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THE REVEREND Mr. RALPH ERSKINE.
The Revd Mr
Ralph Erskine
Died 6th Nov.
1752.
in the LXVIII
Year of his
Age.
L. Chambars sculp.

THE

SERMONS,

AND OTHER

PRACTICAL WORKS,

OF THE LATE REVEREND AND LEARNED

MR. RALPH ERSKINE,

MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL IN DUNFERMLINE.

CONSISTING OF ABOUT

One Hundred and Thirty *Sermons*, beſides his *Poetical Pieces*.

IN TWO LARGE FOLIO VOLUMES.

To which is prefixed,

A ſhort Account of the AUTHOR'S LIFE and WRITINGS, with the CONTENTS.

Whereunto is ſubjoined,

A Copious Alphabetical INDEX of the Principal Matters contained in the whole Work.

The righteous ſhall be had in everlaſting rememberance. PSAL. cxii. 6.
By theſe he being dead yet ſpeaketh. HEB. xi. 4.

VOLUME I.

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THE EDITOR TO THE PUBLIC.

IT is now a conſiderable time ſince the publication of the Reverend Mr. RALPH ERSKINE's *Practical Works* was firſt propoſed. Several occurrences have contributed to retard the forwarding the deſign; the intimation whereof here would anſwer no valuable end. It gives the Editor now a great deal of pleaſure, that he hath it in his power to favour the public with the FIRST VOLUME of this Work, finiſhed in an handſome manner. He reſolved with himſelf, when he firſt propoſed this undertaking, either to have the Work done in ſuch a manner as would reflect honour upon the worthy Author, yield pleaſure, as well as profit, to the Reader, be a credit to himſelf, and an honour to our country, (being the firſt of its kind, for largeneſs and elegance, that ever was publiſhed, as the compoſition of a Scotch author,) or not to have emitted it at all into the world: How he hath accompliſhed his reſolution, the public are left to judge. But the elegant and handſome dreſs, in which it now makes its appearance, will, in ſome meaſure, we hope, compenſate for the unavoidable impediments which fell in the way of its publication.

THE Publiſher, however, hath ſpared no pains and coſt to effectuate his deſign, in having this Work both accurately and elegantly printed. For this purpoſe, the whole Work was carefully read over and prepared for the Preſs, before it was printed; and the Sermons, formerly publiſhed, freed of many inaccuracies and improprieties of the preceding impreſſions.—The doctrinal obſervations, general heads of method, and ſub-diviſions, (which our Author's works abound with) are carefully diſtinguiſhed, and properly ranged, which was not the caſe in the other editions.—The ſcripture texts, which were too curtly cited, and broke off with *et cætera*'s, (of which the Author himſelf, when alive, juſtly complained) are here properly extended; at leaſt ſo much as was neceſſary to prove the point for which they were quoted.—The emphatical words and phraſes are carefully pointed out, and printed in different characters, according to the degree of the emphaſis, that the reader may, at once, perceive the chain of connexion, the emphaſis of his diſcourſe, and the ſtrength of his reaſoning.—Various readings, and criticiſms upon the original text, are uniformly marked out and diſtinguiſhed: proper paragraphs have been made through all the diſcourſes, and the whole punctuation rectified; with ſeveral other amendments.

THE Sermons are here placed according to the order of time in which they were delivered; and ſuch of them as were never before publiſhed, the reader is acquainted thereof at the beginning of the ſermon; with the time, occaſion, and place of the delivery of each. Such pains have been taken upon the Manuſcript Sermons, to have them accurately reviſed, and correctly printed, that, it is hoped, they will appear every way equal to thoſe formerly publiſhed.

THAT nothing might be wanting to render this edition of our Author's Works acceptable to the public, and every way beneficial to the reader; in ſuch places of his diſcourſes, where he makes an alluſion to the occurrences and tranſactions of the times, in which they were compoſed and delivered, theſe alluſions are pointed out, and ſuch paſſages elucidated with notes at the foot of the page, that the Reader, unacquainted with, or uncertain about, theſe occurrences, may be at no loſs to underſtand our Author; and eſpecially, that thoſe

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in after ages may have a clear view of the whole. Any point of doctrine, only occaſionally touched at by the Author, on account of his having elſewhere more copiouſly handled the ſame, the reader is directed to the place where he may find it.

To affirm that there are no typographical miſtakes in this edition, would be conſtructed more a piece of vanity than truth; in a work of this extent it is not to be expected: However, it is hoped theſe will be found to be but very few; all imaginable pains having been taken to free it of theſe as much as poſſible, and eſpecially of ſuch as would injure the ſenſe.

THE Encouragers of this undertaking, on receipt of the Book, will find that they have not been ſerved, as the moſt part of ſubſcribers uſually are. It is a very ordinary thing with publiſhers of books, in far leſs undertakings than this, to amuſe the Public with flattering and pompous words, great promiſes, ſtriking and enticing conditions; but, upon ſeeing the work executed, there hath been a viſible failure of the whole. In this undertaking, the Editor hath *exceeded*, inſtead of *fallen ſhort* of what he promiſed, as will be eaſily perceived by the judicious and accurate Reader; eſpecially in the following reſpects. In the printed propoſals for this work, it was undertaken to print ſome copies upon a *coarſe*, and ſome upon a *fine* paper: the Editor altered his reſolution in this particular, and hath printed the *whole* upon a *ſuperfine* DEMY paper; and although this alteration will coſt the Publiſher more than £ 130 of additional expence, yet there is no additional price exacted from the ſubſcribers. Beſides this, that the book may be more univerſally uſeful to thoſe who want to peruſe it, he has cauſed to draw out, though at a vaſt labour and expence, a copious alphabetical INDEX of the principal matters contained in the whole work; which is a conſiderable ornament to the book, and makes it vaſtly more valuable. Moreover, as an evidence that the Editor's motives, in this undertaking, were not ſolely lucrative, but the good of the Public his principal aim; though the printed propoſals intitled the ſubſcribers only to one copy *gratis* for a DOZEN, yet he afterwards condeſcended to give them a copy freely to every SIX.

THE ſubſcribers to this Edition have no reaſon to be afraid that the book will fall in its price, after publication, as indeed is too frequently the caſe: and if any perſons, in expectation of this, have withheld their ſubſcriptions, with a view to purchaſe it eaſier afterwards, they may, perhaps, come to be diſappointed altogether, in regard the impreſſion is but ſmall.

WHAT is farther neceſſary to be ſaid, concerning our AUTHOR and his WORKS in general, and this edition of them in particular, we refer our Reader to the *Account of his Life and Writings*.

THE Editor has nothing farther to trouble the Public with, but to acquaint them, that the SECOND VOLUME is going forward, conſiderably advanced, and will be carried on and finiſhed with all poſſible expedition.—Any ſubſcribers names, not come to hand, to be printed in this Firſt Volume, may get a place in the Second.

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Thomas Wilſon, currier in Kelſo.
James Wilſon, farmer in Winter-muir.
Andrew Wilkie, ſtay-maker in Alnwick.
William Watſon, farmer in Niſbit.
Robert Wilſon, indweller in Biggar.
James Whyte, farmer in Kilbride.
Mrs. Watſon, relict of John Watſon, late merchant in Glaſgow.

Y

BAILIE David Young, copper-ſmith in Perth.
Mr. John Young, merchant in Edinburgh.
Mr. John Young, dyer in London.
Robert Young, coupar in Glaſgow.
John Young, coupar there.
William Young, farmer in Eagleſholm.

PREFACE,

GIVING A SHORT

ACCOUNT of the AUTHOR.

THE Rev. Mr. HENRY ERSKINE, the AUTHOR's father, was amongſt the younger of the thirty-three children of RALPH ERSKINE of Shielfield, a family of conſiderable ſtanding in the county of Merſe, deſcended from the antient houſe of MAR. He was born at Dryburgh, the ordinary ſeat of the family, in the year 1624, and ordained to the miniſtry, by the Preſbyterians in England, at Cornwal, Northumberland; but ſoon after the Reſtoration, was ejected from his charge there, in virtue of the *Bartholemew act*, or *act of Uniformity*, requiring the Preſbyterian miniſters, in that kingdom, to receive their ordination *a-new*, in the Epiſcopal form, and to comply with the Liturgy and Ceremonies of the church of England. After a variety of ſufferings in the perſecuting period, under the reigns of CHARLES II. and JAMES VII. he was called, ſoon after the merciful and happy Revolution, to be miniſter at Chirnſide, five miles from Berwick, on the Scot's ſide, where he continued till the day of his death, on the 10th, of Auguſt, 1696. aged ſeventy-two. *

Beſides ſome other children, he left two ſons behind him, Meſſrs. EBENEZER and RALPH, whoſe miniſterial endowments are well known, not only in this, but in other churches of Chriſt.

Mr. EBENEZER ERSKINE, the eldeſt of the two, was ordained to the paſtoral office, in Portmoak, in the Preſbytery of Kirkcaldy, *Anno* 1703. where he continued, till he was tranſported to Stirling, in the year 1731. In April 1732. he was choſen Moderator of the Synod of Perth and Stirling; and, of courſe, had to preach at the opening of the ſaid Synod, at Perth, Oct. 10th, the ſame year. His text, on that occaſion, was Pſal. cxviii. 22. *The ſtone which the builders refuſed, is become the head-ſtone of the corner.* In his ſermon on this text, he uſed that freedom and plainneſs of ſpeech, which he thought became him, on ſuch a public occaſion, againſt ſome of the prevailing evils of thoſe times; particularly, againſt the act of the preceding Aſſembly, [May 1732.] lodging the deciſive power of electing and calling miniſters, (where an accepted preſentation did not take place,) in the majority of a conjunct meeting of heritors and elders, no other qualification being required of heritors, but that they be *Proteſtants;* which they might nominally be, and yet very much diſaffected to the government both in church and ſtate: beſides, by the above reſtriction, it is obvious, that heads of families were quite excluded from any voice in the election.

Againſt this act, and other violent methods practiſed by the judicatories at that time, of obtruding miniſters upon diſſenting and reclaiming congregations, Mr. Erſkine very faithfully teſtified; which ſo nettled ſome of the members, who had an active hand in carrying on the arbitrary meaſures complained of in the ſermon, that, at the ſecond ſederunt of that Synod, they accuſed Mr. Erſkine of uttering many offenſive expreſſions in his diſcourſe before them: and though others, at the ſame time, declared, they were ſo far from being offended, that they heard nothing but ſound and ſeaſonable doctrine delivered; yet the foreſaid party inſiſted ſtrenuouſly for the appointment of a Committee, to recollect theſe expreſſions, which had given offence, and lay them before the Synod in writing, at their next diet, which was done accordingly.

After three days warm reaſoning on this affair, the Synod did, by the ſmall majority of ſix voices, find Mr. Erſkine *cenſurable*, for the expreſſions contained in the proceſs, and which, they alledged, were emitted by him, in his ſermon at the opening of the ſaid Synod. Againſt which ſentence he *proteſted*, and *appealed* to the next enſuing General Aſſembly.

When the ſaid Aſſembly met at Edinburgh, in the month of May 1733. they approved the proceedings of the Synod of Perth and Stirling; and appointed Mr. Erſkine to be rebuked and admoniſhed by the Moderator, at their own bar; which was accordingly done: whereupon Mr. Erſkine proteſted, that in regard the Aſſembly had found him cenſurable, and had tendered a rebuke and admonition to him, for things he conceived agreeable to, and founded upon the word of God, and our approven Standards, therefore he ſhould be at liberty, to preach the ſame truths, and teſtify againſt the ſame, or like evils, on all proper occaſions. Unto which Proteſtation and Declaration, as containing a Teſtimony againſt the act of Aſſembly 1732. and aſſert-

* See the Continuation of Calamy's Life of Baxter, p. 681. See alſo Scots Magazine for October, 1752. p. 510.

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ing their privilege and duty, to teſtify publickly againſt the ſame, or like defections, other three miniſters gave in a written adherence, under form of inſtrument; and then all the four withdrew, not reſolving to carry their Teſtimony any farther, but to return home to their charges, and act in conformity with their Proteſtation, as Providence ſhould give them opportunity: and, probably, there never had been a Seceſſion, if matters had ſiſted here.

But the prevailing party were determined, to ſcrew church authority to a far greater height; and accordingly, about eleven o' clock the ſame night, the four Brethren were ſummoned, by the Aſſembly's officer, to compear at the bar of the General Aſſembly, to-morrow, at ten before noon. When, in obedience to this citation, they came, next day, to the bar, without a queſtion put to them, they were immediately ordered to retire with a Committee, who were inſtructed to deal with them, about withdrawing their Proteſt. This Committee, after ſome time ſpent with them, returned, and made report, *That the four Brethren continued firmly reſolved to adhere to their Proteſtation;* but without relating any of the reaſons advanced by them, in ſupport of this their reſolution: whereupon the Aſſembly, by a great majority, ordained that the ſaid four Brethren appear before the Commiſſion in Auguſt next, and then ſhew their ſorrow for their conduct, in offering to *proteſt* againſt a ſentence of the Aſſembly, and retract the ſame: and, in caſe they do not ſhew their ſorrow, and retract, as ſaid is, the Commiſſion is impowered and appointed to *ſuſpend* them from the exerciſe of their miniſtry: and, in caſe they act contrary to the ſaid ſentence of ſuſpenſion, the Commiſſion in November is impowered and appointed to proceed to a *higher cenſure* againſt them.

As the Commiſſion in Auguſt, that year, paſſed the ſentence of ſuſpenſion, contrary to the mind of many of their members, ſeverals of whom, both miniſters and elders, diſſented therefrom; ſo their proceeding in November enſuing, to a higher cenſure, was carried only by the Moderator, Mr. John Goldie's *caſting vote.* Thereafter, the ſaid Commiſſion came to their *final* ſentence, which ſtands in their minutes, in the following terms;——" The Commiſſion did, " and hereby do, *looſe the relation* of Mr. Ebenezer Erſkine, miniſter at Stirling, Mr. William Wil- " ſon, miniſter at Perth, Mr. Alexander Moncrief, miniſter at Abernethy, and Mr. James Fiſher, " miniſter [then] at Kinclaven, to their reſpective charges; and do declare them no longer mi- " niſters of this Church: and do, hereby, prohibite all miniſters of this Church, to employ them, " or any of them, in any miniſterial function. And the Commiſſion do declare the churches of " of the ſaid miniſters vacant, from, and after the date of this ſentence."

This arbitrary procedure laid the four Brethren under the neceſſity, of declaring their SECESSION, [not from the Church of Scotland, but] from the prevailing party in the Judicatories thereof, who had now caſt them out from miniſterial communion with them: and this their Seceſſion, given in, at that time, in writting, under form of inſtrument, was chiefly founded upon the following grounds, namely, *That the ſaid prevailing party were carrying on a courſe of defection from our reformed principles; and particularly, were ſuppreſſing miniſterial freedom and faithfulneſs, in teſtifying againſt the preſent backſlidings of the Church, and inflicting cenſures upon miniſters, for witneſſing, by proteſtations and otherwiſe, againſt the ſame.*

It is true, the Aſſembly which met in May 1734. did ſo far abate the rigour of the above ſentence, that they impowered the Synod of Perth and Stirling, to *unite* the four Brethren to the communion of this Church, and reſtore them to their reſpective miniſterial charges; " but, with " this expreſs direction, That the ſaid Synod ſhall not take upon them, to judge of the legality " or formality of the former proceedings of the Church Judicatories, in relation to this affair; " or, either approve or cenſure the ſame." Whereby it plainly appears, that the acts and ſentences paſſed againſt the Brethren, were legal and formal ſtill, notwithſtanding of all that the Aſſembly 1634. did; and muſt continue to be ſo, till ſome ſubſequent Aſſembly ſhall think fit to reverſe and annul them, which is not likely to be done in our day: ſo that both preaching and proteſting, againſt acts and deciſions of Aſſembly, (however bad,) if once paſſed, are ſtill, in the judgment of the prevailing party, in the preſent Judicatories, neither due nor regular miniſterial freedom, which any miniſters of this Church may uſe, without being liable to cenſure.

This ſhort narrative, of the riſe of that memorable event of the SECESSION in Scotland, was the more requiſite, in regard of the after-acceſſion that the worthy Author made thereunto, as ſhall be preſently related. Mean-time, to finiſh the account of the Rev. Mr. Ebenezer Erſkine, whoſe freedom and faithfulneſs was the firſt occaſion of all the above procedure *, it ſhall only be obſerved, that he lived ſeveral years after this, labouring in the work of the miniſtry, amongſt a very numerous congregation in Stirling, till it pleaſed the Lord to remove him by death, June 2d, 1754. in the ſeventy-fourth year of his age, and fifty-firſt of his miniſtry.

* See a Pamphlet, intitled, *The true State of the Proceſs againſt* Mr. EBENEZER ERSKINE.

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His younger brother, the Rev. Mr. RALPH ERSKINE, Author of the following Sermons, was born at Monilaws, in Northumberland, March 15th, 1685.——After he had made good progreſs in the languages at the ſchools, he went through the ordinary courſes of philoſophy and divinity, at the college of Edinburgh, with ſucceſs: and being well reported of, by all who knew him, for a converſation becoming the goſpel, he was entered upon trials in the Preſbytery of Dunfermline; and afterwards licenſed by them, to preach as a probationer, June 8th, 1709. In which capacity, he exerciſed the talents, which the Lord had graciouſly given him, within the bounds of the ſaid Preſbytery, both in vacancies, and ſettled congregations, to the great ſatisfaction of his hearers, both miniſters and people, as his certificate from that Preſbytery, dated April 4th, 1711. expreſly bears.

At length, upon application from the pariſhioners of Dunfermline, the Rev. Mr. Samuel Charters at Inverkiethen, was appointed to moderate in a call amongſt them, which, on the firſt day of May, 1711. turned out very harmoniouſly for Mr. Ralph Erſkine, and was approven by the Preſbytery, on the very day following, as regularly proceeded in. Then the uſual pieces of trial for ordination, were preſcribed, in which he acquitted himſelf, to the entire ſatisfaction and approbation of the preſbytery: whereupon they ſet him apart to the office of the holy miniſtry, in the collegiate charge of Dunfermline, on the ſeventh day of Auguſt, 1711. the Rev. Mr. James Culbert, miniſter at Culroſs, having preſided in that action, who preached upon Eph. iv. 11, 12, 13. *And he gave ſome, apoſtles; and ſome, prophets; and ſome, evangeliſts; and ſome, paſtors and teachers; for the perfecting of the ſaints, for the work of the miniſtry, for the edifying of the body of Chriſt: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of Chriſt.*

Having, *now*, a paſtoral relation, to a particular flock, in the Church univerſal, *he determined not to know any thing among them, ſave Jeſus Chriſt, and him crucified:* was *inſtant in ſeaſon*, and *out of ſeaſon*, in all the parts of his miniſterial labour; gave himſelf *wholly* thereunto; exhorting the people under his truſt, from houſe to houſe, in the way of family-viſitation; examining them, more publickly, upon the principles of our holy religion; and viſiting their ſick, when called; beſides his main work of preaching the everlaſting goſpel among them, wherein he had a very pleaſant and edifying gift. He preached by turns with his colleague, every Sabbath and Thurſday, through the year; and afterwards, when he had none for ſeveral years before his death, he officiated alone, both on Sabbath and week-day very punctually.

He delivered few extemporary productions. His ſermons were, generally, the fruit of diligent ſtudy, and aſſiduous application. For the moſt part, he wrote all; and kept very cloſe by his notes in the delivery, except when the Lord was pleaſed to carry in upon his mind, in time of preaching, ſome pat and appoſite enlargements, whereof he had no previous ſtudy, and to which he, nevertheleſs, chearfully gave way, as coming from him who has *the tongue of the learned*, who knows *how to ſpeak a word in ſeaſon to him that is weary* *, and who ſays, *It ſhall be given you the ſame hour, what ye ſhall ſpeak: for it is not ye that ſpeak, but the Spirit of your Father which ſpeaketh in you* †.——He was bleſſed with a rich and fertile invention, as appears in the agreeable and entertaining diverſity, wherewith his heads of doctrine are, every where, adorned. The poetical genius, with which he was happily endowed, contributed not a little, to the embelliſhing of his diſcourſes, with a variety of pertinent epithets, and ſtricking metaphors.

It will eaſily appear to the judicious and experienced reader, in peruſing theſe Volumes, that he had a dexterous faculty in ranſacking the plagues of the heart, and deſcribing the diverſifyed circumſtances of ſerious and exerciſed ſouls, as if they had fully communicated their ſeveral doubts and caſes unto him; while, in the mean time, he was only unfolding the inward experience of his own ſoul, what he himſelf felt of the workings of unbelief, and of the powerful influence of the holy Spirit, in oppoſition thereunto; which could not but quadrate or agree, with the operations of the ſelf-ſame Spirit of God in others; for, *as in water, face anſwereth to face, ſo doth the heart of man to man* ‡.—No trial or temptation can befal any of the ſaints, but ſomething ſimilar thereunto, has happened to others before them, as the apoſtle aſſerts, when he ſays, *There hath no temptation taken you, but ſuch as is common to man* ‖.—This eminent ſervant of Jeſus Chriſt, being exerciſed to godlineſs from his youth, became, by the grace of God, a *ſcribe inſtructed unto the kingdom of heaven*, whom our Lord compares to *an houſholder, which bringeth forth out of his treaſures things new and old* ⁋.—Old invariable truths, but new illuſtrations of them; old experiences, the ſame with other ſaints before, but new obſervations and improvements upon them: ſo that, with abundance of propriety, it may be ſaid, that there are few perplexing doubts, or intricate caſes, which the ſaints have, at any time, been exerciſed with, that are not, in ſome one or other

* Iſa. l. 4. † Matth. x. 19, 20. ‡ Prov. xxvii. 19. ‖ 1 Cor. x. 13. ⁋ Matth. xiii. 52.

other of the following ſermons, very judiciouſly ſolved, and diſtinctly elucidated, or cleared up.

In a word, his gift of preaching, was both inſtructive and ſearching. Few, perhaps, outſhine him, in the nervous and convincing manner, whereby he confirms the truth of the doctrines he is inſiſting on; and fewer ſtill, in the warm and pathetic addreſs, in which he inforces the practice of them. — He peculiarly excelled, in the ample and free offers of Chriſt he made to his hearers, and the captivating and alluring method he uſed, for gaining their compliance, or their receiving and reſting on Chriſt alone for ſalvation, as thus freely and fully exhibited unto them in the goſpel.—On all which accounts, he was juſtly eſteemed, and much followed, as one of the moſt popular and edifying preachers of his day.——During his time, ſacramental ſolemnities, at Dunfermline, were much crouded: numbers of people, from ſeveral parts of the kingdom, reſorting unto them, and the Lord was pleaſed to countenance ſome of theſe communions, with ſignal evidences of his gracious preſence and influence, to the ſweet and comfortable experience of many.

When the General Aſſembly, in their fifth act 1720. very ſummarily condemned a book, intitled, *The Marrow of Modern Divinity*, after it had been under the conſideration only of two different ſederunts of that Aſſembly, and a Committee of the whole houſe; the Rev. Mr. Ralph Erſkine was one of the twelve miniſters, who gave in a Repreſentation and Petition to the Aſſembly 1721. bearing, That many goſpel-truths were wounded by the foreſaid condemnatory ſentence; and craving that the ſame might be repealed. The Aſſembly referred this whole affair to their Commiſſion; and the Commiſſion, which met in November that year, did put twelve Queries to theſe miniſters, to be anſwered by them in writing, at their meeting in March following: againſt which time, their written and ſubſcribed anſwers were given in accordingly, and ſoon after publiſhed to the world. The conſequence of which was, that the Aſſembly, which met in May 1722. paſſed another act, intitled, *Act concerning doctrine, confirming and explaining the acts 5th and 8th of the General Aſſembly, Anno* 1720. In the ſaid act, " the General Aſſembly finds, that the " ſaid Aſſembly 1720. in theſe acts, had no deſign to recede from the received doctrine of this " Church, nor by them have done injury to truth, nor given countenance to error.——And con- " ſidering, that the Brethren's deſire, that the act 1720 ſhould be repealed, is unjuſt, the Aſſembly " does refuſe the ſame." Whereby it evidently appears, that whatever truths, [by way of amendment,] may ſeem to be aſſerted by the Aſſembly 1722. they can be underſtood in no other ſenſe, than will agree with the act of Aſſembly 1720.; in regard, the act of Aſſembly 1722. is expreſly ſaid to be *in vindication of the two acts of Aſſembly* 1720. *and for wiping off*, (what they are pleaſed to call,) *injurious aſperſions, caſt upon them by the Brethren in their Repreſentation.*

The Rev. Mr. Erſkine was a very zealous and ſtrenuous defender of theſe precious goſpel-truths, condemned through the ſides of that book, intitled, *The Marrow of Modern Divinity*, in the above acts of Aſſembly 1720, and 1722. A few of them ſhall be here enumerated, for the ſake of thoſe Readers, who have not, perhaps, ſeen and peruſed a Paper, intitled, *Act of the Aſſociate Presbytery, concerning the Doctrine of Grace*; where they are more fully vindicated.

1. That there is a *revelation* of the divine will in the word, affording a warrant to offer Chriſt, unto *all* mankind without exception; and a warrant to all freely to receive him, however great ſinners they are, or have been: and that this gift is made to mankind only, and not to fallen angels.——The oppoſite error, couched in the foreſaid acts is, That the *free* and *univerſal offer* of Chriſt in the goſpel, to mankind ſinners, as ſuch, is inconſiſtent with *particular* redemption, or infers an *univerſal* redemption, as to purchaſe; and that this offer is made only to the elect, or ſuch as have ſome previous qualifications, commending them above others.

2. That in *juſtifying faith*, there is a *real perſuaſion* in the heart of a ſinner, that Chriſt is his; that he ſhall have life and ſalvation by him; and that whatever Chriſt did, for the redemption of mankind, he did it for him: or, that in juſtifying faith, there is the ſinner's *application* and *appropriation* of Chriſt, and the whole of his ſalvation, to himſelf in particular, upon the gift or promiſe of him in the goſpel, to ſinners of Adam's family in general.——In oppoſition hereunto, the condemnatory ſentence of the two Aſſemblies above-mentioned, plainly bears: That in juſtifying faith, there is only a belief and perſuaſion of the *mercy* of God in Chriſt, and of Chriſt's *ability* and *willingneſs* to ſave all that *come* to him:—evidently importing, that we muſt firſt come to Chriſt, and be true believers, before we are warranted to appropriate him to ourſelves, upon ſcripture-ground. This is a notion of faith the Arminians can ſubſcribe to, in a full conſiſtency with their ſcheme.

3. That all *precepts* do, in a ſtrict and proper ſenſe, belong to the *law*; and that the infinitely meritorious obedience and ſufferings of Chriſt, our Surety, are the believer's only plea, in anſwer

ſwer to the law's demand of perfect obedience, and complete ſatisfaction to juſtice. Whereas, in the above acts of Aſſembly, it is fairly imported, that the *goſpel*, ſtrictly taken, is a *new preceptive law* with ſanction, binding to faith, repentance, and other duties, conſequential to the revelation of the grace of God; and expreſly aſſerted, that though the *righteouſneſs of Chriſt alone*, founds our title to eternal glory, yet it is by our own *perſonal holineſs* we obtain the poſſeſſion thereof; and that this our perſonal holineſs has a CAUSAL influence upon our ſalvation, and is a *fœderal* and *conditional* mean thereof; which is a plain retrograde motion to the covenant of works, from which Chriſt came to deliver us.

4. It is a truth, That neither *believers*, nor *unbelievers*, under a goſpel-diſpenſation, are *obliged* to ſeek juſtification by their own obedience, as the above acts of Aſſembly aſſert, with reference, at leaſt, to *unbelievers*. On the contrary, it is the ineſtimable privilege, and unqueſtionable duty of all the hearers of the goſpel, believers or unbelievers, to ſeek juſtification, *only*, through the obedience and ſatisfaction of Chriſt, imputed to them, and received by faith alone; there being no other name by which they can be juſtified and ſaved.

5. It is a precious goſpel-truth, That all believers "are delivered from the *moral law*, as a "*covenant of works*, ſo as thereby they are neither juſtified nor condemned †." Whereas, the ſaid acts of Aſſembly affirm, *That the law, as to believers, is not really diveſted of the promiſe of life, and threatening of death.* From whence it undeniably follows, That if the law, as to believers, is not diveſted of its *promiſe of eternal life*, then they muſt be under the *commanding power* thereof; and if it is not diveſted of its *threatening of death*, they muſt be under the *condemning power* of it ſtill, after all that Chriſt has done and ſuffered in their ſtead; quite contrary to the above doctrine in our Larger Catechiſm.

6. God ſeeth not *iniquity in true believers*, as it is a traſgreſſion of the law, as a *covenant of works*, but only as it is a tranſgreſſion of the law, as a *rule of obedience*, in the hand of a Mediator, they *not being without law to God, but under the law to Chriſt* ‡. Whereas it is contained in the foreſaid acts, That God ſeeth iniquity in believers, as it is a violation of the covenant of works, and conſequently with an eye of vindictive juſtice notwithſtanding of their being under the covering of his law-magnifying righteouſneſs.

In the following diſcourſes, the Reader will find the above, and other truths, relative to the doctrine of grace, clearly illuſtrated; and the oppoſite errors, ſolidly confuted, particularly in Vol. I. Serm. VIII. intitled, *Law-death, Goſpel-life.*

This controverſy about the book, intitled, *The Marrow of Modern Divinity*, wherein the Rev. Author was ſo deeply concerned on the defenſive ſide, has been the moſt uſeful and beneficial to this Church, of any other, that has been broached, ſince the beginning of this Century: for it broke up at a time, when the *Neonomian*, or *Half-arminian* ſcheme, was like to be univerſally adopted; in regard of the great encouragement, (with regrete be it ſpoken) that it met with from the General Aſſembly, in the year 1717. who, the ſame day, wherein they very ſuperficially diſmiſſed the proceſs againſt Profeſſor Simſon, which had taken up much of the time of three Aſſemblies ſucceſſively, in labouring to ſcreen him from cenſure, though according to their own confeſſion, "He had vented ſome opinions not *neceſſary* to be taught in Divinity,—and which "tend to attribute *too much* to natural reaſon, and the power of corrupt nature *:" Yet when a doctrine came before them, which tended to advance the freedom of grace, in oppoſition to man's natural powers of performing that which is ſpiritually good, it gets their condemnatory ſentence at once; for, ſo ſoon as the following propoſition, advanced by the Preſbytery of Auchterarder, for putting a ſtop to the ſpread of Arminian and Baxterian errors in their bounds, was brought in from the *Committee* of *Bills*, viz. *That it is not ſound and orthodox to teach, that we muſt forſake ſin, in order to our coming to Chriſt, and inſtating us in covenant with God;* immediately, upon a ſhort hearing of parties, the ſaid Aſſembly "declare their *abhorrence* of the foreſaid propoſition, as *unſound* and *moſt deteſtable* ‖." Whereby they ſay, upon the matter, that we muſt be *holy*, or ſo and ſo *qualified*, in order to our coming to Chriſt, or believing on him: or, which is the ſame thing, That we muſt *waſh ourſelves*, before we come to the *fountain opened for ſin and uncleanneſs*; which is the very ſoul of the Arminian and Neonomian ſcheme. Whereas, it is obvious from the Scriptures, and our Standards, that a natural man can no more forſake his ſin, or qualify himſelf for the grace of God, than the *Ethiopian can change his ſkin*, or, *the leopard his ſpots.*

To prevent the fatal tendency of ſuch a deciſion, ſo much in favour of the legal and Arminian ſide, the *Marrow of Modern Divinity* is reprinted at Edinburgh, in the year 1718. with a recommendatory preface, by a worthy miniſter of this Church, the Rev. Mr. James Hog at Carnock; wherein he affirms, That this book "contains a great deal of the marrow of revealed and goſ-

† Larger Cat. Queſt. 97. ‡ 1 Cor. ix. 21. * Act ix. Aſſem. 1717. ‖ Act x. Aſſem. 1717. of the ſame date with the former, *viz.* May 14th, ſaid year.

" pel-truth, ſelected from authors of great note, clearly enlightened, and of moſt digeſted ex-
" perience." That the matter contained in it, " is of the greateſt concernment, *viz.* the ſtating
" aright both law and goſpel, and giving true and clear narrations of the courſe of the cloud of
" witneſſes, in the following of which, many have arrived at a glorious reſt." All which, ſays he,
" are managed in ſuch a manner, as to detect the rocks on either hand, upon which the dan-
" ger of ſplitting is exceeding great."

Upon the publiſhing of this new edition of the *Marrow*, it took a very ſpeedy run among people of different ſtations; wherefore the General Aſſembly 1719. inſtructed their Commiſſion to " enquire into the publiſhing of books and pamphlets, tending to the diffuſing of that condemn-
" ed propoſition, *viz. That it is not ſound and orthodox to teach, that we muſt forſake ſin, in order to our
" coming to Chriſt.*" In conſequence of this inſtruction, the Commiſſion of that Aſſembly appointed a Committee of their number, (the leading members whereof, being the ſame that had ſuch an active hand in condemning the Preſbytery of Auchterarder for the foreſaid propoſition,) to take under their cognizance, *the Marrow of Modern Divinity*, as a book of the above tendency, and bring in an Overture, concerning the ſame, to the enſuing General Aſſembly 1720. which they did in the condemnatory way, and it was paſſed, and publiſhed among the printed acts of that Aſſembly, as above related. This animated the Rev. Author, and ſeveral other worthy miniſters, to make a ſtand in defence of theſe condemned doctrines, to the great benefit of real religion, and the true intereſts of precious and immortal ſouls, when the whole land was in danger of being overflowed, with the deluge of Legaliſm, which every intelligent perſon knows to be an inlet to Popery.

When, in the ſecond Proceſs againſt profeſſor Simſon, concluded by the Aſſembly 1729. it was found clearly proven, that he had vented and taught ſeveral propoſitions, utterly inconſiſtent with the ſupreme Deity, and neceſſary Exiſtence of the eternal Son of God; Mr. Erſkine teſtified, with a becoming zeal, againſt theſe dangerous, and ſoul-ruining errors, in ſome of his ſermons preached and publiſhed at that time *.

Though he did not join in the Seceſſion, when it was firſt ſtated, in Nov. 1733. yet he concurred with other miniſters, in the Proteſtations which were taken againſt the Cenſures, paſſed upon the four Brethren, at that time; and afterwards, when he ſaw no probability of the Judicatories redreſſing the grievances, complained of by the ſeceding miniſters, and others, but that they were ſtill going farther off from the foundation which God had laid in Zion, He, together with the Rev. Mr. Thomas Mair at Orwel, gave in a *Declaration of Seceſſion, from the preſent Judicatories of the Church of Scotland*, to the Rev. Preſbytery of Dunfermline, (whereof they were members,) met at Dunfermline, the ſixteenth day of February 1737 years. This Declaration was preſented to the Aſſociate Preſbytery, met at Orwel, on the eighteenth day of the ſame month; and the Preſbytery finding, that the grounds thereof were the ſame, upon the matter, with theſe, upon which they themſelves had, ſome time ago, declared their Seceſſion from the ſaid Judicatories, they unanimouſly agreed to receive and admit them, as members of the Aſſociate Preſbytery; and appointed their names to be added to the Preſbytery-roll. In Mr. Erſkine's adherence to Mr. Mair's grounds of Seceſſion, he has theſe words; " The four Brethren, being particu-
" larly ſtirred up to this work, by a remarkable chain of providences, I think myſelf obliged to
" join with them in this matter; not as they are a Preſbytery or Judicatory *ſeparate* from the
" Church of Scotland, but as they are a *part* of the ſame Church, conſtituting themſelves in the
" Lord's name, as a Judicatory of miniſters aſſociate together, *diſtinct from the preſent Judicatories* of
" this Church, and *witneſſing* againſt their corruptions and defections.——If the Judicatories—
" were acting a contrary part, and putting hand to Reformation, the ſame reaſons that induce
" to this withdrawing, would neceſſarily induce to a returning; which I cordially wiſh, I may
" quickly ſee good reaſon for:" But this he never ſaw, for he died a ſteady member of the Aſſociate Body, having, to his grief, ſeen the grounds of Seceſſion more and more corroborated.

About the beginning of the year 1742. there appeared at Cambuſlang, and ſome other places in the Weſt of Scotland, ſome very uncommon emotions among the people; ſuch as, convulſions, ſwoonings, imaginary repreſentations of ſtrange ſights, and the like; as may be ſeen from the journals of theſe times, ſtill extant in the hands of many. This extraordinary work, (as it was then called,) could not miſs to attract the attention, both of the ſerious and profane, who made very different improvement thereof: the one ſort were thereby confirmed in their infidelity; and the other, ſet upon a more narrow ſcrutiny and ſearch, into the ſcriptural and poſitive evidences of true converſion, ſo as to diſtinguiſh betwixt what was real and ſolid, and would ſtand the teſt of the unerring ſtandard, and that which was only imaginary and deluſive. It is not doubted,

* See, amongſt other places, Vol. I. p. 322, 454, 577.

doubted, but ſeveral exerciſed Chriſtians, acquainted with religion before, might get benefit to their ſouls, by means of the ſound doctrine, preached by ſome of the miniſters, who reſorted to Cambuſlang on that occaſion; but, at the ſame time, the converſion of others, ſo loudly boaſted of, was much ſuſpected; in regard the ſubjects of that extraordinary work, which took place at that time, were preſently filled with an indifferency as to any one profeſſion by another, and an utter averſion to all contending for the Reformation-principles of the Church of Scotland, in oppoſition to every contrary extreme; this being the grand object Mr. Whitefield had in view, in all his miniſtrations while in this kingdom, to induce the people therein, to give as kindly reception to Prelacy, as to Preſbytery; and to blunt the edge of their zeal againſt the defections that were then, and are ſtill taking place in this Church *.

One thing cannot be denied, that the promoters of this work defended the fanciful ſights, which the ſubjects of it pretended to be privileged with, by alledging, that *an imaginary idea of Chriſt as man, was helpful to the faith of his being God-man.* In oppoſition to this extravagant notion, the Rev. Author publiſhed a very elaborate Diſcourſe, intitled, FAITH NO FANCY; or, a *Treatiſe of mental Images:* wherein he diſcovers the abſurdity of the above principle, *That an imaginary idea of Chriſt as man is helpful to the faith of his being God-man:* Firſt, by ſhewing the ignorance, error, idolatry, and atheiſm, that are, each of them, included in the doctrine of *an imaginary idea of Chriſt as man* †; and then, in conſequence hereof, proves, at great length, that the foreſaid imaginary idea, is ſo far from being *helpful* and *neceſſary*, that it is moſt *hurtful* and *contrary* to, or quite *everſive* of the faith of his being God-man.

As this excellent treatiſe may not, perhaps, be in the hands of every one who may read the following Sermons, a few paſſages of many, ſhall be quoted, as a ſpecimen of the Author's accurate ſentiments on this head; and the rather, as it is doubted, if this nice and delicate point was ever directly and of purpoſe handled by any Divine before him. "To aſſert, ſays he, that "a man cannot believe in Chriſt, without an imaginary conception or idea of him *as man*, is to "aſſert, That we cannot believe, without that which neceſſarily preſents a falſe Chriſt to the "imagination, and conſequently hath a native tendency to lead people off from the true Chriſt "in the word ‡." This he proves by the following arguments, amongſt others. "1. The true "Chriſt in the word is the *perſon*, God-man: but Chriſt repreſented in the imaginary conception, "*as man*, is not the perſon, God-man; therefore it leads to a falſe Chriſt in the imagination. "(2.) The true Chriſt held forth in the word, is exhibited there, as a *Prophet*, *Prieſt*, and *King*: "but no imaginary conception can have any offices or relations whatſoever for its object.— "(3.) The true Chriſt in the word, is a *whole* Chriſt. The imaginary conception of him, *as man*, "is not a conceiving of a whole Chriſt, but of a mere human body. Therefore that idea muſt "lead to a falſe Chriſt in the imagination ‖."—Again, he argues thus. "How ſtrangely muſt "the man be attached to his imaginary notions, who makes the repreſentation of Chriſt in "them, as true, as the repreſentation of him in the divine word?—An imaginary idea, to give "us as true a picture of Chriſt in the fancy, as the infallible truth of God gives us in the word! "If ſo, then a *corporeal Chriſt*, in the imagination, is as truly the object of faith, as the *true Chriſt*, "IMMANUEL, *God with us*, is in the word; and ſo a Chriſt within us, as good as a Chriſt without us. Here is a wide door opened to dreadful *Enthuſiaſm*, and damnable *Quakeriſm* ‖‖." Farther, ſince human nature cannot be ſeparated from a perſon, either human or divine, then, ſays he, "The image of Chriſt's human nature, muſt either repreſent a *human* perſon, or a *divine* "one; if it repreſent a *human* perſon, then it is not the true image of Chriſt, who never had, and "never was a human perſon; and ſo it conveys nothing but lies and falſehoods. If the image "of Chriſt repreſent a *divine* perſon, then it is the image of God; for Jeſus Chriſt is God, the "ſecond Perſon of the glorious Trinity: and conſequently, it is but an idolatrous picture of "him who is God, expreſly forbidden in the ſecond commandment.——There is no image of "Chriſt lawful for us to contemplate, but in the glaſs of the goſpel, 2 Cor. iii. 18. To con"template an image of Chriſt formed in the brain, is to gaze upon an idol, and ſo to turn the "mind from him who is *all*, to that which is *nothing*; *For we know*, ſays the apoſtle, *that an idol is "nothing in the world, and that there is no other God but one*," 1 Cor. viii. 4. **—Moreover, he adds, "The imaginary idea of the *man Chriſt Jeſus*, is impoſſible; for the *man Chriſt*, is God as well as "man, in one Perſon: therefore, this imaginary idea of Chriſt as man, repreſenteth to the "mind no truth, but a lye: for, when by this, men alledge they think upon Chriſt, they are "under a groſs deluſion; for Chriſt as man, is not God, nor a perſon either: and conſequently "the object of that idea, is not the true Chriſt. True faith is founded upon the knowledge of "truth; but it is ſtrange doctrine, that ſuppoſes we cannot believe in Chriſt, without imagining "a falſehood ††." And, to quote no more, if it is aſked, "Is not Chriſt's manhood, or humanity,

* See the Author's APPENDIX to the Pamphlet, intitled, *Fraud and Falſehood diſcovered*, publiſhed Anno 1743. which concludes thus; "May this generation be delivered from an imaginary faith, religion, and converſion; which will neither unite them to the true Chriſt, "nor bring them to the true heaven, nor keep them out of the true hell." See likewiſe ſeveral ſermons of his, in Vol. II. particularly, one intitled, *The true Chriſt, no new Chriſt*... p. 180, 181. The Reader may conſult alſo, p. 158, 159, 174, 240.

† Faith no Fancy, p. 42,—57. ‡ *Ibid.* p. 143. at the foot. ‖ *Ibid.* p. 144. ‖‖ *Ibid.* p. 146. ** *Ibid.* p. 156, 157. †† *Ibid.* p. 161.

" a part of, or rather what relates to the object of faith? It is answered, Not separately, or apart " from the divine Person; and therefore it is no part of the object of faith, as it is the object of " fancy, or of any imaginary idea; because that fancy or idea can conceive of it no other way, " than separately or apart from the divine Person; for this good reason, because it can conceive " of no more than that which is corporeal †."——" From the union of the two distinct natures " in one individual Person it is, that the actions of each nature, are the actions of the same one " Person. Thus it was the Person of God-man who fulfilled all righteousness, preached, wrought " miracles, suffered, died.—Hence,—to speak of the doing, suffering, and death of Christ as " man, or in his human nature, as if they were not to be considered as the doing, suffering, " and death of the Person, God-man, is to weaken and undermine our redemption by him, and " destroy the merit and value of his obedience and satisfaction ‡."

What a pity is it, that such an useful book should not be more universally known, and carefully perused! For therein, the more learned would find several of the received, though unguarded maxims of philosophy, which lay the foundation for manifold mistakes in Divinity, solidly and convincingly refuted; and, at the same time, Christians in general, whether learned or unlearned, have the grounds of their faith, especially in that essential article, concerning the PERSON of our Redeemer, as God-man, clearly and distinctly unfolded, in opposition to delusive fancies, and imaginary notions.

When the unhappy difference about the *religious Clause* in some burgess oaths, *viz.* " Here I " protest before God, that I confess and allow with my heart, the true religion presently professed " within this realm, and authorized by the laws thereof; I shall abide thereat, and defend the " same to my life's end, renouncing the Roman religion, called Papistry:" When the idle debate, about the lawfulness of this clause, was forced in upon the Associate Synod; the majority, of whom the Author was one, staved it off for some Synods, as a point, which had never formerly been controverted in this Church, even in her purest times. At length, in a thin meeting, at the end of the Synod, in April 1746. when several members, who had opposed any controversy on this head, were gone off; then they who had insisted upon the sinfulness of the foresaid clause, having kept their party together, catched the opportunity of the Synod's adjournment to a second week, and by mere stratagem, got the *sinfulness* of the said clause, voted by a scrimp majority. Against which the Rev. AUTHOR, and several other ministers *protested*, and promised to give in their reasons in due time: which they did accordingly. But, when at next meeting in September, these reasons and answers were called for, the answers were not in readiness: wherefore a question was moved by the protesting ministers, " Whether the decision " about the religious clause in some burgess oaths, pushed by this Synod," [that is, by a party in the Synod, who took the advantage of the absence of several members on the opposite side,] " in " April 1746. shall now, or afterward, be made a term of ministerial and Christian communion, " ay and until the making of the same to be so, shall be referred, by way of overture, to Pres- " byteries and Kirk-sessions, for their judgment in the same,—or not?" The putting of this question was strenuously opposed by the party, who were for condemning the burgess oath; at length, they went in by a vote, to *delay* the voting of it till next Synod. At the said next meeting of Synod in April 1747. the members being fully conveened, the foresaid question came natively upon the field from the minutes. But, instead of protesting against it, (as they ought to have done, if it was such a monstrous iniquity, as they afterwards make it to be;) they themselves did put a *shift* to it: that is, proposed another question, in order to try by a vote, which of the two should be voted; and yet when it carried, that their decision should *not* be a term of communion, as above, they immediately went off, though they were the minority, and separated themselves, in a manner, absolutely unparalleled in the Christian Church, from the resurrection of our Lord and Saviour, to this day. The rise and scope of this unprecedented Schism, is admirably well delineated by this Rev. Author, in a Pamphlet of his, published that same year, intitled, FANCY NO FAITH: or, *A few humble Admonition and Information to Seceders, against the sinful Constitution of some brethren into a pretended Judicatory*, &c.

In this book, amongst a variety of other things, he observes, p. 5. That " though the rise of " the late rupture was a rash decision, pretending to find the *religious clause* in some burgess oaths " to be sinful, yet the main topic upon which they pretend to have founded this, is, by declar- " ing their quarrel with the present *national profession* and *settlement* of religion: that is, with the " true religion *presently professed* within this realm, and *authorized* by the laws thereof,—and with " the renounciation of Popery at present. Whence it is evident, like sun-shine, they have taught " themselves and their followers, to renounce that religious clause as sinful, at the dreadful " expence of renouncing their own Testimony: wherein, and in the papers it adopts, the true " religion presently professed in the acts of the Revolution Parliament, and established, or au- " thorized by the laws of the land: that is, the authorized doctrine, worship, discipline, and " government of the Church of Scotland; or, the profession of this national Church, and the

† FANCY NO FAITH, p. 107. ‡ Ibid. 308.

" excellent Conſtitution thereof, is again and again, yea, twenty or thirty times eſpouſed and " adopted: in ſo much, as that unleſs they ſhall alſo find it unlawful, to make that the matter " of an oath, which they themſelves have already made the matter of a ſolemn Teſtimony, they " cannot find that foreſaid clauſe to be ſinful, but by finding the Teſtimony to be ſinful alſo; " renouncing what is therein called the *happy* and *glorious Revolution*, and *our excellent, valuable*, " and *beautiful* Preſbyterian conſtitution," *&c.* He obſerves further, concerning their declaring the religious clauſe in ſome burgeſs oaths to be ſinful, " That, as the ſaid deciſion was paſſed " at the very time when we were threatened with an inundation of popiſh idolatry and tyranny; " and as the paſſing thereof, made it a ſin to renounce *Popery*, as well as a ſin to ſwear an ad- " herence to the *true religion* preſently authorized; ſo the raſh authors of that deciſion, ſeem to " be righteouſly left of God, to embrace a *new religion*, or a new profeſſion and conſtitution, lead- " ing them to ſo many pieces of the *Roman* religion, called *Papiſtry*, as to aſſume to themſelves " a *popiſh* and arbitrary power, to urge a popiſh and *implicite* faith, and to carry on popiſh and " prelatic practices;—arrogating to themſelves the *name of the Synod*,—the *only Synod*;—declaring " and enacting, that all Preſbyteries, Kirk-ſeſſions, and Communities of the Aſſociation, were " ſubject to them; and that all Courts, whether Preſbyteries or Seſſions, who were not ſubor- " dinate to them, were unlawful Courts; and that all miniſters and elders, who were not ſub- " ordinate to them, had *loſt the keys of the kingdom of heaven.*——All this being without the leaſt " ſhadow of argument from ſcripture or reaſon, is a piece of conduct, ſo manifeſtly *diſorderly* " and *ſchiſmatical*, that it hath not, in all its circumſtances, a parallel, among the *wildeſt Separatiſts* and *Sectaries*, that aroſe in any age of the Chriſtian Church *."

The Rev. Mr. Erſkine expoſes the foundation of this unprecedented Schiſm, in a moſt convincing and ſtriking light, to all who are not ignorantly bigotted, and implicitely led, in the following terms:— " The religious clauſe, ſays he, of the burgeſs oath, is a ſwearing to the " *true religion preſently profeſſed* and *ſettled by law*; which true religion none dare find fault with; " but the Brethren's arguments make it a ſwearing to the *preſent profeſſion* and *ſettlement*, which " being *faulty*, they make *this profeſſion* and *ſettlement*, the thing ſworn to, that they may find fault " with the foreſaid religious clauſe of the oath. But, as no man can lawfully ſwear, either to " his own, or other mens profeſſion, in this ſenſe; otherwiſe, he would be but ſwearing to " himſelf, or to men, and not to God, which is profanity; ſo, the thing ſworn to in the burgeſs " oath, is neither the PROFESSION nor SETTLEMENT, but ony *the true Religion* PROFESSED " and SETTLED.

" The beſt *profeſſion* and *ſettlement* in the world, is but a *human* thing, may be imperfect, defec- " tive, and unfit to be ſworn to; but the true religion, which is *God's religion, Chriſt's religion*, (as " the ſtanding laws term it,) is a *divine* thing, and to ſwear to it, is the *only thing* ſworn to in " that oath. To confound theſe two, is to confound an *imperfect law*, with a *perfect religion* " eſtabliſhed and authorized by that law; and thus to confound the thoughts of people with a " notion, that when they ſwear to maintain the true religion authorized by law, they ſwear to " maintain ſome other thing that is not the true religion, namely, the *authorized profeſſion*, or *Re-* " *volution ſettlement of religion*;—whereas that religious clauſe of ſome burgeſs oaths, imports a " ſwearing, neither to a *profeſſion* nor a *ſettlement*, as I ſaid, but to the true religion *profeſſed* and " *ſettled:* and therefore, though it were never ſo clear and evident, that the profeſſion and ſettle- " ment is *wrong* in certain reſpects, yet it is as clear as the ſun, that the true religion profeſſed " and ſettled is *right;* and, that this *true religion*, and nothing elſe, except the *renouncing of Po-* " *pery*, is the *matter* ſworn to in the foreſaid clauſe †." This is the true ſtate of the argument, in its juſt and proper light, which the oppoſite party have never been able to diſprove to this day.

Beſides this Pamphlet, the Rev. Author publiſhed alſo two others on this controverſy, viz. *The* LAWFULNESS *of the religious clauſe in ſome burgeſs oaths, aſſerted*; and OBSERVATIONS *upon the conduct of the ſeparating Brethren*, particularly, *upon the unwarrantable grounds of their pretended Conſtitution*, &c. wherein he ſhews a direct oppoſition betwixt their former, and preſent profeſſion and Teſtimony; their inconſiſtency in condemning the burgeſs oath, as a ſin of the firſt magnitude; and yet allowing their burgeſſes to continue their traffic upon ſuch a ſinful footing; and the vaſt odds, or wide difference there is, betwixt the *firſt* conſtitution of the Aſſociate Preſbytery, and this *new* and unprecedented conſtitution, at Edinburgh, April 10th, 1747. Our *firſt conſtitu-* " *tion*, ſays he, was the fruit and effect of our being *ſeparated* from our Brethren, who *thurſt* us " out from their miniſterial communion. But this *new conſtitution*, was the effect and conſequent " of our Brethren's *ſeparating themſelves*. We find in ſcripture, a wide difference betwixt a *paſſive* " and an *active* ſeparation from Church communion. We ſee a bleſſing reſting on the head of " them who have been *ſeparated* from their brethren; but a note of ignominy upon theſe that " wilfully *ſeparate themſelves*, Jude ver. 19.—The fruit of our *firſt* conſtitution, was the *joy* of all " the friends of the covenanted Reformation; but the fruit of this *new pretended conſtitution*, is the " *ſaddening* of the hearts of the Lord's remnant every where.—The fruit of our *firſt* conſtitution,

* Fancy no Faith, p. 7,—11. † *Ibid*, p. 35, 36.

" was the *gathering* of the Lord's remnant into one; but the fruit of the *ſecond*, is the *rending* and " *breaking* them to pieces *;" and ſeveral other remarks of this kind, to excellent purpoſe.

Thus far concerning the Rev. Mr. RALPH ERSKINE's *controverſial Writings*, wherein he gives ſufficient proof of his ability in fair and candid argumentation from ſcripture and reaſon, without ſophiſtical cavilling, or ſubtil evaſion. Had theſe polemical performances been re-printed in this Collection, the Reader would not have been troubled with the above excerpts from them; which, indeed, are deſigned, not only to give a view of the Author's judgment in theſe controverted points; but likewiſe to induce all who want information, to have recourſe to the Treatiſes themſelves, (which may be had from the Editor of theſe Volumes,) and, it is hoped, they would have abundance of pleaſure and ſatisfaction, to compenſate their labour in peruſing them.

His *poetical* talent was employed chiefly on divine ſubjects; he had no reliſh and taſte for any other. They who have any appetite for the ſubſtantial and ſolid food of the word, to the nouriſhment of their precious and immortal ſouls, and do not want to be ſtarved and decoyed with empty notions, and fanciful flights, will readily meet with ſuitable and agreeable entertainment in the poetical performances of this Rev. Author, which are here re-publiſhed in the Second Volume of his Works. They begin with that excellent Poem, intitled, GOSPEL SONNETS, or SPIRITUAL SONGS, *in ſix parts*, viz. The Believer's *Eſpouſals*, *Jointure*, *Riddle*, *Lodging*, *Soliloquy*, and *Principles*. This book (as the Author obſerves) underwent ſeveral impreſſions at Edinburgh, ſome of them without his knowledge, and very incorrect; but at length, upon leave aſked and given, it was re-printed at London, with large additions and great improvements, made by himſelf, upwards of ten years before his death. The reaſon of calling this Poem by the name of *Goſpel Sonnets*, is given by himſelf, in his preface to this London edition.—" When I conſidered (ſays he) the *man-* " *ner*, wherein much of it is written, and how far true poeſy is, in my opinion, ſuperior thereto; " I thought it preſumption in me to give it any lofty title; and that it was enough if it paſt " under the name of SONNETS: yet, on the other hand, the *matter* contained therein, being ge- " nerally ſo great evangelical myſteries, as are not below the ſtudy of elect angels in heaven, " 1 Pet. i. 12. far leſs below the conſideration of the moſt intelligent minds and elevated thoughts " of men, under whatever denomination, on earth; I thought I might preſume to diſtinguiſh " them from all idle and profane ſcribbles under that name, by the high adjunct and epithet of " GOSPEL *Sonnets*." The uſefulneſs of this *poetical Compend* of the revealed principles of our holy religion, for the promoting of the life of faith, comfort, and holineſs, will, it is hoped, be experienced by many of the ſaints of God, to the lateſt poſterity.

Next after the *Goſpel Sonnets*, was publiſhed a PARAPHRASE, or *Large explicatory Poem upon the* SONG OF SOLOMON; which indeed is an evangelical Comment, done in a ſtrain adapted to the New-teſtament diſpenſation, upon that allegorical or figurative part of holy Writ. Of the ſame paraphraſtic or explanatory nature, are his Poems on ſome ſelect paſſages of the book of Job, intitled, *Job's Hymns*. But, as a Verſion in common metre, as near to a literal tranſlation as the idiom of the Engliſh language would permit, of all the Scripture Songs, was very much wanted, [except of the *Pſalms* of *David;* there being already a moſt excellent tranſlation of theſe, allowed by the authority of the General Aſſembly of the Church of Scotland, and appointed to be ſung in congregations and families, upwards of an hundred years ago;] ſo it was warmly recommended to the Rev. Author, by all his Brethren, that as he had already emitted a ſhort verſion of the *Song* of *Solomon*, and book of the *Lamentations*, as free of the paraphraſe, as the ſenſe would allow; he might, in like manner, make out a verſion in metre of all the other Scripture Songs. Theſe he completely finiſhed, a little time before his laſt ailment, and they were carefully tranſcribed from his ſhort-hand characters, by his eldeſt ſon, the Rev. Mr. Henry Erſkine, and publiſhed after his death.

This faithful and laborious ſervant of Jeſus Chriſt, continued publickly uſeful in his Maſter's work, till within a few days of his departure; for he preached in his own pulpit on Sabbath Oct. 29th, and by means of a nervous fever, wherein, nevertheleſs, he had the exerciſe of his judgment and ſenſes, he fell aſleep in Jeſus on Monday ſe'n-night thereafter, being Nov. 6th, 1752. in the ſixty-eight year of his age, and was buried in the church-yard of Dunfermline, on Thurſday the 9th of foreſaid month.

Beſides other children, he had three ſons miniſters in the Aſſociation, the Rev. Meſſrs. Henry, John, and James Erſkines: the firſt ordained at Falkirk, the ſecond at Leſlie, and the third at Stirling. All of them died in the prime of their age, when they had given the world ground to conceive big hopes of their after-uſefulneſs.—He had a daughter alſo, married to the Editor of theſe Volumes. His only ſon, now in life, is Robert, a merchant in London.

That the whole of his Works here publiſhed, both Sermons and Poems, may be profitable to the Churches of Chriſt, while ſun and moon endure, is the ſincere and unfeigned deſire of his ſurviving friend, at the date hereof,

* Obſervations, &c. p. 39, 40, 41.

GLASGOW, Jan. 16th, 1764. JAMES FISHER.

CONTENTES.

SERMON I.

THE Beſt Match; or, the Incomparable Marriage between the Creator and the Creature, Page 1

Isa. liv. 5. *Thy Maker is thy Huſband.*

The words being viewed in their connexion and ſcope, and wrapt up in a doctrinal propoſition, the following general topics are illuſtrated, *viz.*

1. That there is a marriage-relation betwixt Chriſt and believers, proved, *ibid.*
2. The nature of this marriage opened up, *ibid.*
3. Reaſons aſſigned why Chriſt comes under ſuch a relation to his people, 4
4. Application of the whole, in ſundry uſes, *ibid.*

SERMON II.

The Rent Vail of the Temple; or, Acceſs to the Holy of Holies by the Death of Chriſt, 8

Mat. xxvii. 51. *And, behold the vail of the temple was rent in twain, from the top to the bottom.*

The words being analized and explained, and their proper ſignification being aſcertained, the following general heads of method are illuſtrated, *viz.*

1. What that vail is that interpoſed between God and us enquired into, 10
2. How the death of Chriſt hath rent that vail, *ibid.*
3. In what manner the vail is rent, 11
4. For what end the vail is rent, narrated, 12
5. Inferences deduced for application, 13

SERMON III.

The Sword of Juſtice awakened againſt God's Fellow, 22

Zech. xiii. 7. *Awake, O ſword, againſt my ſhepherd, and againſt the man that is my fellow, ſaith the Lord of hoſts.*

After a brief introduction, clear analization, and ſuccinct explication of the words, the following general topics of diſcourſe are treated of, *viz.*

1. The character of the perſon againſt whom the ſword doth awake, enquired into, 23
2. The nature and quality of this ſword opened up, 28
3. The manner how this ſword did awake, and the import of it, 30
4. The ſpecial hand Jehovah had in calling this ſword to awake againſt this glorious perſon evinced, 31
5. The reaſons of the doctrine adduced, why the Lord of hoſts ordered the ſword of juſtice to awake againſt his Shepherd, *ibid.*
6. The application of the ſubject in ſundry inferences, 34

SERMON IV.

Chriſt the People's Covenant, 47

Isa. xlii. 6. —*I will give thee for a covenant of the people.*—

The connexion of the words being traced, viewed in their ſcope, divided, explained, and ſummed up in a compendious propoſition, the following general heads of method are proſecuted, *viz.*

1. Some remarks offered concerning the covenant in general, 49
2. How Chriſt is the covenant, and in what reſpects he bears that name, 51
3. For whoſe benefit he is ſo; and thus ſhew that he is the covenant of the people, 52
4. By whoſe authority he is ſo; and here his divine ordination, and being given of God for that end, are ſpeak of, 54
5. Some reaſons of the doctrine offered, why he is given to be a covenant, and why a covenant of the people, 57
6. Inferences are deduced for the application of the ſubject, 58

SERMON V.

Preventing Love; or, God's Love to us, the Cauſe of our Love to him, 74

1 John iv. 19. *We love him, becauſe he firſt loved us.*

After an introduction to, an analization and explication of the words, and their ſenſe given in a doctrinal obſervation, the following topics are diſcourſed, *viz.*

1. God's love to his people, 75
2. The ſaints love to God, 79
3. The influence his love hath upon ours as the cauſe of it, 83
4. The application of the whole in ſundry uſes, 84

SERMON VI.

The Militant's Song; or, the Believer's exerciſe while here below, Pag. 92

Psal. ci. 1. *I will ſing of mercy and judgment; unto thee, O Lord, will I ſing.*

Here after an introduction unto the ſubject, and an analization of the text, four general topics are handled, *viz.*

1. What mercies the people of God meet with, and what it is in theſe that afford matter of a ſong, 93,—97
2. What judgments the people of God meet with, and what it is in them that may be matter of a ſong of praiſe, 97,—103
3. What this ſinging imports; and how we are to ſing of mercy and judgment, 103,—105
4. The reaſons why it is ſo ordered by the Lord, that his people ſhould have ground to ſing both of mercy and judgment, 105, 106
5. The application of the whole, in a variety of inferences, 106,—112

SERMON VII.

The Harmony of the divine Attributes diſpayed, in the Redemption and Salvation of Sinners by Jeſus Chriſt, 112

Psal. lxxxv. 10. *Mercy and truth are met together, righteouſneſs and peace have kiſſed each other.*

After the introduction and explanation of the words, four general heads of method are proſecuted, *viz.*

1. Who are members of the meeting; or, what are theſe attributes of God which do harmoniouſly conſpire together, propoſing their various claims, 114, 115
2. When and where did theſe parties meet together, 116,—118
3. How, and after what manner, they meet together and kiſs each other, 118,—120
4. Why, or for what reaſons, they have met together, and embraced each other, 120,—124
5. The application of the ſubject in ſundry inferences, 124,—130

SERMON VIII.

Law-death, Goſpel-life; or, the Death of legal Righteouſneſs, the Life of Goſpel Holineſs, 131

Gal. ii. 19. *I through the law, am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.*

The ſcope of the apoſtle being obſerved, the words analized and explained, and a compendious propoſition laid down, the following topics of diſcourſe are illuſtrated, *viz.*

1. The doctrine cleared and confirmed, 133
2. The believer's mortification, or death to the law, opened up, 234
3. The believer's vivification, or living to God enquired into, 140
4. The neceſſity of this death, in order to this life; or, the influence that our being dead to the law, hath upon our living to God, 145
5. The application of the ſubject, in four diſtinct uſes, 149

SERMON IX.

The Beſt Bond; or, the ſureſt Engagement, 167

Jer. xxx. 21. *For, who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me, ſaith the Lord.*

The ſcope of the prophet being noticed, and the words viewed in their connexion, analized, and explained, the doctrine laid down and confirmed, the following general heads are diſcourſed, *viz.*

1. Who this wonderful perſon is that engaged his heart to approach unto God, 169
2. The nature of the work he engages himſelf in, 170
3. The ſingularity of the fact, 174
4. The reaſons of the doctrine, *viz.* why Chriſt came under this engagement, *&c.* 176
5. Some inferences deduced for the application of the doctrine, 178

SERMON X,—XIX.

Goſpel-Principle the Foundation of Goſpel-Practice; or, the great Duty of receiving Chriſt, and walking in him, opened, 186

Col. ii. 6. *As ye have received Chriſt Jeſus, the Lord, ſo walk ye in him.*

After a copious introduction and ſuccinct diviſion of the words, ſhewing the ſcope of the apoſtle, and ſenſe of the verſe, the following general topics are handled at great length, *viz.*

1. The believer's character and dignity, as a receiver of Chriſt Jeſus the Lord, delineated, 188

2. The

2. The believer's duty, *viz.* to walk in Chriſt, opened, 199
3. The rule of the believer's duty, and the proportion it ſhould bear to the reception of Chriſt, evinced. 205
4. The connexion betwixt the character and the duty; or, between receiving Chriſt and walking in him, opened up, 213
5. An ample application, in a variety of inferences and uſes, 218

SERMON XX,—XXVII.

The Happy Congregation; or, the Great Gathering of the People to Shiloh, 279

GEN. xlix. 10. *The ſceptre ſhall not depart from Judah, nor the lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come, and unto him ſhall the gathering of the people be.*

The words being viewed in their connexion, analized, and explained, difficulties obviated, and the true ſenſe aſcertained, the following general topics of diſcourſe are largely handled, *viz.*
1. Some remarks offered with reſpect to the nature and qualities of the gathering of the people to Shiloh, 279
2. Who the people are, of whom it is ſaid this gathering ſhall be, enquired into, 284
3. To whom this gathering of the people is to be, and in what reſpects it is to Chriſt, 287
4. The manner of this gathering, by what means, and in what method it ſhall be, 290
5. The ſpecial ſeaſons mentioned wherein this gathering doth, or ſhall take place, 302
6. The reaſons why this gathering of the people ſhall be to Shiloh, ennumerated, 315
7. A copious improvement of the whole, in an uſe of information and exhortation, 319

SERMON XXVIII,—XXXI.

The Main Queſtion of the Goſpel Catechiſm, WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST? 336

MAT. xxii. 42. *What think ye of Chriſt?*

After an introduction to the words, the connexion traced, the occaſion of propounding the queſtion aſcertained, the words themſelves divided, explained, their emphaſis pointed out, and the ſcope of them ſummed up in a doctrinal propoſition, the following general heads of method are illuſtrated, *viz.*
1. Some general remarks premiſed for clearing the doctrine, 338
2. The import of the queſtion pointed out, 340
3. The reaſons of the doctrine aſſigned, why this is the leading queſtion in the Chriſtian Catechiſm, 352
4. Application of the point, for informing our minds, trying our ſtate, and directing our thoughts and affections concerning Chriſt, 354

SERMON XXXII,—XXXVIII.

The Pregnant Promiſe with her Iſſue; or, the Children of Promiſe brought forth and deſcribed, 367

GAL. iv. 28. *Now we, brethren, as Iſaac was, are children of promiſe.*

After taking a view of the words in their connexion, dividing, explaining, and fixing the proper ſenſe of them, the following general topics are treated at great length, *viz.*
1. The promiſe whereof believers are the children, opened up, 369
2. This character, of their being the children of promiſe, unfolded; and in what reſpects they are ſo, inquired into, 378
3. The compariſon ſtated, or the parallel run, between them and Iſaac, and ſo the truth of the propoſition evinced, *viz.* that as he was, ſo they are the children of promiſe, 382
4. The grounds of the doctrine ennumerated, both with reference to the prolific virtue of the promiſe for begetting children to God, and alſo the pleaſure of the Promiſer, why he will have people to be children of promiſe, 386
5. Application of the ſubject, in an uſe of information, examination, caution, and exhortation, 390

SERMON XXXIX,—XLII.

The Saving Sight; or, a View of God in Chriſt, 440

JOHN xiv. 6. —*He that hath ſeen me, hath ſeen the Father.*—

The words being viewed in their connexion, analized, explained, and ſummed up in a doctrinal propoſition, the following general heads of method are handled, *viz.*
1. The oneneſs betwixt the Father and the Son, opened up, 441
2. Some remarks offered concerning a ſaving ſight of Chriſt, 443
3. In what reſpects they who ſee Chriſt ſee the Father, 447
4. In what manner the Father is ſeen in Chriſt, 451
5. The reaſons why theſe who ſee Chriſt, ſee the Father, 452
6. The application of the whole, in an uſe of information, examination, conviction, conſolation, and exhortation, 454

SERMON XLIII, XLIV.

The Gradual Conqueſt; or, Heaven won by little and little, 477

DEUT. vii. 22. *And the Lord thy God will put out theſe nations before thee, by little and little.*

Having divided and explained the words, viewed them in their ſpiritual meaning, and wrapt them up in a doctrinal obſervation, the following general topics are illuſtrated, *viz.*
1. Who are the true Iſrael of God, enquired into, 472
2. The heavenly Canaan, which they are brought to the poſſeſſion of, viewed, 473
3. What nations of enemies oppoſe them in their way to the heavenly Zion, enumerated, 474
4. The mighty Conqueror, *The Lord their God*, viewed and deſcribed, 476
5. The manner of the conqueſt, *by little and little*, 476
6. The reaſons of this gradual conqueſt, 485
7. The application of the whole in ſeveral uſes, 488

SERMON XLV,—LI.

The Strength of Sin, and how the law is the Strength thereof, opened up and unfolded, 496

1 COR. xv. 56. *The Strength of ſin is the law.*

The words being viewed in their connexion, analized and explained, there are two doctrinal propoſitions adduced, and ſeparately proſecuted. The FIRST is, *That ſin is a very ſtrong and powerful thing.* And from this obſervation, the following general heads of method are proſecuted, *viz.*
1. The nature of ſin enquired into, and opened up, 498
2. The ſtrength of ſin unfolded, by viewing the qualities and degrees of its ſtrength, 499
3. How the ſtrength of ſin diſcovers itſelf, evinced, 503
4. Whence the ſtrength of ſin comes, and where it lies, 507
5. Some inferences deduced for application, *ibid.*

The SECOND doctrine is, *That the law of works is the ſtrength of ſin to the ſinner that hath violate and broken it.* And from this propoſition, the following general topics are propoſed, *viz.*
1. Enquire what law is the ſtrength of ſin, 513
2. Shew what ſtrength it is that ſin hath from the law, 514
3. Shew what ſin the law is the ſtrength of, 515
4. How, and in what reſpect, the law is the ſtrength of ſin, 518
5. Whence it is that the law is the ſtrength of ſin, 521
6. Application of the whole, in an uſe of caution, information, examination, and exhortation, 523

SERMON LI.

The Mediator's Power in Heaven and Earth, 548

MAT. xxviii. 18. *And Jeſus came, and ſpoke unto them, ſaying, All power is given unto me in heaven and earth.*

After the words are divided and explained, and ſummed up in a doctrinal propoſition, the following general heads of method are handled, *viz.*
1. The truth of the propoſition illuſtrated from parallel texts and ſcripture inſtances, 549
2. The power that is delegated to, and reſides in the perſon of Chriſt, enquired into, 551
3. The extent of this power unfolded, as it is declared to be all power in heaven and earth, 554
4. The divine donation thereof touched at, by ſhewing when and how it was given to Chriſt, 555
5. The reaſons of the doctrine aſſigned, why all power in heaven and earth is given to him, 557
6. Sundry inferences deduced for the application, 559

SERMON LII.

The Female Preacher; or, the Woman of Samaria's Sermon to the Men of the City: or, the Self-humbling and Chriſt-exalting Influence of divine Diſcoveries, 572

JOHN iv. 29. *Come, ſee a man that told me all things that ever I did; Is not this the Chriſt?*

The context being viewed, the connexion traced, the words analized and explained, and wrapt up in a general propoſition, the following general topics are diſcourſed, *viz.*
1. What is to be underſtood by Chriſt manifeſting himſelf to a perſon, 574
2. What are theſe ſin-diſcovering and ſoul-debaſing effects of Chriſt manifeſting himſelf, 576
3. What are theſe Chriſt-exalting commendations wherein ſuch diſcoveries of Chriſt vent themſelves, 577
4. The reaſons why ſaving diſcoveries of Chriſt have ſuch a ſelf-debaſing and Chriſt-exalting influence, 580
5. The application of the whole in ſundry uſes, 581

SERMON LIII.

God's Great Name, the Ground and Reaſon of ſaving great Sinners, 590

PSAL. cvii. 8. *Nevertheleſs he ſaved them for his name's ſake.*

The words being divided, explained, and ſummed up in a doctrinal obſervation, ſeveral propoſitions laid down for clearing the doctrine, and parallel ſcriptures adduced for illuſtrating the truth of it, the following general heads of method are inſiſted upon, *viz.*

1. What is that name of God, for the ſake of which he ſaves, 591
2. What it is for God to ſave for his name's ſake, 593
3. What ſalvation he works for his name's ſake, 595
4. What is imported in this *nevertheleſs*; or, over what impediments God brings about ſalvation for his name's ſake, 596
5. Some reaſons offered why he ſaves for his name's ſake, 597
6. Some inferences deduced for the application, 598

SERMON LIV, LV.

Heaven's Grand Repoſitory; or, the Father's Love to the Son, and depoſiting all Things into his Hand, a ſtrong Encouragement to Faith, 661

JOHN iii. 35. *The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.*

After an introduction unto, a diviſion, and explication of the words, and laying down the doctrinal propoſition, the following topics of diſcourſe are handled, *viz.*

1. The Father's love to the Son evinced, 602
2. The evidence of the Father's love manifeſted, by giving all things into his hand, 603
3. How the love of the Father, thus evidenced, in giving all things into his hand, is a ground of faith, 606
4. A very copious application of the whole, 608

In which application, beſides other things, the following points are proſecuted, *viz.*

(1.) That all things are in Chriſt's hand, demonſtrated, 614
(2.) The beauty of this diſpoſure pointed out, 615
(3.) The extent of this treaſure enquired into, 617
(4.) The manner how all things are in his hand, conſidered, 620
(5.) Motives and conſiderations laid down to excite and quicken our faith in this truth, 621
(6.) Directions offered for regulating our faith therein, 623

SERMON LVI.

The Law of God's Houſe, 627

EZEK. xliii. 2. *This is the law of the houſe; upon the top of the mountain, the whole limit thereof round about ſhall be moſt holy; behold, this is the law of the houſe.*

The words being viewed in their connexion, analized, explained, their proper meaning aſcertained, and ſummed up in a doctrinal propoſition, the following general heads of method are diſcourſed, *viz.*

1. The houſe of God treated of, 628
2. The nature of that holineſs, that is peculiar to the houſe of God, unfolded, *ibid.*
3. That holineſs is the law of the houſe, evinced, 629
4. The extent of this holineſs, required by the law of God's houſe, pointed out, 630
5. The privilege of acceſs to the moſt holy place, 632
6. That this privilege obliges the whole to be a moſt holy people, manifeſted, 635
7. The application of the whole, in ſundry uſes, *ibid.*

SERMON LVII.

The Little City beſieged, and delivered: or, the Deliverance of the Church by Chriſt, and the Ingratitude of Men to the glorious Redeemer, repreſented, 639

ECCL. ix. 14, 15. *There was a little city, and few men within it; and there came a great king againſt it, and beſieged it, and built great bulwarks againſt it: now, there was found in it a poor wiſe man, and he by his wiſdom delivered the city; yet no man remembered that ſame poor man.*

The ſenſe of the words being aſcertained, accurately analized, and ſummed up in a doctrine, the following general topics of diſcourſe are proſecuted, *viz.*

1. The little city, and the few men in it, deſcribed, 640
2. The great ſiege laid againſt the little city, opened, 641
3. The deliverance thereof, and the reaſons of the ſiege, 642
4. The ingratitude of the citizens repreſented, 645
5. The application of the whole, in ſeveral uſes, 646

SERMON LVIII.

The Lamb in the midſt of the Throne, 651

REV. vii. 17. *For the Lamb that is in the midſt of throne ſhall feed them.*

The words being viewed in their ſcope and connexion, divided, explained, and a doctrine obſerved, the following topics are propoſed, *viz.*

1. To ſpeak a little concerning the Lamb, 652
2. To diſcourſe ſomewhat of the throne, 653
3. Enquire how the Lamb comes to be upon the throne, *ibid.*
4. What is imported in the Lamb's being in the midſt of the throne, 654
5. Conſider the benefit of feeding, that iſſues from the Lamb's being in the midſt of the throne, 655
6. To deduce ſome inferences for the application, 656

SERMON LIX.

Stability in the Faith, the Church's Strength, 663

ISA. xxx. 7. —*Their ſtrength is to ſit ſtill.*

The author having taken a view of the words in their connexion, analized, and explained them, and taken up their ſcope in a doctrinal propoſition, the following general heads of method are proſecute by him, *viz.*

1. What theſe times are, that may be called *perilous times*, in which people ſhew much inſtability in the faith, 665
2. The nature of ſtedfaſtneſs in the faith, 667
3. That this ſtability is people's ſtrength in perilous times, 674
4. Inferences for the application of the whole, 675

SERMON LX.

Faith's Plea upon God's Covenant, 678

PSAL. lxxiv. 20. *Have reſpect unto the covenant.*

The words being explained, and a doctrinal propoſition raiſed from them, the following points are handled, *viz.*

1. What covenant it is he will have reſpect unto, 679
2. What it is for him to have reſpect unto the covenant, *ibid.*
3. What it is in the covenant he hath reſpect unto, 680
4. What kind a reſpect he hath to it, *ibid.*
5. Why he hath a reſpect to it, *ibid.*
6. Some application made of the whole, 681

SERMON LXI.

Faith's Plea upon God's Word, 684

2 SAM. vii. 25. —*Do as thou haſt ſaid.*

The words being explained, and a doctrinal obſervation laid down, the following heads of method are proſecute, *viz.*

1. To ſhew that it is the buſineſs of faith to take God's word, 684
2. That it is the buſineſs of faith to put him to it, 685
3. How faith takes God's word, *ibid.*
4. How it pleads the accompliſhment of the promiſe, *ibid.*
5. Whence it is the buſineſs of faith to take God at his word, and put him to it, *ibid.*
6. The application of the whole, 685,—689.

SERMON LXII.

The promiſing God, a performing God, 690

GEN. xxviii. 15. —*For I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have ſpoken to thee of.*

After an introduction, and the words viewed in their connexion, divided, opened up, explained, and the ſenſe wrapt up in a doctrine, the following general topics of diſcourſe are handled, *viz.*

1. What is to be underſtood by the Bethel-viſits that God may allow his people, 691
2. Some of the dark days that may follow theſe Bethel-interviews, mentioned, 693
3. The promiſe explained, *I will not leave thee*, &c. though dark days may intevene between the promiſe and the accompliſhment, 695
4. Some grounds offered upon which they may be aſſured that God *will not leave them, till he hath done that which he hath ſpoken to them of*, 698
5. Several inferences deduced for the application, 699

SERMON LXIII.

The Combination and Conjunction of joys; or, the joyful Approach of the Saviour, chearfully welcomed by the Church's Echo of Faith, 704

PSAL. xlvii. 7. —*Lo, I come!*—
SONG ii. 8. *Behold, he cometh!*

The words being complexly viewed and explained, and the ſcope of them ſummed up in a doctrinal propoſition, the following general heads of method are proſecute, *viz.*

1. What

1. What comings of Christ to his people are joyful to him and them, pointed out, 705
2. What makes his coming joyful to *him*, evinced, 706
3. Shew what makes his coming joyful to *them*, 707
4. What expressions of joy in him are imported in his *Lo, I come!* 708
5. What expressions of joy in them are imported in their *Behold, he cometh!* 709
6. Whence is this combination and conjunction of joys, *ibid.*
7. Inferences deduced for the application of the whole, 710

SERMON LXIV,—LXVIII.

The Time of Need, a Time of Love, 713

EZEK. xvi. 8. *Now, when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee; behold, thy time was a time of love.*

The words being viewed in their spiritual meaning, analized, explained, and a doctrinal proposition raised from them, the following topics of discourse are handled, *viz.*
1. The sinner's time of need and misery, as described in the context, spoken of, 714
2. God's time of love, as here also represented, considered, *ibid.*
3. That he shews his love at such a remarkable juncture, as makes it appear, their time of need is his time of love, evinced, 716
4. That this is matter of wonder and admiration, pointed out, 717
5. Inferences deduced for the application of the whole, 718

SERMON LXIX.

Sensible Presence, Sudden Absence; or, the Believer's most comfortable Interviews but of short Duration, 739

GEN. XXXV. 13. *And God went up from him, in the place where he talked with him.*

Having viewed the words in their scope and connexion, divided, explained, and taken up their sense in a doctrinal observation, the following heads of method are proposed, *viz.*
1. To speak a little of the communion that God's people may have with him, 740
2. Offer a few remarks concerning their missing and finding the Lord, 741
3. To enquire in what respects they may miss him, where they enjoyed him, 742
4. Assign the reason of this dispensation, 743
5. Make application of the whole subject, 744

SERMON LXX.

The Mounting Christian; or, the Eagle-winged Believer, 748

ISA. xl. 31. *—They shall mount up with wings as eagles.*

After an introduction to the words, the scope of the prophet in the preceding verses, the words themselves viewed as they stand connected with the preceding and subsequent clauses, and their sense expressed in a doctrinal proposition, the following general topics are handled, *viz.*
1. The wings wherewith they mount up, speak of, 749
2. The things wherein they mount up, 750
3. The seasons when it is especially they mount up, 751
4. The manner how they mount up, 752
5. The reasons why they mount up, *ibid.*
6. Application made of the whole subject, 753

SERMON LXXI.

The River of Life, proceeding out of the Throne of God and of the Lamb, 757

REV. xxii. 1. *And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb.*

The words being viewed in their scope, their sense ascertained, explained, and summed up in a doctrine, the following general heads of method are prosecute, *viz.*
1. Some remarks offered for clearing and confirming the doctrine, 757
2. The property and quality of the water of this river observed, 758
3. The import of its being said to proceed out of the throne of God and the Lamb, 759
4. The reasons why this river is said to proceed from thence, *ibid.*
5. Inferences deduced for the application of the whole, 760

SERMON LXXII, LXXIII.

The Comer's Conflict; or, the Beginner's Battle with the Devil, when essaying to come to Christ by Faith, 766

LUKE ix. 42. *And as he was yet a-coming, the devil threw him down and tare him.—*

The Author having considered the words in their connexion, divided, explained, and raised a doctrine from them, the following particulars are illustrated, *viz.*
1. The import of coming to Christ, 766
2. In what respects matters may grow worse with people, even when they are thus coming to Christ, 767
3. The reasons why people come to Christ for help, and why they whom he undertakes to help, may find their distress grow, before their deliverance come, *ibid.*
4. The Application of the whole subject, *ibid.*

SERMON LXXIV.

Dark Providences cleared in due Time, 774

JOHN xiii. 7. *—What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.*

After taking a view of the words in their scope and design, analizing and explaining them, deducing an observation from them, and confirming it by an induction of scripture instances, the following general heads are proposed, *viz.*
1. To mention some things the Lord doth towards his church and people, that are dark and mysterious, hidden and unknown, 778
2. To shew in what respects these things that he is doing for them, may be hid and unknown to them, 779
3. For what reason the Lord takes this way of doing, so hid, dark, and mysterious, that what he doth they know not, 780
4. To observe some seasons when it is that he makes them know what now they are in the dark about, 781
5. To deduce some inferences for the application of the whole, 783

SERMON LXXV.

The great Trumpet of the everlasting Gospel, 787

ISA. xxvii. 13. *And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown; and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the Lord in the holy mountain at Jerusalem.*

The words being copiously viewed, both as to their literal, typical, and spiritual meaning, accurately analized and explained, their spiritual sense expressed in a doctrinal observation, and each branch of the doctrine confirmed and illustrated from expres texts of scripture, the following general topics of discourse are insisted upon, *viz.*
1. The state and condition of sinners by nature, as outcasts, ready to perish, considered, 789
2. The duty of sinners to come to a Saviour, the great Lord-deliverer, and glorious object of worship, 790
3. The means speak of by which the Lord gathers these sinners thus to him, *viz.* the blowing of the great gospel-trumpet, 791
4. The efficacy of these means, and shew why it is promised they *shall come*, 793
5. The end for which they shall come, *viz.* their worshipping in his holy mountain, 794
6. Inferences for the application of the whole, 795

SERMON I.*

The BEST MATCH; or, the Incomparable Marriage between the CREATOR and the *Creature*.

ISAIAH liv. 5.
Thy Maker is thy Husband.

THE prophet Iſaiah having largely diſcourſed of the ſufferings of Chriſt, and the bleſſed fruits and effects of them; among which, one is, that he ſhould have a numerous ſeed to believe on him; and that, when the Jews reject him, the Gentiles ſhould gladly receive him: And thus foreſeeing, by the ſpirit of prophecy, the glorious ſtate of the Gentile church, he breaks forth into a ſong of triumph in the beginning of this chapter; where the prophet directs his ſpeech to the church and ſpouſe of God in theſe words, *Sing, O barren, thou that didſt not bear; break forth into ſinging, and cry aloud, thou that didſt not travail with child: for more are the children of the deſolate than the children of the married wife, ſaith the Lord.* Where we have a magnificent and glorious promiſe of the fertility and the felicity of the Gentile church; and this is enlarged to the fifth verſe, which contains the words of our text; where we have the reaſon of her happineſs and fruitfulneſs who was formerly a barren widow, *For thy Maker is thy Husband:* he who made thee out of nothing, and therefore can eaſily fulfil all theſe promiſes, how unlikely ſoever they ſeem to be; he who made thee a people, yea, which is more, who made thee his people, he will own thee as his ſpouſe, and act the part of an huſband to thee.

I ſhall defer any further introduction and explication, and alſo whatever might be ſaid concerning the external relation betwixt Chriſt and the viſible church, my chief deſign being, at this time, only to ſpeak a little to that internal ſpiritual marriage-relation betwixt Chriſt and the inviſible church, or Chriſt and the believer, as it is repreſented under the formality of a marriage: and what I would offer upon this ſubject, I lay before you in this doctrinal propoſition,

That there is a marriage-relation betwixt Chriſt and believers, wherein he ſupplies the place of a husband unto them, and they the place of a bride and ſpouſe to him.

In proſecuting whereof, I would,
I. Prove, That there is ſuch a *marriage-relation* betwixt Chriſt and believers.
II. Speak to the *nature* of this marriage.
III. Give the *reaſons*, why Chriſt comes under ſuch a relation to his people.
IV. Make ſome application.

I. To confirm the doctrine, that there is a *marriage-relation* betwixt Chriſt and believers. This will appear from theſe two conſiderations.

1. From the *compellations* given to *Chriſt* with relation to believers. How frequently doth the ſpouſe call him *her husband* in the book of the Song? *As the apple-tree among the trees of the wood, ſo is my Beloved among the ſons. My Beloved is mine, and I am his*, Song ii. 3, 16. And, ſays the apoſtle, 2 Cor. xi. 2. *I have eſpouſed you to one huſband, that I may preſent you as a chaſte virgin unto Chriſt.*

2. The marriage-relation betwixt Chriſt and believers appears from the compellations given to *believers* in ſcripture, with reſpect to Chriſt. How frequently calls he her *his love, his ſpouſe*, in the book of the Song? *Thou haſt raviſhed my heart, my ſiſter, my* SPOUSE. *How fair is thy love, my ſiſter, my* SPOUSE! Song iv. 9, 10. Rev. xix. 7. There the church, (or believers in the collective capacity) is called the bride, the Lamb's wife, *The marriage of the Lamb is come, and the* BRIDE *hath made herſelf ready.* We need not ſtand to prove that which is ſo evident, we need ſay no more to confirm it, than to repeat the text, *Thy Maker is thy husband.* Therefore I come,

II. To ſpeak of the *nature* of this marriage: and here we would briefly conſider, 1. The *parties* married. 2. The *terms* of the marriage. 3. The *properties* of the marriage. 4. The *effects* of it. 5. How the *match is carried on.* 6. How it is *concluded.*

(1.) I ſay, let us conſider the *parties* married; who is the Bridegroom, and who is the bride.

1. Then, the Bridegroom is the *wiſdom of God*; and all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge are found in him: he knows all the wants of the bride, and is ready to ſupply them.—On the other hand, the bride, before her matching with him, is the moſt *arrant fool* out of hell: her folly is diſcoverd by continuing to refuſe to match with him; to refuſe to give her conſent to this heavenly Bridegroom.

2. The Bridegroom is the *eternal Son of God*; the King's only Son; *The King made a marriage for his Son:* He is the blood-royal of heaven.—On the other hand, What is the bride's pedigree? She needs not boaſt of her deſcent, *Thy father was an Amorite, and thy mother an Hittite*, Ezek. xvi. 3. There is a vaſt difference here.

3. The Bridegroom is the *heir of all things*; he hath all riches, the unſearchable riches of Chriſt.—But what is the bride worth before he match with her? She is worſe than nothing, poverty itſelf; and not only a beggar, but in debt, and Chriſt is willing to pay her debt.

4. The Bridegroom is *comely* and *glorious*. All the ſeraphims and cherubims above, all the ſons of men in the world, all the crowned

* This was delivered in two diſcourſes at Culroſs; but the preciſe time and occaſion cannot be aſcertained; only we ſee the firſt edition was printed Anno 1722. and another Anno 1739.

heads on earth, in all the circumſtances of glory, are but like black pieces of earth compared with this glorious Bridegroom.—On the other hand, What is the bride before he match with her? Even as black as the devil can make her. Not only a leopard, ſpotted here and there, but an Ethiopian, wholly black and ugly. When ſhe is *caſt forth in the open field to the loathing of her perſon*, ſhe is a ſpectacle of horror and miſery; yet then it is a marriage-day, and a time of love.

(2.) What are the *terms* of the marriage? the articles of it on his part and her part? The terms on her part, though the whole belong to Chriſt, yet, to ſpeak of terms in an improper ſenſe, he requires of her what he worketh in her; namely,

1. That ſhe be *divorced* from all other huſbands, and give up with all other lovers and idols; particularly, that ſhe be divorced from the law, that ſhe may be married unto Chriſt: ſhe muſt not obey the law from a principle of her own ſtrength; nor as a covenant of works, that, by obedience, ſhe may purchaſe a title to heaven; nor to gratify a natural conſcience; nor merely to eſcape hell, and make a righteouſneſs of her obedience: ſhe muſt be divorced from that huſband.

2. Upon her part it is required, that ſhe be *ſatisfied* with this huſband alone, as the great portion of the ſoul; that he may have no rival, no competitor in her affections, none to ſit on the throne with him: ſhe muſt keep the chief room for the Son of God. Again, on his part, he contracts,

1. That he will make over *himſelf* to her; all he is, all he hath, all he hath purchaſed, all he hath promiſed: he will make over to her all the bleſſings of the everlaſting covenant. O this is a ſweet article! and a large charter indeed!

2. He contracts to perform all the *glorious offices* of a huſband to her; to provide for her, protect her, direct her, pity her, clothe her, to encourage and comfort her; and to do all for her ſhe needs: this is the ſum of the contract; for, to ſpeak properly, Chriſt is all, and does all in this matter; and our part is done by him in us, Hoſ. ii. 19, 20. *I will betrothe thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betrothe thee unto me in righteouſneſs, and in judgment, and in loving kindneſs, and in mercies; I will even betrothe thee unto me in faithfulneſs, and thou ſhalt know the Lord.* Chriſt ſigns the contract for him and her both. *I will betrothe thee unto me in righteouſneſs;* I will fulfil the law, and ſatisfy God's juſtice. *I will betrothe thee unto me in loving kindneſs;* though there be nothing in thee to invite my love, but much to challenge my averſion, yet I will overcome all thy imperfections, and ſet my love upon thee. *I will betrothe thee unto me in mercies;* in pardoning mercy, ſanctifying mercy, ſupporting mercy, comforting mercy. But leſt the bride think, that when ever ſhe ſins there may be a divorce, ſhe may break and go away, therefore it follows, *I will betrothe thee unto me in faithfulneſs.* He pledges his veracity for fulfilling the articles on her part and his both. But then,

(3.) What are the *properties* of this marriage?

1. It is a very *myſterious* marriage, that the Creator ſhould take the work of his hands for a bride; not only when in its primitive and virgin integrity, as it dropt out of his creating hands, but when polluted with the poiſon of the devil, the venom of the ſerpent, that he ſhould take her for a bride; *Thy Maker is thy husband.* This is a wonderful conjunction. If a glorious angel ſhould be matched with a creeping worm, and a king with a beggar, it would not be ſuch a wonder; but the Maker to join himſelf to the work of his hands! there cannot be a greater diſtance conceived betwixt any thing, than betwixt a Creator, and that which is brought out from the barren womb of nothing, a creature; and yet they are in a marriage-relation; *Thy Maker is thy husband.*

2. This marriage is very *difficult* and *hard.* It is true, there is nothing too hard for Omnipotency; yet the human nature of Chriſt had much to do with it: though he was ſupported by the divine nature, yet he behoved to ſwim through the river of his own blood, before he could get his bride. He ſatisfied the juſtice of God, eſtabliſhed a new covenant. All this muſt be done in order to this marriage.

3. This marriage is an *indiſſolvable* marriage; death diſſolves other relations, but it increaſes this intimate union: Nothing ſhall ſeparate Chriſt and the believer; *I am perſuaded,* ſaith Paul, *that neither life, nor death, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things preſent, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, ſhall be able to ſeparate us from the love of God which is in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord,* Rom. viii. 38, 39.

(3.) What are the *effects* of this marriage?

1. The firſt and immediate effect is a moſt *cloſe union* betwixt Chriſt and the believer. This union, though leſs than a perſonal union, although it be in ſome reſpect, yet it is more than a political union, more than a moral union: It is a very cloſe union. The Bridegroom, Chriſt, he gives his bride his own Spirit; communicates vital influences, from the glorious Head, to her; and ſhe cleaves, by faith and love, cloſe to him: and God promiſeth that he will make the houſe of Iſrael cleave cloſe to him, as a girdle to the loins of a man, Jer. xiii. 11. He makes his ſpouſe, in ſpite of all her folly, in ſpite of all her enmity, in ſpite of all her enemies and temptations, to cleave cloſe to him.

2. Another effect of this union, is *ſweet communion, mutual fellowſhip:* he feaſts with them and they with him; he blows upon her garden, quickens and animates her graces; and then he comes and eats his pleaſant fruits.

3. Another effect is, *familiarity,* (which is coincident with the former,) he treats them not as ſtrangers, but as friends; and not as friends only, but as his own ſpouſe; he communicates to her, and ſpeaks comfortably and kindly to her. It is a wonder what condeſcenſion God will make ſometimes; and the believer again can be more familiar with God, than with the whole world; and can tell to God what he can tell to none elſe.—Thus you ſee ſome of the effects of this marriage.

(5.) How was the match *carried on?*

I anſwer, in a word. On his part it was carried on thus:

1. He gave the Father his hand, and engaged to him in the covenant of redemption, from eternity, that he would do all things neceſſary for accompliſhing the marriage.

2. Becauſe there muſt be an union of natures betwixt the Bridegroom and the bride; (it was not poſſible that we could be matched with

with the divine nature;) therefore he becomes a man, and takes on our nature, that there might be an union of natures.

3. Becauſe the bride is a ſlave, he pays her ranſom, ſubſtitutes himſelf in her room, takes on her debt, and pays all that ſhe owed to juſtice, and then takes on with her. But, on our part, juſt nothing at all: we had no hand in the covenant of redemption; no hand in the contrivance of ſalvation; we knew nothing about the buſineſs; we had no thoughts of a Redeemer, deſerved nothing but pure wrath: we were lying with full contentment in the devil's territories, when Chriſt was carrying on the match.

(6.) How is the marriage *concluded* upon his part?

1. He ſends forth his ambaſſadors to *court* for him, as Abraham did his ſervant for Iſaac; and there is a great work, indeed, to make her give her conſent. Let angels in heaven unite their topicks of perſuaſion, they could not prevail with one ſoul, if a converting day were not come: but they muſt always ſpeak fair to her. How rhetorical was Abraham's ſervant for his maſter: he hath but one child, and that child hath great riches; he ſeeks no portion with Rebecca, only her conſent. Thus he rhetorizes and flouriſhes exceedingly, and perſuades with the greateſt motives. But yet the ambaſſadors of Chriſt have a larger commiſſion, if our eyes were opened to ſee it: they are ſent forth to make love to the bride, and in his name to commend Chriſt.

2. He concludes the marriage thus. The bride being wretchedly ignorant of her true happineſs, therefore his Father *diſtreſſes* her with the *debt* that ſhe owes to him; and the wretched perſon is forced, for ſome time, to mount Sinai; and there God deſcends in all the circumſtances of terrible majeſty: he thunders againſt her, curſes her; *Curſed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them*, Gal. iii. 10. God exacts all the debt, conſcience roars, and the devils are let looſe; ſhe fears hell and wrath; and God declares, in the goſpel, that the wretched bankrupt ſhall go to priſon, and ly eternally in hell, if ſhe do not take on with his Son, marry him, and believe on him. Thus the bride is forced to an extremity: ſome have more, ſome have leſs of this law-work; but all are humbled and broken in ſome meaſure, who are married to Chriſt: he ſends forth his Spirit and convinces the world of ſin. But this would not do either; and therefore,

3. The bridegroom ſees that nothing but *condeſcenſion* will do it; and ſo he appears in all his glory: when the bride is full of fears, perplexities, and anxieties; when the terrors of God are ſurrounding her, and the arrows of the Almighty drinking up her ſpirits, and when ſhe is crying out, What ſhall I do? Whether ſhall I go? Then the bridegroom appears in all his excellency and glory, and ſays, *Behold me, behold me;* and ſhe gets a view of him that raviſhes her heart, and enlarges her ſoul: then it is that the Spirit is ſent to determine her to conſent. The manifeſtation of his glory does enlighten her mind and ſpirit; and immediately grace, upon the will, draws out the whole heart after him; ſo that if the bride could be grieved and pained upon the marriage-day, it would be for her folly in refuſing him ſo long. — But what is done upon the bride's part, for concluding the match? Nothing at all; but the whole ſoul is enabled to acquieſce in a Redeemer; and the believer is ready, at ſuch a time, to ſay, *He is my Lord, my God, my ſtrength, my all*, and ſhall be for ever.——Thus you have a brief ſcheme of the nature and way of this marriage.

Having ſpoken but very briefly to the former heads, I ſhall here, before I proceed to the reaſons of the doctrine, offer a few remarks upon the *time* of this marriage-union betwixt Chriſt and believers. We told you how this match was concluded and compleated by Chriſt, and now we ſay, there is a ſtated day and time for the concluding thereof: and upon this head we may remark.

1*ſt*, That there is a two-fold *day* we are to conſider in this marriage, *namely*, the day of *eſpouſals* on earth, and the day of *conſummation* in heaven; and we may compare theſe two together in few words. 1. The day of eſpouſals here is uſhered in with a very dark morning, or rather an evening, upon the bride's part, with the wrath of God, and the law: as it was ſaid, *The evening and the morning was the day*; ſo, in this contract, the evening of legal terrors, at leaſt ſome humiliation, uſhers in the morning: But as to the conſummation, there is a great deal of glory before it, the ſoul being taken to heaven already, and the body ſleeping ſweetly in the grave, a bed where the bridegroom lay three days before her. 2. In the day of eſpouſals, when the perſon gets a victory over corruption, and finds little ſtirring of it, no ſenſible working of it, yet there is a party within, at the ſame time, that oppoſe the match, and which will afterwards get out its head, and will be ſtill aſſaulting the believer, while he is on earth: but, in the day of conſummation, there is no ſuch thing; no enemy, no ſin, no corruption; but the whole ſoul goes out wholly upon the bridegroom. 3. The eſpouſals are carried on ſecretly; it may be the perſon is ſitting at your ſide, and you do not ſee, nor know when Chriſt is making up the match; or, perhaps, on his knees at home, there is a ſecret tranſaction: But the conſummation will be before millions of angels, millions of ſaints, millions of ſpectators. Here is a great difference: after the day of eſpouſals is over, the bride may give many ſquint looks to her old lovers, looking back to Egypt, departing from her huſband, doubting of his love, diſtruſting his word, fearing his diſpenſations: But, after the conſummation, no ſhadow of ſin, no ſhadow of jealouſy, no ſhadow of imſtakes, or fears, can overtake her for ever; no cloud can interveen, for the ſun of righteouſneſs ſhall never be eclipſed any more. But then,

2*d*, A ſecond remark is, that the *preciſe time* of the eſpouſals is condeſcended on by the Bridegroom and his Father, from all eternity; the very moment when the bride ſhall be made to ſign the contract, and flee to Chriſt, and pour our her whole ſoul upon him; that preciſe moment is agreed upon betwixt the Father and the Son, in the covenant of Redemption, from eternity.

3*d*, We remark, that the bridegroom *waits pati-*

patiently for that moment that is agreed upon betwixt the Father and the Son; he longs for it, he desires it. The believer many times is ready to think, O, Christ is not willing! I have set days apart, I have gone to my knees, I have sought him in and about this and the other ordinance, and yet I could not close with him: I have been almost dipt in hell with affliction, yet my heart was never melted; surely Christ is not willing. O let us flee the borders of blasphemy! The Lord Jesus is willing, but the fulness of time is not yet come: there is a set moment of his coming to his people, and for this they are to wait; yea, for this he waits himself, according to that scripture, which I shall read to them that cannot get that in duties and ordinances which they have been long looking for; Isa. xxx. 18. *Therefore will the Lord wait, that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you: For, the Lord is a God of judgment; blessed are all they that wait for him.* He will wait upon the very moment of time, for the day of salvation; he knows the proper season. The crane, the swallow, and the stork know their seasons, by the natural instinct God hath given them; and will he not know his own season? yea, he waits to be gracious.

4*th* Remark, That when the time comes, then there is a *sweet conjunction* of all circumstances to conclude the work; all things work pleasantly together to compleat the match; conscience goes right to work, the word is made lively, the Spirit acts powerfully and sweetly in the soul: there is an auspicious conjunction of all favourable circumstances, for determining the bride, and drawing out her heart.

5*th* Remark, That there are several *signs* and *characters* of this day, by which it may be known. What are the signs of it? you will say. I shall not stand on this, only it is a day of light; great light breaks in upon the mind: it is a day of love; much love is let in upon the heart: it is a day of power, wherein the bride is perswaded and overcome; difficulties are surmounted, enemies conquered, and the bride's will is moulded into a compliance; it is a day of amazement. O what an extasy of wonder is raised in the person's heart! I was blind, now I see; I was dead, now I live; I was weak, now I am strong; this morning, perhaps, I was under affliction, and under the terrors of God, and now he hath ravished me with the consolations of his Spirit: I was afraid of hell, now I have the hope of heaven and eternal life. O what a day of wonder is it! Lastly, It is a day of vows; the soul will be ready to break forth in such a day, crying, What shall I speak for him? What shall I suffer for him?

A *sixth* and *last* remark on this head is, that, in this stated day of espousals, the bridegroom *manifests his glory* to the bride; when he intimates to the soul, *Thy Maker is thy husband*, he shews his glory; his absolute glory, his comparative glory, his relative glory; they are all one upon the matter, yet there is a formal different consideration of them. 1. His *absolute* glory is manifested. What does the soul see, that is matched and married to Christ? Alas! some see nothing but dreams and fancies; but when the believer is matched with Christ, he so deals with him as with Moses, he makes all his glory to pass before him: The person gets a view of the glorious attributes of the Son of God. 2. He manifests his *comparative* glory; *Thou art more excellent than hills of prey; fairer than the sons of men:* the bride, the believer, sees him *as the apple-tree among the trees of the wood*, every way incomparable: whatever he be compared to, he excells it; if he be a lilly, he is the lilly of the valley; if he be a rose, he is the rose of Sharon; if he be a plant, he is the plant of renown; if he be a physician, he is the physician of value; if an advocate, he is an advocate with the Father: he is represented without any parallel. 3. His *relative* glory is manifested: he is discovered as a glorious Priest, a glorious Prophet, a glorious King, a glorious Husband, a glorious Redeemer and Saviour; and there will be a sight of his glorious fulness in all these relations, and the glorious fitness of that sufficiency and fulness, all suited for the soul: and thus revealing himself, he removes all jealousies and mistakes from the bride, supplies all her wants, heals all her diseases, and outbids all her rivals, who can offer nothing to allure the soul, while he can, and doth say, I am All-sufficient to help thee.

III. I come now to the *third* thing proposed, *namely*, To offer some *reasons* of the doctrine, why Christ comes under a marriage-relation to believers.

I answer, 1. His own *sovereign will* is the best reason why he comes under a marriage-relation in this case; *Even so Father, for so it seems good in thy sight*, Matth. xi. 26. His actions are not to be examined at the bar of our reason: *He hath mercy, because he will have mercy.*

2. His *love* to them makes him come under such a relation to them; *I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with everlasting kindness have I drawn thee.* Love is the motive that engages him; love brought him out of heaven for them; love nailed him to the cross for them; love laid him in a grave for them; and love engages him to a marriage-relation with them.

3. He does it for the *glory* of his own free grace, mercy, and love. As love and mercy was his motive, so it was his end, that he might display and discover it to the utmost. This attribute is at its utmost line. Infinite wisdom could have contrived a thousand worlds, and infinite power could have made them, but the love of God hath gone to its utmost height; it is not possible for Christ to give a greater demonstration of his love than he hath done, in giving his life for the bride, and entering into a marriage-relation with her.

4. He does it, that he may furnish *work* for the blessed company in the higher house; for on the earth the contract is only drawn up: this is only the day of espousals; heaven will be the day of consummation of the marriage: this is only a courting and wooing time; but the day will come when the nuptial solemnity shall be celebrated, and that shall continue while the day of eternity lasts.—This shall suffice for the reasons of the doctrine.

IV. The *fourth* thing was, To make some *application;* and it may be, 1. For information. 2. Lamentation. 3. Examination. 4. Exhortation. Now of these in their order.

(1.) For

(1.) For *information.* Is it ſo, that there is a marriage-relation betwixt Chriſt and believers?

1. This informs us of the *infinite love of God* towards loſt ſinners, in giving his own Son to be a Huſband and Redeemer unto them; *God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in him might not periſh, but have everlaſting life*, John iii. 16. God ſo loved the world, as neither angels nor men can tell.

2. This informs us of the *infinite love of Chriſt*, in condeſcending to be a huſband to ſuch a bride. It could never have entered into the heart of the wiſeſt angel in heaven, that Chriſt, the eternal Son of God, ſhould become man; and far leſs that he ſhould take ſuch a filthy and deformed creature and bride by the hand, as ſinners are: if he had given us our deſerving, he would made his juſtice to ride in triumph over us, and hell to reſound with eternal hollows of praiſe to injured juſtice; but, to the quite contrary, he hath ſo ordered, that heaven ſhall reſound with eternal halelujahs of praiſe to his gracious mercy and free grace, in chuſing thoſe that were enemies, and admitting them to his bleſſed boſom.

3. This doctrine informs us of the *believer's ſafety.* Having Chriſt for her huſband, who can hurt her? It is the duty of a huſband, you know, to protect and defend his ſpouſe; and to be ſure Chriſt will not be wanting in this to his bride: *He will hide them in the ſecret of his preſence from the pride of men: he will keep them ſecretly in a pavilion from the ſtrife of tongues*, Pſalm xxxi. 20. *About all the glory he makes a defence*, Iſa. iv. 5. He covers them with the mantle of his providence, the mantle of his righteouſneſs, the mantle of his interceſſion, the mantle of his Spirit; ſure then the bride of Chriſt is in abſolute ſafety: he hath retiring chambers for her, to hide her in till the day of indignation be overpaſt.

4. This doctrine lets us ſee, that believers are no ſuch mean and *deſpicable perſons* as the world generally takes them to be; they are Chriſt's bride, and he is their huſband: and O what an honour is it to be married to the Son of God! Having him for an huſband, they come to be related to all Chriſt's relations; God is their Father, becauſe he is his Father; angels are their ſervants, becauſe they are his ſervants; ſaints are their fellow-brethren, becauſe they are his members; heaven is their inheritance, becauſe it is the kingdom of their huſband. In a word, whatever is his, is theirs; *And all things are yours, for ye are Chriſt's, and Chriſt is God's*, 2 Cor. iii. 22, 23.

(2.) For *lamentation.* Is it ſo, that there is a marriage-relation betwixt Chriſt and believers? This calls for deep lamentation in theſe two particulars.

1. It calls us to lament that Chriſt ſhould have ſo *few brides* among us, though he be wooing and courting us by the goſpel, *crying, Behold me, behold me*, Iſa. lxv. 1. Yet where is the man or woman that is prevailed with to enter a match with this glorious bridegroom? Though he be fairer than the ſons of men, and condeſcends to offer marriage with ſinners, who are as black and ugly as hell itſelf, yet they ſet him at nought, and give him juſt ground for that melancholy complaint, *My people would not hearken to my voice, Iſrael would have none of me*, Pſalm lxxxi. 11. And may he not appeal to the very material creation, to judge of our folly, as he did of old to Iſrael? Jer. ii. 12, 13. *Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; yea, be aſtoniſhed and horribly afraid, for my people have committed two great evils: they have forſaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out ciſterns, broken ciſterns, that can hold no water.*

2. This doctrine may afford us matter of lamentation alſo, That believers, who are eſpouſed to him, ſhould walk ſo *unworthily* of ſuch a huſband. You know a wife ſhould demean herſelf conform to the character of her huſband; and where her carriage is baſe and mean, it reflects a diſhonour on him. O how unſuitable is it to ſee Chriſt's bride blackened with the filth of hell! to ſee thoſe who have ſtricken hands with Chriſt, in a marriage-covenant, joining hands with luſts and idols, and defiling themſelves with them!

(3.) For *examination.* Let us try if we be thus married and related to Chriſt; whether he be our huſband, and we his bride and ſpouſe.

I ſhall offer a few marks whereby we may know whether or not we be married unto this glorious huſband; and they may be drawn from the conſideration of the antecedents, the conſtituents, and the conſequents of this marriage.

1ſt, Try by the *antecedents* to the marriage-contract. Before ever Chriſt did contract with thee, didſt thou obſerve him courting thy ſoul before this contract? Here is a courting. Now, how did Chriſt court you?

1. Did he court you by the *auſterity* of the *law*, as with fire and ſword? Did he court you by ſuch a word as that, Thou art a curſed wretch? For, *curſed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them*, Gal. iii. 10. Did he court you by ſuch a word as that, *Curſed is every one that doth the work of the Lord negligently?* Did he court you thus, by the ſpirit of bondage, with the terrors of God, as clothed with vengeance, telling thee, thou art an heir of hell and wrath, a child of the devil? Did he court thee ſo as thou waſt ſurrounded with fear and trouble?

2. Did he court thee as by the auſterity of the law; ſo by the *ſweetneſs* of the *goſpel*, when he ſaw thee caſt down, when he ſaw thee a poor heavy laden ſinner, like to be cruſhed under thy weights? Did he then court you with ſuch a word as that, *Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you reſt*, Matth. xi. 28. or with ſuch a word as that, *Ho, every one that thirſteth, come to the waters; he that hath no money, come; buy wine and milk without money and without price*, Iſa. lv. 1. *Flee to your ſtrong holds, ye priſoners of hope.* Did he thus court you with the goſpel-offer?

3. Did he court you by his *love-letters?* This is another antecedent of the contract. Got you ever a love-letter ſent from Chriſt out of heaven? But you will ſay, What is the love-letter? even the Bible; *Search the ſcriptures, theſe are they that teſtify of me*, John v. 39. Here there are the declarations of the love of Chriſt to thy ſoul: here there are love-promiſes in theſe letters, that ſhall be yours. There is a love-covenant in theſe letters. Have you read and pondered them? And can you ſay that Chriſt ſpake them in to your heart? If it be a text that was preached upon, or if it be a ſingle word, O

Chriſt dropt that into my heart! and I think it will go with me to my death-bed, it came with ſuch life and power. In a word, Got you any gifts before the marriage-contract, ſuch as the gift of true conviction, ſuch as the gift of heart-contrition, the gift of real humiliation, the gift of ſelf-denial, the gift of faith? Theſe are given, ſome before, ſome at the contract.

2*dly*, Try by the *conſtituents* of the marriage.

1. If this marriage be made up betwixt Chriſt and thee, then thou haſt put away *all lovers* beſides Chriſt; the right hand will be cut off, the right eye put out; you will be divorced from all other huſbands, particularly from the law; ye muſt be dead to the law, that ye may be married to another huſband, even to Chriſt. But you will ſay, What is it to be dead to the law? I anſwer, It is not to lay it aſide as the rule of obedience; for the law ſhall ſtill be the rule and ſtandard of the believer's obedience, life, and converſation: but to be dead to the law, is to be ſenſible that the law cannot ſave us as a covenant of works. It is to diſclaim all hopes of being juſtified by the law, or by our works or obedience to it. I ſee Chriſt, the glorious huſband, hath brought in an everlaſting righteouſneſs, anſwering the law fully: this is the garment I muſt put on, and caſt off my old filthy rags.

2. Haſt thou given a *cordial conſent* upon the contract-day? Can you ſay you was enabled to take him, as the Pſalmiſt, *O my ſoul, thou haſt ſaid unto the Lord, thou art my Lord;* and thou art my God, my Head, my Huſband? Have you given a rational conſent to it? yea, a ſuperrational and ſupernatural conſent? a deliberate, chaſte, ſtayed, ſolemn, peremptory conſent? Did you ſay it with faith, and with an air of heaven, that he was yours, and ſhall be ſo for ever? It is true, perſons may be matched to Chriſt who cannot condeſcend on the preciſe time: the Spirit may work many times ſome way that we cannot know; yet it is his ordinary way with his bride, after many toſſings, to break in with raviſhing, conquering ſweetneſs, to draw forth her ſoul to a ſolemn remarkable cloſing with him, and conſenting to him. Have you then been engaged to make over yourſelf to the bridegroom, by an unreſerved reſignation of yourſelf to him, that you will not only take him wholly, and for ever, for holineſs and happineſs, for light and life, for grace and glory, but alſo make over yourſelf to him, ſoul and body, whatever you are, whatever you have been? Have you been thus made to yield yourſelves unto the Lord? Are you one with him? Have you one Spirit with him? Are you of one faith with him, of one way with him, endeavouring to walk as he walked? *He that is joined to the Lord is one ſpirit*, 1 Cor. iv. 17.

3. Can you ſay, that, upon the marriage-day, you got a *marriage-gift* from the Bridegroom? Among the Jews, the bridegroom was to give a marriage-gift to his bride: Now, what gift got you on this marriage-day? Can you ſay, indeed I got the wedding-garment; he clothed me with his righteouſneſs, which he ſpan out of his own bowels, weaved with his own hands, and dyed with his own blood; and thus all my guilt is covered, the curſe is done away? This is indeed what few get; yet ſome have been, and are able to ſay, I am delivered from the wrath to come; and there is no condemnation to me; and on ſuch a time I got alſo an ornament of the graces with the Spirit, which I wear as jewels, *viz.* faith, love obedience, patience, humility; and I got the promiſe of an hundred-fold here, and I am expecting more gifts yet, before the marriage be conſummate; I am expecting the aſſurance, I live in the hope of glory, I expect a ſealed pardon of all my ſins, and I look to get the earneſt of the Spirit, and more every day.

4. Another conſtituent of this marriage-contract is, the bride, on that day, *puts off* one vail, and *puts on* another. This was the Jews cuſtom, the brides put off the vail of baſhfulneſs, and put on the vail of ſubjection. Chriſt's bride, before the marriage, cannot look the Bridegroom in the face, is aſhamed to look upon him; but ſhe is made to put off this vail in the preſence of her former lovers, and to take Chriſt by the hand, and then ſhe puts on the vail of ſubjection, whereby ſhe promiſes, in his ſtrength, to ſubject herſelf to her huſband's will. Have we thus promiſed to be obedient to his commands, in his own ſtrength, whatever he injoins us to do or ſuffer?

3*dly*, Try by the *conſequents* of this marriage. Would you know if there has been a contract betwixt Chriſt and you? Try then by the immediate conſequents.

1. Did you ſee the King in his beauty, and ſuch a glory and excellency in him as could not be paralleled by all the glory of ten thouſand worlds?

2. What was your converſe with him on the contract-day? Can you ſay, he embraced me in his arms, and I embraced him in my heart, and there was ſweet communion and fellowſhip betwixt him and me?

3. Waſt thou crowned on the marriage-day, ſo as thou waſt known by others, as it were, to be the bride of Chriſt? The Jews, they not only crowned the bridegroom, but the bride alſo. You ſee what the crown is that Chriſt's bride ſhould have, Rev. xii. 1. *There appeared a great wonder in heaven, a woman clothed with the ſun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve ſtars.* The bride of Chriſt is crowned with the doctrine of the twelve apoſtles.

4. The bride of Chriſt keeps at home, and delights in the bride-chamber. This is her delight all the days of her life, *to dwell in the houſe of the Lord, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple.* Ordinances will be ſweet, being the galleries wherein the king is held.

II. Try by the *qualities* and *duties* of the bride, which are alſo the conſequents to this marriage.

1. If you be Chriſt's bride, then you will love the bridegroom. Love is what every wife owes to her huſband; much more doth the believer owe it to Chriſt, who hath expreſſed far more love to this bride than ever a huſband did to a wife; *he loved her, and gave himſelf for her.* He ſhed the hotteſt blood of his heart to ſave and redeem her. You will love him with a love of deſire; *with my ſoul have I deſired thee in the night:* with a love of delight; *my meditation of him ſhall be ſweet:* with a love of benevolence, wiſhing well to his intereſt; *if I forget thee, O Jeruſalem, let my right hand forget her cunning; let my tongue cleave to the roof of my*

my mouth, if I prefer not thee to my chief joy, Pſal. cxxvii. 5, 6. They that habitually love huſband, wife, children, riches, or any thing more than Chriſt, have no reaſon to think that they are matched with him.

2. If we be married to Chriſt, we will *truſt in* and *depend on* our huſband. In whom can a wife truſt, if not in her huſband? The believer reſts on Chriſt for grace and glory; and commits all to him, ventures all on him, and expects all from him. The ſoul that is eſpouſed to Chriſt, looks on the infinite virtue of his blood, the infinite efficacy of his Spirit, the infinite fulneſs of his grace, the infinite dimenſions of his love, the infinite faithfulneſs of his promiſe: in all this he ſees an infinite ground of hope, and thereupon he ventures, and rolls all on him. Here, he ſays, I will ſtay and reſt, here I will build, here I am reſolved to ſtay, here I am reſolved to live and die.

3. If we be married to Chriſt, we will have a *zeal for his glory*. Some ſacrifice Chriſt's intereſt to their own honour; but the believer ſays, Let my Maſter increaſe, and me decreaſe. Though my name ſhould never be heard of in the world, let Chriſt be exalted. O, ſays Chriſt's bride, I would have all the world coming and adoring him! I would have all the world to love him! I would have all the world to praiſe him! Eſpecially when ſhe is under any lively influence, O then, ſays ſhe, if the greateſt enemies knew what were in our Lord, they would come and join with him, as I have done!

4. The bride of Chriſt cannot *live without him*. An honeſt wife will be hard put to it, to live many years without her huſband. O it is ſometimes like a hell to her to miſs Chriſt in ordinances! O the ſore moans and heavy groans of the deſerted ſoul, that has had the experience of the ſweetneſs of Chriſt! *O that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his ſeat!* Job xxiii. 3. *O that it were with me as in months paſt!*

5. If you be Chriſt's bride, you will be *longing* ſometimes for his ſecond coming; leſs or more you will deſire the day of judgment, and long for his appearance. The epilogue of all the ſpouſe's ſweet diſcourſes is, *Make haſte, my beloved, be thou like a roe, or a young hart, on the mountains of Bether, till the day break, and the ſhadows fly away.* And the concluſion of the whole Bible is, *Come, Lord Jeſus, come quickly*, Rev. xxii. 20. Can you ſay you have longed for his coming? I ſee the devil reigns here, corruption reigns here, and never will things be right till he come again in the clouds, and ſet heaven and earth in a flame, when theſe nuptial ſolemnities ſhall begin to be celebrated, and the marriage ſolemnized while eternity laſts.

6. If there has been a marriage betwixt Chriſt and your ſouls, then readily you have ſome of the love-tokens to preſent; I mean, ſome experiences and ſome expreſſions of his covenant-love: you can tell, that, ſome time or other, he brought you to the banqueting-houſe, and diſplayed a banner of love over you. Sometime he hath enlarged your ſoul with ardent and longing deſires after him, and ſatisfied you with the fatneſs of his houſe. The ſoul that is really eſpouſed to Chriſt, will readily have ſome experiences of his love to tell of.

7. The ſpouſe of Chriſt is a *chaſte* ſpouſe. Idols never get her heart as before; though now and then ſhe may give a ſquint look, yet idols never have that force and room in her affections once they had; ſhe is afraid of doing any thing that may be diſpleaſing and diſhonouring to him: hence we will find the ſpouſe of Chriſt breathing out earneſt deſires and requeſts to God, to be kept and led in the way of righteouſneſs; *O that my ways were directed to keep thy ſtatutes*, Pſalm cxix. 5. Hence ſhe groans up her caſe, *O wretched one that I am! who ſhall deliver me from this body of ſin and death!* Rom. vii. 24.

8. If we be Chriſt's bride, we will be a fruitful bride. Let us try; have we never a child of good works, or of grace? *Thy belly*, ſays Chriſt to the ſpouſe, *is as an heap of wheat*, Song vii. 2. You know wheat is very fruitful; the barren ſoul that never loved, never mortified, never repented, never gave alms, never appeared for God; that barren ſoul is not the ſpouſe of Chriſt; for the ſpouſe of Chriſt is faithful. — Thus much by way of trial.

4*thly*, For *exhortation*. Is there a ſpiritual marriage betwixt Chriſt and believers? O then! ſhall we not be perſuaded to come and cloſe with Chriſt for our huſband, and take our Maker for our huſband, our God for our huſband? If we be ambitious, here is the top of ambition, Jeſus Chriſt; if we be covetous, here is the true riches; whatever we are, whatever we have been, if we come to him, he will in no ways caſt us out: it is true, we cannot come of ourſelves, but let us cry, Lord, if I die, I ſhall be buried under the mercy-ſeat, praying, weeping, looking, as I can, and go to hell with Chriſt in my heart as much as I can. Come to him, and he will overcome your impotency; lay your caſe before him, ſaying, Lord, I am a wretched one in the higheſt degree; Lord, here is a great offer made, I have no heart to it; O come and give a diſcovery of a loſt ſtate, and of thy excellent glory. O draw out my heart, and let me die upon the ſpot, rather than reject Chriſt for ever!

Many motives might be adduced; conſider only,

1. The *lovelineſs* and *beauty* of Chriſt. His beauty is univerſal; he is lovely in his perſon, lovely in his natures, lovely in his offices, lovely in his eſtates of humiliation and exaltation, lovely in all his relations; his beauty is transforming, it will make the bride comely alſo; it is communicative, the bride *is made comely through his comelineſs*. When we ſpeak of the comelineſs of Chriſt, we ſhould let angels and ſaints above, that have the more immediate intuition of the radiant ſplendor of this bleſſed object, go forth to declare his glory. Every thing in him is lovely, and nothing is lovely without him, nothing is lovely but what proceeds from him, and goes to him; he is ſo lovely, that he cannot poſſibly be otherwiſe: he is the primary, original, and neceſſary lovelineſs.

2. Conſider, as he is lovely, ſo he is *loving*; his love is infinite, eternal, free, diſtinguiſhing, effectual; never man loved like him. O how many foldings are in this love, as can never be unfolded?

3. Conſider, if we cloſe with Chriſt, we will

will give him a *glad heart*; his heart is glad in that day, when he takes a poor ſinner by the hand; the day of his eſpouſals is the day of the gladneſs of his heart. How many times have we grieved him by our hypocriſy, and formality, and backwardneſs? And would we now give him a glad heart, for all the grieved hearts we have given him? then let us embrace him as offered in the goſpel, and then he will be glad. Why? then he will ſee the fruit of election, the fruit of redemption, the fruit of his death, the fruit of his reſurrection, the fruit of his aſcenſion, the fruit of his interceſſion: then he gets back the temple of the Holy Ghoſt; the loſt ſheep is found again: then he gets back the member of his own body.

I might give ſomething by way of *direction*. You may ſay, What ſhall I do then, that I may be married unto Chriſt?

In one word, if you would have Chriſt for your huſband, O then entertain his ſuit, and hearken to his wooing and courting motions! Is he darting light into your hearts, and letting you ſee the evil of ſome ſin that formerly ye delighted in? O do not reſiſt his ſuit, by continuing in ſin after this!—Is he ſtrengthening that light ſo as to ſet conſcience on fire with the ſenſe of ſin, and apprehenſion of wrath? O quench not this fire till you get water out of the wells of ſalvation! otherwiſe ye reject his ſuit.—Is he carrying his ſuit farther, and ſtirring up your affections to deſire after Chriſt! O quench not this motion! but cry to him to faſten the nail ſure, and carry on the work, till the marriage be compleated.

Now, I might give a word of exhortation alſo to them that are married and eſpouſed to Chriſt.

All I ſhall ſay is this; O let Chriſt's bride live on him, and take all from him! as a poor woman married to a rich man, ſhe lives upon his riches. Many are ready to ſay, That if Chriſt would call us his bride, we would live on ourſelves; we would pray, repent, believe, *etc.*; but the bride of Chriſt muſt get all theſe things in him, and take all from him, and live wholly on him, and freely on him. When Joſeph's brethren did not know him, they were buying and ſelling with him, they would have nothing from him without money; but when they knew that he was a brother, for all the offences that they had done him, they were content to come down every man of them, and take all from him for nothing: this is the way ye muſt do with Chriſt, when matched to him; we muſt not, with the legaliſt, have repentance and duties of our own, we muſt take all from him, who is the repoſitory of all divine fulneſs, whereof the believer's part is, out of that fulneſs, to receive *grace for grace*.

SERMON II.*

The RENT VAIL of the Temple; or, Acceſs to the Holy of Holies by the DEATH of CHRIST.

MATTH. xxvii. 51.

And behold, the vail of the temple was rent in twain, from the top to the bottom.

SOME here may think, what will the miniſter make of that text, and what relation hath it to the work of this day? Indeed, I cannot promiſe to make any thing of it, unleſs the Lord himſelf make ſomething of it to you. But, with his help, we may find a feaſt in it to our ſouls; and a ſuitable feaſt on the back of a feaſt, ſuch as many of you have been celebrating. Chriſt hath been evidently ſet forth crucified among you, this day, and as you have been called to feaſt upon his paſſion, ſo now you are called to feaſt upon the fruits and effects of it. Have you ſeen him dying on a croſs for you! O come and ſee what immediately followed upon his death, *Behold, the vail of the temple was rent from the top to the bottom.*——That I may divide the words, and then explain them, you may notice here,

1. The *connexion* of this verſe, with what went before, in the particle AND, intimating the time of this miracle, that it attended the death of Chriſt, ver. 50. *When he had cried, with a loud voice, he gave up the ghoſt.* This *loud cry* ſignified, that his death ſhould be public, and proclaimed to all the world, as it hath been to you this day; and his *yielding up the ghoſt*, ſhewed, that he voluntarily reſigned his ſoul to be an offering for ſin, according to his undertaking as our Surety, Iſa. liii. 10. Death being the penalty for the breach of the firſt covenant, *Thou ſhalt ſurely die*; the Mediator of the new covenant muſt make atonement by means of death, otherwiſe no remiſſion. Now, he gave up the ghoſt, and immediately the vail of the temple was rent.

2. You have a note of admiration, *Behold!* intimating what a wonderful thing did immediately enſue. Several miracles, beſides the rending of the vail are here mentioned, but this ſeems to be the moſt remarkable. We are told, *that the earth did quake, the rocks rent, graves were opened, and many dead bodies of the ſaints aroſe;* but that which is put in the firſt rank of theſe

* This ſermon was preached on the ſabbath-evening, immediately after the adminiſtration of the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper at Carnock, July 12th 1719.; and hath already undergone four editions

miracles,

miracles, is, *that the vail of the temple was rent in twain*: and we find the evangeliſt Mark mentions this in particular, and none of the reſt of the miracles here named, as if this rending of the vail were the miracle moſt to be noticed, as containing ſomewhat myſterious and ſignificant therein, Mark xv. 37, 38. where we have the very ſame words, *Jeſus cried, with a loud voice, and gave up the ghoſt; and the vail of the temple was rent in twain, from the top to the bottom.* And here it is uſhured in with a *behold*; turn aſide and ſee this great ſight; be aſtoniſhed at it. But what are we to wonder at? Then,

3. See this object of admiration; the vail of the temple was rent in twain, juſt as our Lord Jeſus expired; that vail of the temple which parted betwixt the *holy place* and the *moſt holy*, was rent by an inviſible power. In this, and the reſt of the miracles, Chriſt gave teſtimony to his Godhead; putting forth the power of his divine nature at the ſame time wherein his human nature, his ſoul and body, were rent in twain, like the vail of the temple. It is remarkable how the evangeliſt deſcribes the manner in which the vail of the temple was rent; ſhewing what a full and intire rent it was. Luke ſays, *it was rent in the midſt*; and here Matthew and Mark ſay, *it was rent in twain*: rent from the top to the bottom; an intire rent. But what was the meaning of all this? What did the rending of the vail ſignify?

(1.) It was in *conformity* to the temple of Chriſt's body which was now diſſolved: Chriſt was the true temple, *in whom dwells all the fulneſs of the Godhead bodily*. When he cried, and gave up the ghoſt, and ſo diſſolved and rent the vail of his fleſh, the literal temple did, as it were, echo to the cry, and anſwer the ſtrokes by rending its vail.

(2.) The rending of the vail of the temple, ſignified the *revealing of the myſteries of the Old Teſtament*. The vail of the temple was for concealment; it was extremely dangerous for any to ſee the furniture of the moſt holy place within the vail, except the high prieſt; and he but once a year with great ceremony, and through a cloud of ſmoke: all which pointed out the darkneſs of that diſpenſation, 2 Cor. iii. 13. But now, at the death of Chriſt, all was laid open; the myſteries are unvailed, ſo that he that runs may read the meaning of them.

(3.) The rending of the vail of the temple ſignified the *uniting of Jews and Gentiles*, by removing the partition-wall betwixt them, which was the *ceremonial law*; Chriſt, by his death repealed it, and *cancelled that hand-writing of ordinances*, nailed it on the croſs, and ſo *broke down the middle wall of partition*; and, by aboliſhing theſe inſtitutions and ceremonies, by which the Jews were diſtinguiſhed from all other people, *he aboliſhed in his fleſh the enmity, even the law of commandments, contained in ordinances, for to make in himſelf of twain one new man*, Eph. ii. 14, 15. Juſt as two rooms are made one, by taking down the partition-wall.

(4.) The rending of the vail did eſpecially ſignify the *conſecrating* and *opening of a new and living way to God*. The vail kept off people from drawing near to the moſt holy place; but the rending of it ſignified, that Chriſt, by his death, opened a way to God for himſelf, as our bleſſed High-prieſt; and for us in him. 1. For *himſelf*; this was the great day of atonement, wherein the great High-prieſt, not by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood entered once for all into the holy place; in token of which, the vail was rent, Heb. ix. 7,——13. Though Chriſt did not perſonally aſcend to heaven, *the holy place not made with hands*, that is, to heaven, till above forty days after; yet he immediately acquired a right to enter, and had a virtual admiſſion; his entrance into the heavenly temple, into the holy of holies, began in his death; having offered his ſacrifice in the outer-court, the blood of it was to be ſprinkled on the mercy-ſeat within the vail, according to the manner of the prieſts under the law: but now the legal ſhadows were all to evaniſh; the great, the true High-prieſt having by his own blood entered, and ſo procured, 2. For *us* an open entrance into the true holy of holies, as the apoſtle applies it, Heb. x. 19, 20. *We have boldneſs to enter into the holieſt, by the blood of Jeſus, by a new and living way, which he hath conſecrated for us through the vail.* We have now free acceſs to come with boldneſs to a throne of grace, to a God in Chriſt, Heb. iv. 16. The vail of the temple did ſo interpoſe betwixt the people and the moſt holy place, that they could neither go in, nor look into it, but only the prieſt, in the manner that I ſaid before; but the rending of the vail ſignified, that the true holy of holies, heaven itſelf, is now open to us, by the entrance of our great High-prieſt, that we alſo may enter in by faith, as a royal prieſthood, following our Forerunner, who for us hath entered within the vail, Heb. vi. 19. Nothing can obſtruct or diſcourage our acceſs to God in his grace and glory, for the vail is rent.

Now I am to touch a little at the ſpecial myſtery here repreſented, *Behold, the vail of the temple was rent in twain, from the top to the bottom.*

OBSER. *That Chriſt, by his death hath rent the vail that interpoſed betwixt God and us, and obſtructed our acceſs to him.*

He gave up the ghoſt, and behold, the vail was rent, 1 Pet. iii. 18. *Chriſt hath once ſuffered for ſins, the juſt for the unjuſt.* Why? *That he might bring us to God*; and, in order thereunto, that he might rend the vail of guilt and wrath that interpoſed betwixt us and him, that he might take away the cherubims and flaming ſword, and open a way to the tree of life.

The method wherein I ſhall ſpeak of this ſubject, ſhall be, to ſhew,

I. What is that *vail* that interpoſed betwixt God and us.
II. How the death of Chriſt hath *rent* that vail.
III. In what *manner* is the vail rent.
IV. For what *end* is the vail rent.
V. Draw ſome *inferences* from the whole for application.

There may be ſome here that came to this occaſion, to enquire into God's temple, to ſee his beauty and glory there, and to get near to God; but ah! they are complaining, they have loſt their end; why? they apprehended a vail betwixt them and the glory of God, and thought it impoſſible to get through the vail; but, perhaps, you knew not that the vail of the temple was rent; and therefore you have not

not ſeen the beauty of the Lord in his temple. If you had known that the vail was rent from the top to the bottom, you would have gone in more boldly to the moſt holy place; and if yet you will believe that the vail is rent, I can promiſe that you ſhall not miſs a ſight of his glory through the rent vail; *Did I not ſay to thee, if thou wouldſt believe, thou ſhalt ſee the glory of God?* But I proceed in the method propoſed.

I. What is that *vail* that interpoſed betwixt God and us? Not to ſpeak of the vail of Old Teſtament ſhadows and ceremonies, now rent and removed by the death of Chriſt, there are ſome vails that, in a ſpecial manner, obſtructed our acceſs to God; and they may be reduced to theſe three, the vail of a broken covenant, the vail of God's injured attributes, and the vail of man's ſin.

1. The vail of a *broken covenant*, or *law of works*. The covenant of works, you know, was, *do* and *live*, otherwiſe you ſhall die; *In the day thou eateſt, thou ſhalt ſurely die.* In which covenant, you ſee, there was a precept, a promiſe, and a penalty. The precept was *do*, or perfect obedience; the promiſe was *life*, or eternal happineſs upon obedience; and the penalty was *death* and eternal damnation, in caſe of diſobedience. Now, man by his ſin hath broken the precept of that covenant, and ſo forfeited the promiſe of life, and incurred the penalty of death. If ever we have acceſs to God, this broken precept muſt be repaired, this forfeited life muſt be redeemed, this penalty muſt be execute. Here is a vail that ſeparates betwixt God and us; a vail that neither men nor angels can rend, and yet a vail that muſt be rent, otherwiſe we die and periſh for ever; and this vail is the harder to be rent, becauſe of the following, namely,

2. The vail of God's *injured perfections*; particularly, his incenſed juſtice, and injured holineſs. Juſtice, infinite juſtice, was a black vail that obſtructed our acceſs to heaven; for God became an angry God, a God filled with fierce wrath againſt the ſinner. God hath ſet this penalty upon the law, commanding perfect obedience upon pain of death: God's juſtice was engaged to make this penalty effectual upon man's falling into ſin. Nothing can ſatisfy juſtice but infinite puniſhment; *The wages of ſin is death:* and *God will, by no means clear the guilty*: And ſo, if this vail be not rent by a complete ſatisfaction, the guilty ſinner muſt go down to the pit. The holineſs of God alſo was injured by the breach of the law; *Sin is a tranſgreſſion of the law*; a tranſgreſſion of the precept. Now, as God's juſtice ſtands up in defence of the threatening and penalty, ſo his holineſs ſtands up for the defence of the precept and command of the holy law. God cannot juſtify the ſinner, nor accept of him as righteous, unleſs he hath a complete righteouſneſs; not a lame, partial, and imperfect righteouſneſs; but a righteouſneſs every way commenſurate to the extenſive precept of the law, will ſatisfy an infinitely holy God. As infinite juſtice cannot be ſatisfied, without a complete ſatisfaction, anſwering to the threatning and penalty of the law; ſo the infinite holineſs of God cannot be ſatisfied without a perfect obedience, anſwerable to the precept and command of the law. Now, our natural want of ability to yield ſatisfaction, and our natural want of perfect conformity to the law, make juſtice and holineſs, and other perfections of God, ſtand in the way of our ſalvation, and of our acceſs to heaven, like a vail that can never be rent by us; eſpecially conſidering, that there is,

3. A third vail, and that is the vail of *ſin* on our part. This is a ſeparating vail betwixt God and us, Iſa. lix. 2. *Your iniquities have ſeparated betwixt you and your God.* Now, before we can get near unto God, this vail muſt be rent, the guilt of ſin muſt be expiated; for without ſhedding of blood there is no remiſſion: the filth of ſin muſt be purged; for, who ſhall aſcend to the hill of the Lord, and ſtand in his holy place, but he that hath clean hands and a pure heart? The power of ſin muſt be broken: there is, by nature, in us all a power of ignorance; our minds are become a dungeon of darkneſs, and this is ſuch a vail betwixt God and us, that unleſs it be removed, there is no hopes of mercy: therefore ſays the prophet, *It is a people of no underſtanding; therefore he that made them, will not have mercy on them.* There is in us a power of enmity, *The carnal mind is enmity againſt God*, etc. We are enemies to God by wicked works: this is another vail that muſt be rent by the arm of almighty power; for it is a vail and curtain that the devil hath ſtrongly wrought, like a web, with the warp and waft of pride, carnality, ſecurity, worldlineſs, and all other wickedneſs whatſoever, which are but ſo many threads and pieces of this web, this vail of enmity. There is a power of unbelief, that is another vail, that on our part ſtands betwixt us and the holy place, and ſeparates us from divine favour; *He that believeth not, is condemned already.*

II. The *ſecond* thing, How the death of Chriſt hath *rent* the vail: when he gave up the ghoſt, behold the vail was rent.

1. By the death of Chriſt the vail of a *broken covenant* was rent in twain, ſo as we might get to God through that vail of the law; for the law was fulfilled in every part of it, by his obedience to the death. Was the precept of the law a perfect obedience? Well, Chriſt by his obedience to the death, did magnify the law, and make it honourable, brought in an everlaſting righteouſneſs: his death was the finiſhing ſtroke, the higheſt act of that obedience whereby the law was fulfilled. Was the promiſe of life in the law, or firſt covenant forfeited by us? Well, Chriſt rent this vail, by redeeming the forfeiture with the price of his blood: he bought back the inheritance for us that we had loſt, making a purchaſe of us, and of eternal ſalvation for us. Was the penalty of death in the law ſtanding alſo in the way? Well, Chriſt comes in the ſinner's room, endures this penalty, by coming under the curſe of the law, becoming obedient to the death, enduring the wrath of God, and delivering us from the wrath to come: and ſo behold, the vail of a broken covenant was rent.

2. By the death of Chriſt, the vail of God's *injured attributes*, that ſtood betwixt God and us, was rent and removed. Chriſt hath ſatisfied the juſtice of God, by offering himſelf a ſacrifice, Eph. v. 2. This offering being through the eternal Spirit, it was of infinite worth and value: here the altar ſanctified the

gift;

gift; the altar was the God-head of Chriſt, the offering was made upon the altar of the divine nature; and therefore this blood of Chriſt is called the blood of God. This ſacrifice was of infinite worth and value, for doing the buſineſs of poor man, in atoning juſtice, and ſo rending this vail. But now, as Chriſt hath ſatisfied the juſtice of God, by enduring the penalty and threatening of the law; ſo he hath vindicated the holineſs of God, by fulfilling the precept and command of the law, which he not only did through the whole courſe of his life, but perfectly finiſhed in his death. Now, if Chriſt hath fulfilled the law, ſatisfied the juſtice, and vindicated the holineſs of God, by his obedience to the death, then we may ſee and ſay, *Behold the vail was rent.* But,

3. There is the vail of *ſin* on our part; how is this rent by the death of Chriſt? Why, the Lamb was ſacrificed to rend and remove this vail, *Behold the Lamb of God, that takes away the ſin of the world.* By his death, the guilt of ſin is expiated; *for God ſet him forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteouſneſs for the remiſſion of ſins,* etc. By his death the filth of ſin is purged; *for the blood of Chriſt cleanſeth from all ſin,* and that both meritoriouſly, and efficaciouſly; for, by his death, the power of ſin alſo is broken fundamentally, ſeeing by his death he purchaſed the Spirit; which, in due time, he pours out, and thereby actually removes the vail on our part, which he had done fundamentally and virtually on the croſs. By this purchaſed Spirit he rends the vails of darkneſs and ignorance: *The God who commanded light to ſhine out of darkneſs, ſhines into the heart,* etc. All the light of nature, reaſon, education, and human literature cannot rend this vail, till the man receive the Spirit of wiſdom and revelation in the knowledge of Chriſt. By this purchaſed Spirit he rends the vail of enmity, ſhedding abroad his love upon the heart; and indeed the view and apprehenſion of God's mighty love in Chriſt, can rend that mighty vail of enmity; for we love him whenever we ſee that he firſt loved us, 1 John iv. 19. When the ſoul ſees the God, whoſe majeſty he dreaded, is now a God in Chriſt, reconciled to the ſoul through the ſacrifice that Chriſt offered up, then the ſoul is reconciled to God, and ſo the vail of enmity rent in twain. By this purchaſed Spirit he rends alſo the vail of unbelief; for, as he is a Spirit of light to remove the vail of darkneſs, and a Spirit of love to remove the vail of enmity; ſo he comes into the heart as a Spirit of faith, and removes the vail of unbelief; he begins the rent of humiliation, when he rends the heart in twain with a ſenſe of ſin, and a ſight of its undone ſtate; when he makes the ſoul take with ſin, and juſtify the Lord, though he ſhould damn him for his ſin. He makes the rent of the vail wider by a gracious manifeſtation, like that, John ii. 11. *He manifeſted forth his glory, and his diſciples believed on him.* Thus he rends the vail of unbelief; and completes the rent of this vail when faith is turned into viſion.—Thus you ſee how by his death the vail was rent.

III. The *third* thing, *In what* manner *was the vail rent?* All I ſay on this head, ſhall be in alluſion ſhortly to the rending of the vail of the temple here; which we ſee, was in a wonderful manner uſhered in with a *behold.*

1. *Behold, it was* rent; not only drawn aſide, but rent. The curtain was not only drawn aſide, but torn to pieces, as if God had been angry at the vail of partition betwixt him and us; angry at the vail of ſeparation, and enraged that there ſhould have been any vail to intercept betwixt him and us. God's heart was ſet upon a reconciliation betwixt him and us, and therefore his hand tears the curtain that was hanging up betwixt him and us; gave it ſuch a rent, as it might never be whole again: all the devils in hell cannot ſew up the rent, ſo as to diſappoint God's deſign of bringing his people into union and communion with him.

2. Behold, the vail of the temple was not only rent, but rent in *twain*: the vail that was one, was made two, that God and man, who were two, might be made one. It was not half rent, but wholly rent; rent in twain, a full and complete rent; ſhewing, that Chriſt, by his death, would not be a half Saviour, but a complete Saviour, and the Author of a full and complete ſalvation; taking entirely out of the way whatever ſeparated betwixt God and us, not leaving ſo much as a ſtitch of the curtain to hold the two ſides of the vail together; no, the vail was rent in twain. And not only ſo, but,

3. *Behold, the vail was rent* FROM THE TOP *to* THE BOTTOM: *the vail was rent from the* TOP, the higheſt thing that ſeparated betwixt God and us was rent in twain; we could never have reached up to the top of the vail; yea, the hands and arms of all the men on earth, and angels in heaven, were too ſhort to reach to the top of the infinite juſtice and holineſs of God, that interpoſed betwixt him and us: the top of this vail, this wall of partition was higher than heaven: what could we or any other creature do for rending it from the top? But Chriſt put up his hand, as it were, to the top of the vail, and rent it from the top. The rent begins at the top, but it does not ſtop here: For,

4. The vail is alſo *rent to the* BOTTOM: the bottom of this vail, that did ſeparate betwixt God and us, did reach as deep as the bottom of hell: who could deſcend to hell for us to rend the vail to the bottom? According to the lamentation of one Joannes Seneca upon his death-bed, "We have here, *ſays he,* ſome that will "go to the quire for us, ſome that will play "for us, ſome that will ſay Maſs for us, ſome "that will pray for us; but where is there "one that will go to hell for us?" But, O happy believer, Chriſt is one that hath gone to hell for you, that he might quench all the flames of hell with his blood, and conquer all the powers of hell that were in the way betwixt you and heaven. He deſcended to hell, in a manner, that he might rend the bottom of the vail. But there is yet more here, he not only rends the vail at the top and at the bottom, but,

5. From the top to the bottom all is rent; both the top and the bottom, and all that is betwixt the top and the bottom, all the impediments betwixt heaven and hell are removed. Though heaven be purchaſed, and hell vanquiſhed, yet there might be ſomething in the earth, ſomething in the world, betwixt hea-

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ven and hell that might obſtruct the paſſage to the holieſt; well, but the rent is from the top to the bottom: all that comes betwixt the top and the bottom is rent as well as both ends; ſo that there is acceſs from the loweſt part of miſery to the higheſt happineſs, a long rent, in a manner, from the top of heaven to the bottom of hell. We fell as low as hell by ſin, but Chriſt by his death hath made an open way from hell to heaven; for, *behold, the vail was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.*

IV. The *fourth* thing, *For what* END *was the vail rent?* I ſhall tell you only theſe two ends of it. 1. That Chriſt might enter into the holieſt as our High-prieſt for us. 2. That we might enter in alſo after him and through him.

1. I ſay, the vail of the temple was rent, that Chriſt our glorious High-prieſt might *enter* into the *holy of holies* in our name. I told you, that the vail of the temple was that which parted betwixt the *holy place* and the *moſt holy*, and which kept off people from drawing near to the *moſt holy place*. The vail was for concealment; and none might enter within the vail but the high-prieſt, and he was not to enter in without blood, the blood of the ſacrifice along with him, as you ſee, Heb. ix. 3, 7. Now, the moſt holy place was a type of heaven; ſo our Lord Jeſus Chriſt having ſhed his own blood, entered within the vail into heaven, the true *holy of holies*, carrying in with him the blood of his own ſacrifice, Heb. ix. 12. *Not by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place.* Not that Chriſt did carry into heaven his own ſubſtantial blood in his hand; we are not to underſtand it ſo carnally, but that, in a ſpiritual ſenſe, and virtually, he did ſo. Under the law, the day of atonement was upon that day when the high-prieſt went into the *holy of holies*, Lev. xvi. 30.; on that day the people were pardoned all their ſins, and cleanſed from all their tranſgreſſions: when the high-prieſt had been *within the vail in the holy of holies*, then was the atonement actually made: though the blood was ſhed without the camp, yet the atonement was not made till it was brought into the holy place, Lev. xvi. 14, 15. What did this typify, but that our atonement was perfectly made upon Chriſt's going into the *holy of holies*, namely heaven? See Heb. ix. 24. *For Chriſt is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itſelf, now to appear in the preſence of God for us.* Perhaps you have thought hitherto that the work of our redemption was perfectly completed on the croſs, ſo as there was no more to be done; but know, it was not enough for the ſacrifice to be killed without the camp, but the blood muſt be carried into the *holy of holies*; all was not done till that was done. Indeed when Chriſt died, the ſacrifice was ſlain, the blood was ſhed; there was no more ſacrifice to ſucceed, all was finiſhed in that reſpect; but yet all was not done until the true vail being rent as well as the typical: the blood of Chriſt was carried into the holy place within the vail, that is, into heaven. Though Chriſt did not perſonally aſcend to heaven, as I ſaid in the explication, till above forty days after, yet he immediately acquired a right to enter, and had a virtual admiſſion; ſo that his entrance began in his death; and when he aſcended into heaven he completed and perfected that in his own perſon, in the true *holy of holies*, heaven itſelf, which the high-prieſt did typically in the figurative *holy of holies*, which was of old under the law in the earth; and there hath Chriſt, in the power and virtue of his blood, made atonement: and as the high-prieſt did under the law, he carried in with him all the names of all the tribes of Iſrael on his breaſt; and by the power of this blood of the ſacrifice made a full atonement. But then,

2. Another end of rending the vail was, not only that he might make a way for *himſelf*, as our Prieſt, into the moſt holy place, but that he might make a way for *us in him;* that we might enter in alſo, and have acceſs to God through him; acceſs to heaven through him. See therefore how the believer is ſaid to follow in after Chriſt into the holieſt within the vail, Heb. vi. 19, 20. They are ſaid to flee for refuge to the hope ſet before them, *which hope we have as an anchor of the ſoul, both ſure and ſtedfaſt, entering into that within the vail, whither the Forerunner is for us entered, even Jeſus, made an High-prieſt for ever after the order of Melchiſedec.* Heb. x. 19, 20. *We have boldneſs to enter into the holieſt by the blood of Jeſus, by a new and living way, which he hath conſecrated for us through the vail, that is to ſay, his fleſh.* Where our way to heaven, or to the holieſt, is ſaid to be through the blood of Chriſt; or, which is all one, thro' his fleſh offered as a propitiatory ſacrifice; by which, as by the rent vail, we have boldneſs to enter. Now, this entrance into the holieſt, or acceſs to God that we have in Chriſt, is twofold, either inchoative here, or conſummate hereafter.

(1.) There is an initial, *inchoative*, or begun entrance that we have into the holieſt in time. In the moſt holy place was the golden altar, and ſymbols of God's preſence and glorious majeſty, and acceſs thereto was typical of our acceſs to God and heaven; which acceſs we have now with boldneſs even in time, through the rent vail by which our High-prieſt hath entered into the holy place. Heb. iv. 16. *Seeing then that we have a great High-prieſt that is paſt into the heavens, Jeſus the Son of God, let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace.* And ſo it is inferred from this ſame doctrine, Heb. x. 22. *Let us draw near with a true heart, in full aſſurance of faith. Queſt.* What is that nearneſs to God, and acceſs to him, that a man hath in time, when he is brought within the vail? *Anſw.* In a word, it lies not only in the firſt application of grace, and change of the man's ſtate, when in Chriſt Jeſus he that was afar off is made nigh by the blood of Chriſt: for, whenever the virtue of that blood comes upon us by the Spirit of Chriſt, God comes near to us, and we are brought near to God; but there is ſtill more and more nearneſs enjoyed by his people. Exerciſed Chriſtians are able to give a diſtinct account of their having this nearneſs at ſome times, and of their want of it at other times. He may be ſuſpected indeed for an hypocrite that hath no changes, Pſal. lv. 19.; for the true Chriſtian's ſky is never long clear and without clouds: change of weather, and change of way, is uſually found by travellers to heaven. Every believer indeed hath

ſtill

ſtill the Spirit of Chriſt dwelling in him; *for if any man have not the Spirit of Chriſt he is none of his;* but there are ſome ſingular outpourings of the Spirit promiſed and beſtowed, and well known by all believers, and they are precious enjoyments. *This Spirit the world cannot receive, becauſe it ſees him not, neither knows him,* ſays Chriſt; *but you know him, for he dwells with you, and ſhall be in you,* John xiv. 17. This acceſs to God within the vail, is ſometimes experienced in prayer; yea, moſt frequently in that exerciſe is the light of God's countenance lifted up, and the ſoul made to ſay, *I love the Lord, becauſe he hath heard the voice of my ſupplication.* Do not ye, believers, know this, that ſometimes you have been ſo troubled that you could not ſpeak? Pſal. lxxvii. 4.; that your hearts have been ſo bound and ſtraitened, that you could do nothing, and ſay nothing before the Lord, but ſit as dumb and oppreſſed, all dark above, all dead within, and all doors ſhut upon you? You durſt not neglect prayer, and yet you could not perform it; but behold, you have quickly found the two-leaved gates caſt open to you; your hearts enlarged, and mouths wide opened in aſking; the windows of heaven open, and the banks of the river of life broken down, and the ſtreams guſhing in upon you, like that in Iſa. xliv. 3. *I will pour water upon him that is thirſty, and floods upon the dry ground.* Alſo, this acceſs to God within the vail, is ſometimes experienced in ſweet communion and fellowſhip with God; *Truly our fellowſhip is with the Father, and with his Son Jeſus Chriſt.* This communion with God is a myſtery, ſweet indeed to them that have it, and ſurpaſſing all the delights of ſenſe and reaſon; but to them that have it not, it is incredible and unintelligible: a ſtranger intermeddles not with this joy. Ye that know not what it is, although the word be full of ſuitable and ſavoury expreſſions of it, yet it is a riddle and dark parable to you; it is only taſting of it that can declare its tranſcendent ſweetneſs. *O taſte and ſee that God is good!* You that know what it is, though you cannot expreſs it, yet you can reliſh and underſtand ſome ſound words about it. It may be, you feel it ſometimes in the ſecret retirements of the houſe, ſometimes in the fields, or under a buſh, as Nathanael under the fig-tree; but what you felt, you cannot make the world underſtand; only when the Lord directs the miniſter to ſpeak ſomewhat ſuitably to it, then you are ready to think, O it is juſt like the thing I felt at ſuch a time and ſuch a place; that which the miniſter is ſaying from God's word, hath a ſweet ſound of that which I got yonder, when none in all the world heard me or ſaw me: *But* (Nathanael) *when thou waſt under the fig-tree I ſaw thee,* ſays Chriſt: I heard you groning to me; I ſaw you wreſtling with me; I put your tears in my bottle, and poured in my comforts into your ſoul. O, know you what it is to be brought near to him, and to have the clouds and vails that are on your hearts, or on your faces, ſcattered, and the light of his countenance lifted up upon you? Have you not been ſometimes on the mount, ſo as to think, *O how good is it to be here?* Have you not known what the warm and healing beams of the Sun of righteouſneſs upon you are? Have you not taſted *that* in his company that hath made all the wells of worldly comfort, like puddle water, loathſome and unſavoury to you; yea, that hath made you grone in this tabernacle, and long to be at that complete and uninterrupted communion above, whereof all you taſted on earth is but a ſmall earneſt? However, the vail was rent, that you might enter within the vail into the holieſt, to a begun heaven even in time. Grace being the ſame ſpecifically with glory; there is but a gradual difference; and therefore the believer, even on earth, is ſaid to be *come to mount Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jeruſalem, to the innumerable company of angels, to the general aſſembly and church of the firſt-born that are written in heaven, to God the judge of all, and to the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect,* Heb. xii. 22, 23. Why, when does the believer come to all this? Even when he comes by faith to *Jeſus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of ſprinkling,* then he is come to heaven itſelf, the true holy of holies inchoatively, or by a begun entrance. But,

(2.) There is a *conſummative* entrance into the *holieſt,* that the believer ſhall have, as a fruit of the rending of the vail, and that is when he comes to the heaven above, to the higher houſe, *whither the Forerunner is for us entered,* having rent the vail, which was rent, that we might have acceſs to God in glory as well as in grace, and then the believer will not be half in, as it were, but completely within the vail; for then will his communion with God be completed, then his knowledge of God, his love to God, his delight in God, his viſion of God's glory, his conformity to God's image, will all be complete; *for that which is in part ſhall be done away, and that which is perfect ſhall come,* 1 Cor. xiii. 10. O what a ſweet exchange will that be, when faith will ſay to viſion, I give place to you; when hope will ſay to fruition, I give place to you; when grace will ſay to glory, I give place to you; when partial communion will ſay to perfection, I give place to you; when ſhort paſſing blinks will ſay to uninterrupted everlaſting joys, I give place to you! Little wonder then, believers long to be wholly within the vail; (but I inſiſt not on it) for then indeed he fully enters into the holieſt by the blood of Jeſus.

Thus you ſee the two great ends for which the vail was rent, *namely,* that way might be made for Chriſt's entering into the holy of holies, and ſo for our entering in through him, and after him. But I come now to

V. The *fifth* thing, *viz.* the *application.* Is it ſo, that Chriſt hath by his death rent the vail that interpoſed betwixt God and us, and obſtructed our acceſs to him? Then, *firſt* for *information:* hence we may ſee,

1. What a *full feaſt of love* we have to feed upon on a communion-day, *namely,* the love of Chriſt, not only in dying, but in rending the vail, that he might enter into the holieſt for us. The apoſtle ſays, that *Chriſt loved us;* and how does he prove it? Eph. v. 2. *He gave himſelf an offering and a ſacrifice to God for a ſweet-ſmelling ſavour:* this ſavoury and ſweet-ſmelling ſacrifice, was the *offering of incenſe;* and where was the incenſe offered under the law? why, it was offered within the vail. God tells Moſes, that Aaron ſhould take his handful of ſweet incenſe beaten ſmall, and bring it within the vail,

vail, Lev. xvi. 12. Now, Chriſt having given himſelf an offering and ſacrifice to God without the camp in this world, he rends the vail, and goes to heaven, and offers himſelf as incenſe within the vail. Perhaps you have ſeen and thought upon the love of Chriſt, in his dying upon the croſs, in his making himſelf a ſacrifice; but, O ſee his love alſo in his incenſe within the vail. We feed too ſparingly upon Chriſt; and therefore our faith is weak: we eat, for the moſt part, but of one diſh, Chriſt, as the paſchal Lamb ſlain on the croſs, but we ſhould learn to feed upon Chriſt as a Prieſt gone in within the vail: our faith ſhould not tarry on the croſs, but we ſhould carry it further, even after Chriſt, within the vail, into heaven itſelf. Our faith ſhould flee for refuge, to lay hold upon all the hope that is ſet before us: the anchor of our ſoul will not be ſo ſure and ſtedfaſt, as it might be, except it enter within the vail, Heb. vi. 19. As the apoſtle ſays of patience, *Let it have its perfect work*, ſo we ſay of faith, let it have its perfect work; let us follow Chriſt within the vail, and view him, not only ſhedding his blood, but entering into the holy of holies within the vail, and ſprinkling his blood upon the mercy-ſeat, and before it, Lev. xvi. 15. The prieſts under the law ſprinkled the mercy-ſeat, which was within the vail, all over, and when Chriſt went to heaven within the vail, he did that in ſubſtance, which the prieſts did in ceremony, in order to make a full atonement: and when faith is acted upon all this, then the believer is ſaid to be come to the blood of ſprinkling; and we act not our faith far enough, when we act it no further than the death of Chriſt; for the atonement was not actually perfected, though it was made fundamentally on the croſs, yet not formally, till upon the rending of the vail, our High-Prieſt entered into the holy place, and ſprinkled the mercy-ſeat with his blood; by which act mercy and juſtice are actually met, and kiſs each other.

2. If the vail of the temple be rent, hence we may ſee the *glory of the New Teſtament diſpenſation*, beyond that of the Old; the vail of the covering is rent, the darkneſs of that diſpenſation removed by the death of Chriſt, and Old Teſtament myſteries unvailed; ſo that now, he that runs may read the meaning of them. Now we ſee clearly, that the mercy-ſeat ſignified Chriſt, the great propitiation; the pot of manna ſignified Chriſt, the bread of life. Now we all with open face beholding the glory of the Lord, as in a glaſs, which helps the ſight as the vail hindered it; and that the vail of the temple was rent, it may give us ground further to expect, that the vail ſhall be taken away from the hearts of the Jews; for *even to this day, when Moſes is read, the vail is upon their hearts; nevertheleſs when it ſhall turn to the Lord, the vail ſhall be taken away*, 2 Cor. iii. 15.

3. If by the death of Chriſt the vail be rent, that interpoſed betwixt God and us, hence we may ſee what is the *way to heaven*, and what *acceſs we have this way*; why, *We have boldneſs to come to the holieſt by the blood of Jeſus, by that new and living way, that he hath conſecrated through the vail.* We may come boldly to the throne of grace, for the vail is rent; by the blood of Jeſus, the way is open. How ſhall the unholieſt of ſinners venture to come into the holieſt of all, or to God's preſence? Yea, ſays the Holy Ghoſt, *by the blood of Jeſus*, by the rent vail. There are many miſtakes about the way to the holy place; it is a dreadful thing to think, that many who have heard the goſpel, it may be, ten, twenty, thirty years, if they be aſked of the way to heaven, they will ſay, why, if we do juſtly, live honeſtly and civilly, and do as we would be done to, we ſhall ſurely be ſaved. But I tell you, you ſhall ſurely be damned, if no more be done. O ſad, that after all the light that hath ſhined about the way of ſalvation by the ſlain Son of God, that civility that is to be found among heathens, is all the title that a great many have to eternal life. Others, they hope to get to heaven by a better righteouſneſs, but it is a righteouſneſs of their own; they ſay they will do as well as they can; they muſt read, and pray, and hear, and the like, and ſo they find out a way to heaven for themſelves: ſome cannot endure to hear any thing ſpoken againſt ſelf-righteouſneſs, as if no perſon were in danger to be ruined by it; whereas this is a great part of the ſtrong man's armour, whereby he keeps poſſeſſion of ſouls. I tell you, Sirs, your falſe righteouſneſs, is ſo far from being the way to heaven, that true holineſs itſelf is but the buſineſs that people have to do who are in the way; there will never be another way to heaven but Chriſt: holineſs is the walk, Chriſt is the way in which we walk, Col. ii. 6. *As ye have received Chriſt Jeſus the Lord, ſo walk ye in him. I am the way, no man comes to the Father, but by me.* This is the new and living way, conſecrated through the vail. The vail of the temple is rent, and the way to the holieſt lies through the rent vail. Every perſon thinks, that it is very hard to get to heaven, and that it will coſt a great deal of time, and pains, and ſtruggling; but, ſays one, here is the miſchief of it; people do not know, that it is hard to know the way to heaven, and that fleſh and blood cannot reveal it, till God himſelf ſend in a beam of light upon the heart, and give the Spirit of wiſdom and revelation in the knowledge of Chriſt, who is the way, having by his death rent the vail. O this way is little known, and yet we aſſure you, that there is free acceſs for you all this way; and nothing to hinder your acceſs to God and heaven this way, if it be not your own ignorant unbelieving heart; nothing to hinder your entering into the holieſt, for the vail is rent, the law is fulfilled, juſtice is ſatisfied, holineſs vindicated, ſin is expiated. Will you go to heaven this way, man, woman? for the door is open for you, the vail is rent for you; *to you is the word of this ſalvation ſent*, to you, man, woman, young or old; whoſoever hears me, to you is the way to the holieſt made patent; and *whoſoever will, let him come and enter in*; and *him that cometh he will in no wiſe caſt out.* What in all the world is to hinder you from coming in? The law, however holy, needs not hinder you, here is a righteouſneſs; juſtice, however awful, needs not hinder you, here is a ſatisfaction; your ſins, however great, need not hinder you, here is a ſacrifice: all theſe vails are rent, what ſhould hinder? Are there any other vails to be rent? O, ſay you, the vail of darkneſs, ignorance, enmity, and unbelief that is upon my heart. Well, let me tell you, that needs not hinder you neither to come to Chriſt, and employ him to rend

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theſe vails on your part; that is but little for him to do, who could rend ſuch great vails as were on God's part. O he is good at rending vails; give him work, and the work is done. Did he not rend a greater vail, when he ſatisfied infinite juſtice, and ſtopt up the floodgates of divine wrath? and if he hath done the greater, O will you not employ him to do the leſs? Why, ſay you, if I knew that he rent that great vail for me, I would not fear, but he would rend the leſſer: why, man, the vail was rent for ſinners, and why not for you? *Chriſt came to ſave ſinners.* But ſay you, all ſhall not be ſaved and brought within the vail, and perhaps not I. I anſwer, Some ſhall be ſaved, and why not you? wherefore are not all that hear this goſpel ſaved, but becauſe they will not give employment to Chriſt to ſave them? Through unbelief they think he meant no favour towards them, when he rent the vail, and ſo ſtand aloft from him, ſaying, It was not for me; but I declare in his name, it was for you, man; for you, woman; whoever will have the benefit of it. The goſpel notifies in general, that the vail is rent for you all, ſo far as that God calls and commands you all to come in to the holieſt by this way, this new and living way conſecrated through the vail, and if you do not, you ſhall be damned for your neglect of it. But as for your particular perſonal knowledge of your actual intereſt in the benefit of this rent vail, it is impoſſible for you to have it, till you come to Chriſt and ſue for it: therefore let nothing hinder you to enter, ſince the vail is rent, and the way patent: you have nothing to do yourſelf, for you cannot rend any vail; all that you have to do, is to conſent that Chriſt ſhould rend all vials betwixt God and you; for he will be a complete Saviour; he will not leave a rag of the vail for you to rend, but with his own hand will rend all in twain from the top to the bottom. O ſay *Amen* to it, that he may get all the work, and all the praiſe.

Uſe ſecond, for *examination.* Try what *intereſt* you have in this privilege: if the vail be actually rent from the top to the bottom, with reſpect to you; try whether or not you have gone in within the rent vail of the temple, to the *holy of holies.* The vail was rent fundamentally, when Chriſt gave up the ghoſt; it was rent formally, when he entered into the holieſt. The vail is rent objectively, in the preaching of this goſpel; and now the queſtion is, if the vail be rent ſubjectively, and ſo as you have the actual ſaving benefit of it in your own perſon. It is not enough that the vail is rent doctrinally for you, ſo as you have liberty to go into the holy place, but whether is the vail rent effectually to you, and in you, ſo as you have ſtept in to the holieſt by the rent vail? And,

1. If you be a believer indeed, in whom the vail is ſavingly rent, then you have got a *humbling ſight* and ſenſe of the vail that interpoſed betwixt God and you, and have ſeen yourſelf to be without the vail. Did you ever ſee ſuch a vail of wrath on God's part, and ſuch a vail of guilt on your part? ſuch a vail of a broken law, incenſed juſtice, and injured holineſs on the one hand; and ſuch a vail of ſin, darkneſs, unbelief, and enmity on the other hand, as hath made you to deſpair that ever the vail would be rent by you, or any creature in heaven or earth, and made you to ſee yourſelf loſt and undone, crying out, *Men and brethren, what ſhall I do to be ſaved?* Did you never ſee your ſad ſtate, as having a black vail ſtanding up betwixt God and you? The exerciſe of perſons about religion is ſuſpicious, if they never ſaw the vail. Some will ſay, O I have ſeen many evils about me, and I have an evil heart, and an evil frame of heart; but I aſk, man, did you never ſee yourſelf to be in an evil ſtate, in a ſtate of diſtance from God; in a ſtate of ſeparation from God, by reaſon of the vail that was betwixt him and you? The effectual rending of the vail begins here, *namely*, at a humbling ſight of the ſeparating vail; the man ſees himſelf without the vail, and ſo within the flood mark of God's wrath.

2. If the vail be effectually rent in you, then you have ſeen the *glory* of him that rent the vail; and the glory of God through the rent vail; ſomething of the glory of God in Chriſt. The apoſtle tells us, Heb. x. 19, 20. *That Chriſt's fleſh*, that is, his human nature, is the vail for us to enter by to the holy of holies; that is, heaven or God's preſence, God's face: ſo that in this fleſh, or human nature of Chriſt, we may ſee the very face, the very brightneſs of the glory of God as in a mirrour. Now, if the vail be rent in you, and the face of the covering removed, then you have ſeen the glory of God in Chriſt; you have ſeen God's law fulfilled by him, God's juſtice ſatisfied in him, God's holineſs vindicated by him, and ſo God's righteouſneſs declared in the way of ſaving ſinners through him, as the propitiation in blood. Have you ſeen his glory as the *only way* to heaven, as God's *way* to you, and your *way* to God, as the Render of the vail on God's part and on yours; the glory of his death in the value and virtue of it; in the value of it, for rending of the vails that hindered God's acceſs to you; and in the virtue of it, for rending of the vail within you that hindered your acceſs to God? Have you felt ſomething of this virtue in rending the vail of darkneſs and ignorance that was upon your underſtanding, and ſhining in upon you with the light of life? The effectual rending of the vail makes a man ſee ſome glory that is within the vail; have you ſeen God's glory then through the rent vail, and that God's glorious attributes are all glorified to the higheſt in this way?

3. If the vail be effectually rent, then you have caſt *the anchor of your hope within the vail*, Heb. vi. 18, 19. After your ſoul, like a weary veſſel toſſed upon the waves of convictions, fears, terrors, could find no reſt, God hath brought you at laſt into this haven of reſt, to caſt anchor within the vail; *you have fled for refuge to the hope ſet before you; which hope you have as your anchor, ſure and ſtedfaſt, entering into that within the vail, whither the forerunner hath entered.* Whither have you fled for refuge, when the law and juſtice of God was purſuing you for your debt, when they were ready to condemn you to hell priſon? was you then made to flee for refuge to the Surety that God ſet before you, for paying of your debt, and to ſay, Lord, take bail of thy own Son for me? I deſpair of ever anſwering ſuch a charge as juſtice and the law hath againſt me; but O look for a diſcharge in the blood and righteouſneſs

ouſneſs of Jeſus; and let that anſwer the charge. When Chriſt entered into the holieſt with his blood within the vail, he ſprinkled the mercy-ſeat, and when the ſoul takes hold of this blood and righteouſneſs of Chriſt, as the ground of his acquittance from the charge of juſtice, *then he caſts anchor within the vail.*

4. If the vail be effectually rent for you, then ſurely you cannot but have a *ſuperlative love* for that glorious High-prieſt, who, by his death, rent the vail, and went into the holieſt for you. O can you ſay with Paul, *He loved me, and gave himſelf for me?* Or, can you ſay with Peter, *Thou that knoweſt all things, knoweſt that I love thee?* Surely, they that love him not, know nothing yet ſavingly about the rending of the vail. It may be, ſome love him, and dare not ſo confidently ſay it as Peter did; but if you can ſay *Amen* to two texts of ſcripture, we may warrant you that you love him indeed. The one is a ſad text, *If any man love not the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, let him be anathema maranatha*, 1 Cor. xvi. 22. The true lover of Chriſt can ſay, *Amen*; let them be even curſed that do not love him, and ſhall not love him. They that can ſay *Amen* to that now, they ſhall ſit at Chriſt's right hand at the great day, and ſay *Amen* to the ſentence of the great judge, *Depart from me, ye curſed.* The other is a ſweet text, *Worthy is the Lamb that was ſlain to receive power, and riches, and wiſdom, and ſtrength, and honour, and glory, and bleſſing*, Rev. v. 12. The true lover of Chriſt can ſay, *Amen;* worthy, worthy, worthy is the Lamb to receive all the praiſes, of all the redeemed, to all eternity. They that can ſet the *Amen* of faith to this now, they have begun to join with the triumphant company already within the vail; and they ſhall join with them for ever hereafter, ſaying, *Salvation to our God that ſits upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever.* Indeed, if you love Chriſt at all, you love him with a ſuperlative love; above huſband, wife, children, lands, houſes, goods, and worldly comforts. You do not love him at all, if you do not love him above all; and if you love him at all, the vail is rent, and you have got into the holieſt in part; and if you will have patience, yet a little while and you ſhall get in fully. It is impoſſible that a man that truly loves Chriſt ſhould ever go to hell.

5. If the vail be effectually rent, then all the vails on your part that continue to ſeparate betwixt God and you, are matter of *ſad regret* to you; the vail of indwelling ſin and corruption, the vail of darkneſs and ignorance, the vail of remaining enmity, the vail of unbelief, theſe vails are all whole and intire in the unregenerate; and though in believers theſe vails be rent, yet they are not removed; regenerating grace hath given them a rent that ſhall never be ſewed up or healed again; but yet, alas! they are remaining vails within the believer, while here; though they be rent, yet they hang there, and many times ſadly ſeparate betwixt God and him; and hence he cries, *O wretched man that I am! who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death!* O to be above corruption! O to be within the vail! *that I may ſee him as he is, and be like unto him.* O! when ſhall all vails be removed? when *ſhall the day break, and the ſhadows fly away?* O! when ſhall the curtain be taken down? Chriſt ſtands behind the curtain, and does not manifeſt himſelf. Hath he been a vailed Chriſt at this communion? then I am ſure, believer, your heart will be ſaying, O that the curtain were drawn! O that the vail were rent into ten thouſand pieces!

6. If the vail be effectually rent, then your heart will be effectually rent alſo; when the vail is rent, the heart is rent; and there is ſomething it is rent for, and ſomething it is rent from.

(1.) Something it is rent *for:* it is rent for ſin. Indeed the ſight of the rent vail, or of God reconciled by the blood of Jeſus, will rend the heart for ſin more than all the thunders of Sinai, or flames of hell; *They ſhall look on him whom they have pierced, and mourn.* When a man reads his ſins, as they are written upon the croſs of Chriſt, with the red ink of his ſin-pardoning blood, O then he reads them over with tears of joy, and his heart is kindly rent for ſin; then he cries, *Behold, I am vile.*——When the vail is rent, the heart is rent, not only for his own ſins, but for the ſins of others; *Rivers of tears run down mine eyes, becauſe of the wicked that break thy law. I beheld tranſgreſſors, and was grieved.* They that can ſee God diſhonoured, and hear men curſe and ſwear, and blaſpheme the holy name of God, and yet never be troubled about it, ſurely the *vail* remains upon their heart, otherwiſe their hearts would rend for the ſins of others, and of the generation: *Set a mark upon the foreheads of them that ſigh and cry, for all the abominations that are done in the midſt thereof.* ——Again, when the *vail is rent*, the heart is rent for the Lord's anger and abſence: nothing fears them more than the Lord's anger; *O rebuke me not in thy wrath, neither chaſten me in thy hot diſpleaſure.* Nothing affects them more than the Lord's abſence; for theſe things they weep: *Mine eyes, mine eyes run down with waters, becauſe the Comforter that ſhould relieve my ſoul is far from me.* O the little lamentation after an abſent God, an angry God at this day!—Again, when the *vail is rent*, the heart is rent for the calamities of the church, Jer. ix. 1. *O that my head were waters, and my eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the ſlain of the daughters of my people.* The miſeries of the church, and the ſins that bring them on, are heart-rending things to the people of God; and particularly, their hearts are rent for the rents of the church; *For the diviſions of Reuben there were great thoughts of heart.* For my own part, I am but a perſon of little experience in the world, and therefore I deſire to be modeſt at this juncture, about the *preſent rent* among us *. It is plain enough that *the anger of the Lord hath divided us*, and rent us in twain, like *the vail of the temple, from the top to the bottom.* God is angry becauſe we have ſinned. Surely, if we had been more valiant for the truth, and zealous for a covenanted work of reformation, when we had fair opportunities for it, our rent had not come to ſuch a height. But yet, though I cannot juſtify the ignorant zeal

* About this time the ſecond form of the *Abjuration Oath* was impoſed, which occaſioned different ſentiments both among miniſters and people: and the matter was carried ſo high by ſome, as almoſt to make it a term of commmunion. It is probably this that the author hath in his eye.

of

of many profeſſors, whoſe hearts are rent from miniſters, and they know not for what; they can give no reaſonable account of their ſeparating-courſes; yet, I hope, there is a ſerious remnant, whoſe hearts are duly rent for the rents of the church, and the ſinful cauſes thereof: and I hope the Lord will help ſuch to be regular in the way of their diſſenting, from whatever they reckon, upon ſolid grounds, to be the defection of the day they live in. But that I may not digreſs too far, I am telling you, that if the *vail* be effectually rent with you, then there are ſome things your heart is rent for, namely, for your own ſins, the ſins of others, the ſins of the land, the ſins of the church, the calamities of the church, the rents of the church. The Lord's anger with her, and abſence from her, may indeed make you weep when you remember Zion, and hang your harps upon the willow trees, while we are gone ſo far into captivity, and the glory is ſo far departed. In a word, *if the vail be rent with you*, your heart will be rent habitually for all theſe things, as alſo for all your heart plagues. Your heart will be ſo rent for your atheiſm, ignorance, enmity, carnality, hypocriſy, rovings, wanderings, worldlineſs, and ſuch like, that you will be ready to ſay as Rebecca ſaid to Iſaac, in another caſe, *I am weary of my life, becauſe of the daughters of Heth.*

(2.) *If the vail be effectually rent*, then, as there are are ſome things your heart will be rent *for*, ſo there are ſome things your hearts will be rent *from*. Why, your hearts will be rent from *ſin* as well as rent for ſin; your heart will ſay with Ephraim, *What have I to do any more with idols?* what have I to do any more with luſts? All that expect to get in to the *holy of holies* in the heavenly temple, are ſtudents of holineſs and purity: *He that hath this hope purifieth himſelf even as he is pure.* Chriſt having rent the vail, entered into the holieſt with blood; and believers are daily beſprinkling themſelves with that blood, that ſo they may enter in all ſprinkled over with that blood alſo. Believers want not ſin, and it cleaves to them here; but they are ſo far from cleaving to it, that it is the deſire of their ſoul to be rent from it; and therefore their daily ſins oblige them to make daily application *to the blood of ſprinkling.*——Again, *if the vail be effectually rent*, then your heart will be rent from the *world.* O but this globe of earth, and all the glory of it, looks but like a filthy mote, a piece of dung, to the man who hath got his heart within the vail. The glory of God in Chriſt darkens all created glory. What cares he for worldly pleaſures, who hath Chriſt for his delight? What cares he for worldly profits, who hath Chriſt for his gain? What cares he for worldly honour, who hath Chriſt for his crown of glory? What cares he for the *world's all*, who hath Chriſt for his *all in all*? His heart is rent from the *world.*—— Again, *when the vail is rent*, the man's heart is rent from the *law*: *He that is married to Chriſt, is divorced from the law*, Rom. vii. 4. The law, as a *covenant of works*, the believer hath nothing to do with it. *He does not owe it a cup of cold water*, as one ſays; for Chriſt hath perfectly fulfilled the condition of the *covenant of works*; and therefore, if the law challenge him, he ſends it to Chriſt for a perfect obedience; if the penalty challenge him, he ſends it to Chriſt for a complete ſatisfaction. He deſires, with Paul, *to be found in Chriſt*, and would not be found in his own righteouſneſs for ten thouſand worlds; he ſees ſo much unholineſs in his own holineſs; ſo much unrighteouſneſs in his own righteouſneſs; ſo much carnality, in all his ſpirituality; ſo much earthlineſs, in all his heavenlineſs; ſo much ſin in all his duties; that he is ſure God may damn him for his beſt duties as well as his worſt ſins: and therefore he hath no expectation from the law, but is rent from it, and joined to the Lord Jeſus, ſaying, *In the Lord only have I righteouſneſs and ſtrength*——In a word, when *the vail is effectually rent*, the man is rent from *Self*; it is very hard indeed to rend a man from himſelf; ſelf inſinuates itſelf into all our praying, preaching, and communicating. However, the power of ſelf is broken in all true believers. Inſtead of ſelf-eſtimation he is brought to that, *Behold, I am vile*; he hath never a good word to ſpeak of himſelf, not a good thought to think of himſelf; but every time he prays, every time he communicates, he cries out, *Behold, I am vile.* Inſtead of ſelf-juſtification, he is brought to that, *I will lay my hand upon my mouth*; I will not anſwer, I cannot juſtify myſelf, but muſt condemn myſelf, and juſtify the Lord. Inſtead of ſelf-love, he is brought to that, *I abhor myſelf, and repent in duſt and aſhes.* Self-loathing and abhorrence takes place. Inſtead of ſelf-will, he is brought to that, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* Inſtead of ſelf-eaſe and carnal ſecurity, he is brought to that, *O what ſhall I do to be ſaved?* And after the firſt exerciſe about ſalvation hath landed in converſion, he is always exerciſing himſelf to godlineſs, and giving employment to Chriſt to carry on and complete his ſalvation, and reſtleſs till ſalvation be completed. Inſtead of ſelf-fulneſs and ſufficiency, he is brought to that, *In me, that is, in my fleſh, dwelleth no good thing:* he ſees himſelf empty of all good, and filled with all evil. Inſtead of ſelf-confidence and hope, he is brought to that, *We had the ſentence of death in ourſelves, that we ſhould not truſt in ourſelves, but in God, which raiſeth the dead.* They are brought to deſpair in themſelves. And inſtead of ſelf-righteouſneſs, of which before, they are brought to that, *All our righteouſneſſes are as filthy rags.*——Thus, in ſo far as they ſhare of the ſaving benefit of the *rent vail*, ſo far are they rent from ſelf: and thus, by theſe things you may examine yourſelves, what intereſt you have in this privilege of Chriſt's rending of the vail betwixt God and you.

Uſe third, For *terror* to unbelievers, who, though they hear that the *vail is rent*, and ſo a free acceſs to the *holy of holies* proclaimed, yet they are not at all concerned about entering in by this *rent vail.* The door of heaven is open to you, but you will not come in; the vail of the temple is rent, but you will not enter. O wretched creature, how can you anſwer that challenge, John v. 40. *You will not come to me, that you might have life?* You have no grace, no holineſs, no repentance, no good thing; but, ſays Chriſt, you will not come to me that you might have grace, you will not come to me that you might have holineſs, you will not come to me that you might have repentance, you will not come to me that you might have

have all good things that you need. The *vail is rent*, the door is open, but you will not come in. *O! what will you do in the day of viſitation?* ——What will you do, when he that rent the vail ſhall rend your ſoul and body in twain, and ſay, O ſlighter of the Son of God, come and give account of what uſe you have made of the ſabbaths, ſermons, and communion-ſeaſons that you enjoyed? Perhaps you are little thinking on death, but what know you but God will ſay to you, *Thou fool, this night thy ſoul ſhall be required of thee?* I defy all the miniſters on earth to aſſure you that you ſhall live to get another offer of Chriſt to-morrow. Many here will not come again to-morrow; and many here may never have another venture for heaven. O! what will you do, when he that *rent the vail* that you might have acceſs to God, will rend theſe heavens, and come down to judgment? *Behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye ſhall ſee him!* With what countenance will you look him in the face in judgment, when you did not care for a ſight of his face in mercy through the *rent vail?* O what a dreadful voice will that be to you, when he will ſay, *Riſe ye dead, and come to judgment!* Riſe ye undervaluers of the goſpel, and give an account of yourſelves! Do you know, that while you are neglecting the goſpel, and ſlighting the Son of God, you are ſaying with the Jews, *His blood be upon us, and upon our children?* The guilt of the blood of Chriſt is upon you, and upon the generation after you, that follow your example; and O! how terrible will it be, when he comes to make inquiſition for blood, for the blood of God which you trampled under foot! O! how will you then wiſh to be rent and grinded in pieces, when you ſhall find all the curſes of the Bible lighting upon you! O what will you do, when he that rent the vail, ſhall openly rend you from the company of God, ſaints, and angels, and ſet you with the goats on his left-hand! When you ſhall ſee ſome of your acquaintances that are here, ſtanding on his right-hand, how will you then think with yourſelf, O what hindered me, that I did not conſent to the goſpel, as well as they? You now join with them in the ſame congregation, but your hearts are disjoined from them; you ſeparate from them in your choice, your affections, your diſpoſition, and converſation; but ere long, there ſhall be another kind of ſeparation; you that will not come in among them through *the rent vail* now, there ſhall be a vail hung up betwixt you and them, that ſhall never be rent; yea, a vail betwixt you and the glory of God; for *you ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction, from the preſence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power:* he that rent the vail to pieces, will eternally tear you to pieces, when there ſhall be none to deliver. Now, the vail is rent betwixt God and you, ſo as you may come to God's preſence with boldneſs, through the new and living way that is conſecrated through the vail; and you ſhall have God, and Chriſt, and ſaints, and angels, all welcoming you; for, *the Spirit and the bride ſay, Come; and whoſoever will, let him come*, for the vail is rent; but if once you go down by the ſides of bottomleſs Tophet, the vail that then ſhall be placed betwixt God and you, will never, never, never be rent, ſo long as eternity laſts. You will never hear again ſuch a ſweet word; and O what would you then give for ſuch a word as that, Behold, the vail is rent, that you may come to God's favour and fellowſhip? but no ſuch news ſhall be heard in hell: now, only *now, is the accepted time, now is the day of ſalvation; to day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts;* but think of coming into the holy of holies, while you hear that the vail is rent, and nothing to hinder you.

Uſe fourth, for *conſolation* to believers, to whom the vail is ſo effectually rent in twain, that from the marks given, they may conclude, they have made ſome entrance within the vail, by coming to a God in Chriſt, and caſting their anchor within the vail. I have a word of comfort to ſay to you, though perhaps you are ſtill complaining of many vails that ſeparate betwixt God and you; yet a little while, and you ſhall have a triumphant entrance miniſtered unto you, into the holy of holies above, whither the Forerunner hath for you entered; for, *behold, the vail of the temple was rent in twain, from the top to the bottom;* therefore you *ſhall come into Zion with ſongs, and everlaſting joy upon your heads; you ſhall obtain joy and gladneſs, and ſorrow and ſighing ſhall flee away*, and then all vails ſhall be rent and removed for ever. I will tell you, for your comfort, of a few vails that then ſhall be rent; for the rending of the vail of the temple, promiſes the rending of all vails in a ſhort while.

1. Then, the vail of *ſin* and *corruption* ſhall be rent in twain; all the rents, all the ſtrokes that ſin gets by the word, the rod, the Spirit, never rends a body of death from you; but ſtill you are groning under a ſenſe of indwelling-ſin, that ſeparates betwixt God and you; but then, O then, believer, this vail ſhall be rent in twain from the top to the bottom, and from the bottom to the top; both root and branch ſhall be rent and removed; for, *When he ſhall appear, you ſhall be like him:* Your conformity to him ſhall be complete; you muſt go to heaven dragging a body of death after you; but whenever you come to the port of glory, there will be a joyful parting; for you ſhall take an everlaſting farewel of all your luſts and corruptions; then you will ſay, Farewel with all our hearts; and glory to God that we ſhall never meet again. Bleſſed be God, we ſhall never ſee your face again.

2. Then ſhall the vail of *darkneſs* and *diſtance* be rent in twain; for then darkneſs will give way to light, glorious light; and diſtance will give way to preſence, glorious and everlaſting preſence. Now you ſay, I cannot ſee him, he is far away; but ſays Chriſt, *Father, I will that theſe whom thou haſt given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory:* to be *with me where I am;* there is diſtance removed; to *behold my glory*, there is darkneſs removed. Darkneſs and diſtance now, create doubts and fears; but doubts and fears will then take wings and flee away, never to return again; for, *The face of the covering ſhall be entirely removed*, Iſa. xxv. 7, 8.

3. Then ſhall the vail of *ordinances* be rent in twain; now any view we have of God's glory, is mediate, through the intervention of means and ordinances; any glimpſe we get of his beauty is through the dim glaſs of duties and ordinances; for, *Now we ſee through a glaſs darkly*,

darkly, ſays the apoſtle; but the time comes when the glaſs ſhall be broken, and *we ſhall ſee him as he is*, in an immediate manner; Rev. xxi. 22. *I ſaw no temple there; for the Lord God almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple of it.* And then ſhall the ſaints be able to ſay, the half of his glory hath not been told, when they ſhall ſee him face to face, and not his back parts, or the ſkirts of his garments only.

4. The vail of *ſcanty enjoyments* will be rent in twain; the vail of paſſing blinks and interrupted views. The life of the ſaint here, is moſtly a life of deſire; he can never get his deſire fully ſatisfied; and when you get any deſirable meeting with the Lord, why, it is but a blink and away; your deſires are but increaſed thereby, and your melancholy wants remain unſupplied: but within the vail all deſires ſhall be ſatisfied, all wants ſhall be ſupplied; for, *In his preſence there is fulneſs of joy, and at his right-hand rivers of pleaſure for evermore.* No clouds, no night, no deſertion there; no ſuch complaint as this, *O why hideſt thou thy face?* The beſt communion and enjoyment here admits of interruption; but that which is above, is uninterrupted; no tempting devil, no deceitful heart, no diſmal cloud to darken their day, or interrupt their viſion and fruition of God. Chriſt is here only paſſing by us, and as a way-faring man, that tarries only for a night; yea, hardly for a night: no ſooner does he enter, but he is away; no ſooner does the heart begin to open to him ſometime, than, alas! he is gone, Song v. 6. *I opened to my beloved, but he had withdrawn himſelf, and was gone:* but then their enjoyment ſhall be full, and everlaſting, and uninterrupted; for, *So ſhall they ever be with the Lord.* Partial enjoyments will give way to eternally full enjoyments; *For when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part ſhall be done away.*

5. The vail of *church-diſorders* and *confuſion* ſhall be rent in twain. Many times you have reaſon to ſigh and complain, that matters are all out of order in the church; the vail of confuſion and diſorder is upon it, and the glory departed; nothing but clouds in our ſky. Indeed we would gladly expect the rending of theſe vails that are upon the church, even in time, and even with reſpect to the church of Scotland. It is with the church, as it is with particular believers, the Lord uſually brings them to an extremity, before he give them a deliverance: the darkeſt night may uſher in the cleareſt day; *to them that fear his name the Sun of righteouſneſs ſhall ariſe.* Whatever dark eclipſes the ſun may be under at preſent, do not ſay the ſun is gone out of the firmament, becauſe it is a cloudy day; the clouds may grow thicker and thicker yet; yea, there may not only be clouds, but rain, and perhaps a terrible ſhower of wrath is coming; many things look like it: but though there ſhould be both clouds and rain, ſay not the ſun is gone, and will never return and ſhine again; he that rent the vail, will rend the clouds in his own time. Yea, the rending of the vail of the temple did foretel good to the church. It ſays, that he will rear up a more glorious temple, ſuch as is promiſed, Iſa. liv. 11, 12. *O thou afflicted, toſſed with tempeſts, and not comforted! behold, I will lay thy ſtones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with ſapphires; and I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleaſant ſtones.* Why, what is the meaning of all this? See it in ver. 13. *All thy children ſhall be taught of the Lord, and great ſhall be the peace of thy children.* You ſay it is a time of great darkneſs in the church, ſo it is indeed; but here is a promiſe of light that ſhall ariſe, *All thy children ſhall be taught of the Lord.* Is it a time of great diviſion and contention? ſo it is; but here is a promiſe of great peace, *great ſhall be the peace of thy children.* We hope there will be a more full accompliſhment of this in the church, even in time; but when will all this come to paſs? why, we may come to be tried with another kind of tempeſt before it come to paſs; for, ſee how the promiſe is uſhured in, *O thou afflicted, toſſed with tempeſts, and not comforted;* then follows the promiſe of a pleaſant iſſue. But withal never expect a perfect church upon earth; we hope it will be more pure, but it never will be perfect, till *that which is in part ſhall be done away.* The time is coming, when the bride, the Lamb's wife, ſhall be preſented to him without ſpot or wrinkle; when the union of the ſaints ſhall be entire, and the communion of ſaints ſhall be perfect. There will be no contention, no diviſion, no diſorder in the general aſſembly and church of the firſt-born that are written in heaven.

6. The vail of *militant graces* will be rent in twain, and nothing but triumphant graces will have the throne; *Now remains faith, hope, and love; but the greateſt of theſe is love.* Why, love is a triumphant grace; and faith and hope will reſign to love the chair of ſtate. There will be no need of militant graces in the church triumphant; no need of faith, where viſion is; no need of hope, where fruition is; no need of patience, where all tribulation is at an end; no need of any fighting grace, where there is nothing but victory, light, life, love, liberty, joy, glory. You have a fighting life of it here, but then a ſong of victory; victory for evermore.

7. The vail of *infirmities* will be rent in twain; here believers have infirmities on their bodies, that have no ſmall influence on the actings of their ſouls; infirmities on their ſouls, darkneſs and dulneſs in their intellectual powers; infirmities of the new nature, though created in Chriſt Jeſus, though ſupported by his power, and guided by his grace; yet ſtill it is a weak thing, like a new-born babe; but none of theſe infirmities are in them that are within the vail; they are become perfect; *Then ſhall we all come in the unity of the faith, to a perfect man in Chriſt*, Eph. iv. 13. Then that ſcripture ſhall be fully accompliſhed, Iſa. xxx. 26. *The light of the moon ſhall be as the light of the ſun; and the light of the ſun ſhall be ſevenfold, as the light of ſeven days.*

8. The vail of *mortality* ſhall be rent in twain; for, *This mortal ſhall put on immortality; this corruption, ſhall put on incorruption; and death ſhall be ſwallowed up in victory.* The vail of fleſh, the clay tabernacle will be rent in twain; *We know, that if the earthly houſe of this tabernacle were diſſolved, we have a building of God, a houſe not made with hands, eternal in the heavens: for in this we grone earneſtly, deſiring to be clothed upon with our houſe which is from heaven*, 2 Cor. v. 1, 2. O was you ever brought to that man's ſaying, 'O mortality, mortality! O time, time! that 'will not haſte away, to let eternity come!'

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Was you never content to ſhake the ſand-glaſs of time to win to eternity? was you never content to take death in your arms; and ſay, Welcome, welcome; O friend, welcome news, that mortality ſhall be ſwallowed up of life?

9. The vail of *incapacity* will be rent in twain; now you are not capable of that glory which you ſhall be able to behold and contain in heaven; your eye is ſo weak, that you cannot behold the Sun of righteouſneſs ſhining in his ſtrength. Though light be the moſt pleaſing thing to the eye; yet the meridian brightneſs of the ſun cannot be looked upon without deſtroying the ſight; becauſe the faculty is not ſo ſtrong, nor capable to receive the object: ſo is it here, we want a capacity to behold the light of glory; but within the vail, or in heaven, the faculty will be ſtrengthened, and the capacity enlarged, to hold an exceeding great and eternal weight of glory; the want of which hath made ſome, in time, when their cup hath overflowed with conſolation, to cry out, 'Lord, hold thy hand, thy 'ſervant is a clay-veſſel, and can hold no 'more.' Indeed it is little we get here below, and it is little we can hold, though we ſhould get our fill; but in heaven the capacity will be ſo enlarged, that it will be able to hold a fulneſs of God, a fulneſs of glory, a fulneſs of the Spirit, fulneſs of joy at God's right-hand for ever and ever.

10. The vail of *wearineſs* ſhall be rent in twain; here we ſoon weary of praying and preaching; we ſoon weary of ſermons and ſacraments. I doubt not but many here may be wearied to the heart with this day's work. Indeed little wonder that the carnal heart ſay, What a wearineſs is all this work? 'For, as 'one ſays, you may take a carnal man, tie 'him to a poſt, and then kill him with pray-'ing and preaching only.' But even the ſpiritual man himſelf, while he hath a wearying body of death about him, he wearies of ordinances, he wearies of God's ſervice; but in heaven, within the vail, they ſhall ſerve him without wearying or fainting, Rev. xxii. 3.; there *his ſervants ſhall ſerve him.* Their weary ſervice here is hardly to be called a ſervice; but there his ſervants ſhall ſerve him indeed. O! will it not be a myſtery, and a great wonder, if we, who cannot pray half an hour to an end, and hardly hear an hour to an end, but will be toiled, as if we had done ſome marvellous work, ſhall be brought to heaven, and never weary of the ſervice of heaven? Here is comfort, believer, you ſhall through all the years of eternity, praiſe him, and never weary.

In a word, all the vials of trouble and trials will be rent in twain; *There remains a reſt for the people of God.*—The vail of ſorrow and anxiety ſhall be rent in twain; for, *All tears ſhall be wipt from their eyes; Sorrow and ſighing ſhall flee away.*—The vail of ſickneſs and uneaſineſs of body or ſoul ſhall be rent in twain; *The inhabitants of that land ſhall not ſay, I am ſick; the people that dwell therein ſhall be forgiven their iniquity.*—The vail of wandering thoughts and vain imaginations will be rent in twain; you ſhall not have a wrong thought or conception of God throughout all eternity; for all your heart-plagues, luſts, and corruptions, that you have been wreſtling with all your days, will leave you; and I am ſure you will leave them with ſuch pleaſure and ſatisfaction, and be ſo glad to part with them, that you will hardly ſhake hands with them; but rather ſay, the back of my hand to you; many a ſad hour, many a ſigh and groan have you coſt me; but it is well for me, that now I am quit of you for ever. And I cannot but ſay, that they who now have a glad heart to think of a parting with theſe, and a meeting with Chriſt for ever, they have gotten ſome communion with him this day.

Finally, The vail of *time* will be rent in twain; and the ſtreams of time will be ſwallowed up in the ocean of eternity. O how will you ſay with wonder then, O hath ſuch a black and ugly creature as I was, gotten glorious Chriſt in my arms, never, never, never to part again! O how will his kind looks dart a ſweetneſs and joy inexpreſſible into your hearts, when you ſhall be led with the Lamb about the rivers of living water, when time ſhall be no more!—Take all this comfort into your hearts, believers, for the God of conſolation allows you to rejoice for ever, and to rejoice in the hope of the glory of God, which you ſhall ſee and be for ever poſſeſt of within the vail.

Uſe fifth, For *exhortation.* All I ſhall now ſay, is this, if the vail be rent in twain by the death of Chriſt, O then come and ſee, come and take, come and wonder, come and enter, come and ſing.

1. Come and *ſee:* when the ſeal was opened, Rev. vi. then the voice cried, *Come and ſee:* ſo when the vail is rent, O come and ſee; come and ſee. Turn aſide and ſee this great ſight, the vail of ſeparation betwixt God and us rent in twain from the top to the bottom. What was to be ſeen within the vail of the temple, you are told, Heb. ix. 4, 5. *There was to be ſeen the golden cenſer, the golden pot, the ark of the covenant, the tables of the covenant, and over it the cherubims of glory overſhadowing the mercy-ſeat.* What all theſe did ſignify, I cannot ſtand to ſhew; but in ſhort, they all pointed out the glory of God in Jeſus Chriſt. Now the vail is rent; then look into the holieſt, and ſee the glorious myſtery of redeeming love; ſee the wiſdom, power, holineſs, juſtice, goodneſs, and grace of God, manifeſted brightly in the face of Jeſus, who by his death rent the vail, that we might ſee heaven, and the glory of it.

2. Come and *take:* the pot of manna was within the vail, as you ſee in that forecited text, which ſignified Chriſt the bread of life. Now, that the vail is rent; you may come to the holieſt and take manna: if you go away faſting this night, it will be your own fault; for you have liberty to come and take, ſince the vail is rent. Chriſt himſelf is the manna; and if you take him, you take all things with him that you need. Do you need a pardon? Why, the opening of the vail is a proclamation of pardon upon a jubilee-day. In the year of jubilee, the prieſts entered within the vail into the holieſt; and there was a diſcharge of debt, and liberty proclaimed; ſo here is our jubilee; Chriſt our High-prieſt having rent the vail, and entered into the holieſt, he iſſues out his proclamation of indemnity; he proclaims pardon of debt. Many a bankrupt drowned in debt is in this green; but behold, the cry is, *Go forth ye priſoners of hope.* There is a pardon in this pot of manna, if you will but take it;

it; yea, there is life to your ſouls, and death to your ſins in this pot of manna, if you will take it. *Object.* But you will ſay, I cannot take what is offered to me. *Anſw.* I wiſh you indeed knew your own weakneſs, and were ſenſible of it; *No man can come to me*, ſays Chriſt, *except the Father draw him*: But, O! hath God drawn you ſo far as that you are willing to take Chriſt, though you can do nothing; and willing that Chriſt ſhould take you? Do you know what it is to believe? It is not to do ſome great thing by your own power, no: it is a grace that hath two eyes; with the one it looks to a man's ſelf, and ſees his own utter weakneſs, ſaying, *Not that I am ſufficient of myſelf to think any thing as of myſelf*; and with the other it looks to God, and ſees his infinite power, ſaying, *My ſufficiency is of God.* So, that to believe, is to ſee that you can do nothing, and to employ the power of God to do all things for you, and in you that you need. Now, when you are called to take Chriſt, you are called to take and employ the power of God to do all things that you are called to do, but cannot do of yourſelf; this power of God is in your offer, and you may give employment to it: Iſa. xxvii. 5. *Let him take hold of my ſtrength, that he may make peace with me, and he ſhall make peace with me.* Did you ever know before that the power of God was at your ſervice? Take hold of his power, and give employment to his power, ſaying, Lord, let this power of thine be put forth upon an indigent creature, that I may take Chriſt. Behold, the Father offers him for wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification and redemption; there is manna indeed, which you have for the taking in this manner, ſaying, Lord, take me, and I will take thee. Let thy power and grace be glorified upon me. If you be in earneſt, it is a bargain; for he never called a ſinner to take his Son upon any other terms, but that they only conſent that Chriſt perform all the work, and take all the glory.

3. Come and *wonder; Behold, the vail of the temple was rent in twain, from the top to the bottom.* Come and wonder, that all hinderances are taken out of the way of your acceſs to God. Wonder at the love of God in ſending his Son to rend the vail; wonder at the love of Chriſt in rending the vail, that you might have acceſs to God; wonder that it was rent at all; wonder that it was rent in twain; wonder that it was rent from the top to the bottom; wonder at the thing, and wonder at the occaſion of it. *Chriſt gave up the ghoſt, and the vail of the temple was rent.* The rending of the vail coſt him his life, it coſt him his ſoul; his ſoul was made an offering for ſin, and then the vail was rent. O, is there no wondering at this? It would be an evidence of a good communion to you, if you were filled with wonder. A ſhort wonder is better than a long prayer.

4. Come and *enter.* Not only ſee and take, and wonder, but alſo boldly enter into the holieſt; not ſtanding in the outer-court, as it were, or behind the vail gazing, or only putting in your hand by the rent vail, but come in wholly, and enter boldly. The vail is rent in twain; O then, come and enter by the rent. You may all come boldly to the holieſt, by this new and living way that is conſecrated through the vail. O may ſuch a dog, ſuch a filthy dog as I come? Yes, we uſe to ſay, *When doors are open, dogs come in;* the door is open, the vail is rent; let dogs come in and get a crumb. The Gentiles are called dogs in ſcripture; and it is ſaid, *Without are dogs, murderers, ſorcerers, whoremongers;* but to all the dogs that are without the vail, we, in God's name, proclaim liberty to come in, and get what will ſave you and ſanctify you. You ſay you have nothing to bring with you, no grace, no good. I tell you, there is none here, but they have ſomething to bring to Chriſt with them. What is that? Have you not much ſin and miſery to bring with you? have you not much want, weakneſs, and wickedneſs, to bring with you? Come with all your ills, in order to get all good; come with your ſins, and get grace; come with your guilt, and get a pardon; come with your filthineſs, and get cleanſing; come with your wants, and get fulneſs. Let dogs come in and get a crumb; yea, a feaſt. There is nothing to hinder you, ſince the vail is rent. The law is not in your way, for that is fulfilled; the flaming cherubim is not in your way, for Chriſt hath rent the vail of God's wrath, and divided the *red-ſea* of divine vengeance, that you might paſs through. Have you a mind for heaven, man, woman? here is the way, it lies through the rent vail; and if you take not *this way*, you ſhall never enter there: For there are two porters that will keep all unbelievers out, namely, *juſtice* and *holineſs*. *Juſtice* will ſay, I muſt be ſatisfied; *holineſs* will ſay, I muſt be vindicated, or elſe you ſhall never enter here: but if you come by this *rent vail*, you ſhall have open entrance into the heavenly kingdom. Chriſt will ſay to juſtice, Let ſuch a man in, for I paid you all his debt; holineſs, let ſuch a man in, for I gave you a perfect obedience for him; look upon him in me. This will ſatisfy both theſe porters to let believers paſs. O then, come and enter through *the vail that is rent.* Chriſtleſs ſoul, who will ſatisfy juſtice and holineſs for you? Theſe porters will never be bribed by you. Therefore, O come, and *enter by the rent vail*, for there is no other way to heaven.

5. Come and *ſing.* If you have made entrance, O ſing, *Glory to God in the higheſt*, that ever rent this vail. You might go home ſinging, if you took up the true meaning of the text, and turned it to a ſong; and ſing it with underſtanding, *Behold, the vail of the temple was rent in twain, from the top to the bottom.* Behold, the vail is rent, and ſhall never be whole again. Behold, the work is completed by the Son of God; the work is done, and ſhall never be undone.—To the Author and Finiſher of this great work be glory for ever. *Amen.*

SERMON III.*

The SWORD of JUSTICE awakened againſt GOD'S FELLOW.

ZECH. xiii. 7.

Awake, O ſword, againſt my Shepherd, and againſt the man that is my Fellow, ſaith the Lord of hoſts.

HERE is a very wonderful text, Sirs, as ever a poor mortal man preached upon; for in it there is a cloud, a black cloud, a cloud of divine wrath and vengeance, a bloody cloud, the cloud of Chriſt's bloody paſſion which we are to celebrate the memorials of this day; but like the cloud that led Iſrael in the wilderneſs, though it had a black ſide towards Chriſt, yet it has a bright and light ſide towards all the Iſrael of God; for this cloud of blood diſtills in a ſweet ſhower of bleſſings unto poor ſinners: there is a light in this cloud wherein we may ſee a *God in Chriſt, reconciling the world to himſelf.*

This verſe preſents us with a clear prediction of the ſufferings of Chriſt; and the diſpoſition of his diſciples thereupon; *Smite the Shepherd, and the ſheep ſhall be ſcattered; and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones:* Which our Lord expreſly applies to himſelf, and his diſciples, Mat. xxvi. 31. Mark xiv. 27. So that we need not ſtand to enquire, of whom the prophet here, or rather, of whom God here ſpeaks; for, the words of our text are the words of God the Father, giving orders and commiſſion to the ſword of his juſtice, to awake againſt his Son, when he had undertaken to become our Surety. More particularly, in the words you may notice theſe three things.

1. A ſolemn *call* and *ſummons* given to God's vengeance, or vindictive juſtice, to rendezvous its forces, and march forth in battle array, in all circumſtances of terror: *Awake, O ſword.*

2. The *party* againſt whom this dreadful battle is proclaimed, this terrible ſword is brandiſhed; muſt it not be againſt ſinners? nay, but the ſinner's Surety: *againſt my Shepherd, and againſt the man that is my Fellow:* not againſt the ſheep but the Shepherd; not againſt a ſhepherd ſimply, but againſt my Shepherd: not againſt mankind, but a man; not againſt a man ſimply, a mere man, but *the Man that is my Fellow, mine equal.*

3. By whoſe *orders*, or at whoſe *inſtance* this ſummons to the bloody battle is given; why, it is the *Lord of hoſts* that ſays it: it is he that gives the commiſſion, and orders the ſword to be drawn.

Now, the *ſummons* is very awful, *Awake, O ſword, againſt him;* if he will be a Surety, he muſt be a ſacrifice; if he will be a ſacrifice, he muſt be ſlain; for, *without ſhedding of blood, there is no remiſſion.* It is not a charge to a rod to correct him, but to a ſword to ſlay him; for, *Meſſiah, the Prince, muſt be cut off, though not for himſelf,* Dan. ix. 26. It is not the ſword of war to which he gives this charge, that he may die in the bed of honour; but the ſword of juſtice, that he may die as a criminal upon an ignominious tree. This ſword muſt awake againſt him; it muſt not reſt, cannot be quiet nor ſatisfied, till it be drunk in his heart's blood. It is not called upon to awake and *fright* him, but to awake and *ſmite* him. Not with a lazy, drowſy blow, but an awakened one; even a horrible, terrible blow.

The *party* againſt whom the ſword is called to awake is very glorious; the deſcription of him here is very magnificent; *Awake againſt my Shepherd, and againſt the man that is my Fellow;* deſcribed in his office, *my Shepherd:* in his perſon, God-Man, *My Fellow.* Men thruſt him through as a fooliſh ſhepherd, and God thruſts him through as the good Shepherd, as his own Shepherd, the Shepherd of his own flock, that he might purchaſe the flock of God with his own blood. As Mediator, he is God's Shepherd, who undertook to feed the flock, and to lay down his life for his ſheep: and againſt *the man that is my Fellow;* or, *the man my Fellow;* the man who is God as well as man, who *thought it no robbery to be equal with God.*

Finally, The Party giving theſe *orders* to incenſed juſtice to awake againſt him is as wonderful; *the Lord of hoſts;* that Jehovah that has all the hoſts of heaven, earth, and hell at his call: the Lord of hoſts; that is, Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, one God, eſſentially conſidered, giving a commiſſion to infinite juſtice to awake againſt the ſecond Perſon of the Godhead, conſidered as Surety and Mediator, God-man.

Now, from the words thus ſhortly opened, we might obſerve many doctrines, but I confine myſelf to this one, *namely*;

OBSER. *That by ſpecial orders from Jehovah, the great God of hoſts, the man Chriſt, his Shepherd and Fellow, did fall a ſacrifice to the awakened ſword of infinite juſtice.* Awake, O ſword.

When nothing among the creatures could be found to deliver the ſoul of the ſinner, from going down to the pit, God himſelf *found a ranſom;* he found an atonement, Job xxxiii. 24. by ſetting forth Chriſt to be the *propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteouſneſs,—that he might be juſt, and the juſtifier of him that believeth in Jeſus,* Rom. iii. 25, 26. We ſinful creatures, both miniſters and people, ſhould all have fallen a ſacrifice to the ſword of God's wrath and vengeance for ever, becauſe of our ſins: but behold he finds a ranſom; he ſets forth Chriſt to be the propitiation. When ever he is ſet forth, the ſword falls upon him, and awakes againſt him who was the Shepherd, that the ſheep might eſcape.

* This was an Action-ſermon, preached immediately before the celebration of the Lord's ſupper at Dunfermline, July 3d. 1720, and *never before publiſhed.*

I might

I might here premiſe many uſeful particulars preſuppoſed in this doctrine, *namely*, That it ſuppoſes a *covenant of works broken*, and ſo juſtice inraged againſt men: A *covenant of redemption made*; a counſel of peace between Jehovah and Chriſt, for man's relief; and, which I reckon much the ſame with the former, a *covenant of grace eſtabliſhed in Chriſt*; he engaging to fulfil the condition of the covenant of works which we had broken; to obey the law, which we had tranſgreſſed; to ſatisfy the juſtice, which we had offended; to bear the wrath, which we had incurred; whereupon the ſword of the Lord awakes againſt him, and all the ſquadrons of enraged fury march forth againſt him, with infinite horror and terror: *Awake, O ſword, againſt my Shepherd.* But omitting all that might be ſuppoſed, and preſuppoſed to this doctrine, I ſhall endeavour to confine myſelf as cloſely as poſſible to the ſeveral parts of the text and doctrine, by proſecuting it in the following method; *namely*,

I. To enquire into the *character* of the perſon againſt whom this ſword does awake.
II. The *nature* and *quality* of this ſword that did awake againſt him.
III. *How* this ſword did awake againſt him; by ſhewing what may be *imported* in this expreſſion, *Awake, O ſword.*
IV. What *ſpecial hand* the *Lord Jehovah*, the Lord of hoſts, had in ordering or calling of this ſword, to awake againſt this glorious perſon.
V. The *reaſons* of the doctrine, why the Lord of hoſts ordered the ſword of juſtice to awake againſt his Shepherd, and the man that is his Fellow.
VI. Draw ſome *inferences* for the application of the whole, in a ſuitableneſs to the work of the day.

I. Who is this that the ſword of juſtice muſt awake againſt? The *character* of the perſon is very great and glorious, in the words of our text, *My Shepherd, the man that is my Fellow*; that is, in ſhort, God-man Mediator; for, being here deſcribed in his perſon and office, I ſhall touch a little at both in the following order.

1. His divine nature, as God's fellow. 2. His human nature, the *man* that is my Fellow. 3. The conjunction of both theſe in one perſon, *The man that is my Fellow.* 4. His mediatorial office, *my Shepherd.*

1ſt. Conſider this account we have of his divine nature; MY FELLOW, *ſaith the Lord of hoſts.* Let Arians and Socinians blaſpheme this wonderful perſon, here is an article of our creed, that Chriſt is God's Fellow, God's equal, *Who being in the form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God:* and therefore ſays, John x. 30. *I and my Father are one.* But here conſider, 1. Wherein he is God's Fellow: and, 2. Why, as our Redeemer, it behoved him to be God's Fellow.

1. Wherein, or in what *reſpect* is he God's Fellow? I anſwer, He is God's Fellow, not as he is Mediator, taking upon him the *form of a ſervant*, and becoming the *Father's ſervant* in the work of our redemption; but he is God's Fellow in theſe ſix reſpects.

(1.) He is God's Fellow in point of *nature* and *eſſence*; Chriſt is God eſſentially, as well as the Father, and the Holy Ghoſt, though perſonally diſtinct from both; for, neither the Father nor the Holy Ghoſt were incarnate, or took on our nature, but Chriſt the ſecond perſon of the glorious Trinity: who, though perſonally diſtinct, yet is eſſentially one with the Father and Spirit, John i. 1. *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God:* And it is ſure there is but one God, Deut. vi. 4. *Hear, O Iſrael, the Lord our God is* ONE *Lord, one* JEHOVAH. 1 Cor. viii. 4. In Chriſt our Redeemer *dwells all the fulneſs of the Godhead bodily*, Col. ii. 9. *There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghoſt, and theſe three are one*, 1 John v. 7. and in the penult verſe of that chapter, *We know that the Son of God is come, and has given us an underſtanding to know him that is true; and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jeſus Chriſt: this is the true God, and eternal life.*

(2.) He is God's Fellow in point of *property*; even in all his eſſential properties, which is much the ſame with the former. Is God omnipotent? ſo is Chriſt; he is the *wonderful counſellor, the mighty God.* Is God omnipreſent? ſo is Chriſt; *Lo I am with you always, to the end of the world.* Is God omniſcient? ſo is Chriſt; *Thou that knoweſt all things, knoweſt that I love thee*, ſays Peter. Is God unchangeable? ſo is Chriſt; *The ſame yeſterday, to-day, and for ever.* Is God eternal? ſo is Chriſt; *Before Abraham was, I am:* He is the *King eternal, immortal, the only wiſe God.* He is God's Fellow in all theſe reſpects.

(3.) He is God's Fellow in point of *will* and *conſent*; what the Father wills, Chriſt wills; hence it was *his meat and drink to do his Father's will*, who ſent him; *I delight to do thy will, O my God.* It is true, as man, he had a will diſtinct from his will as God, and ſo diverſe from the Father's will; though yet this did act ſtill in ſubordination to the will of God; hence when the bitter cup is put to his mouth, he prays, *O my Father, if it be thy will let this cup paſs from me; nevertheleſs not my will, but thine be done:* yet, as God, his will is one and the ſame with the Father's will.

(4.) He is God's Fellow in point of *work*; John v. 17. *My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.* Chriſt's works are not only like unto the Father's, but the ſame in ſubſtance, as flowing from one and the ſame eſſence and power; for, *What things ſoever the Father doth, theſe alſo doth the Son likewiſe*, John v. 19. He acts not as an inſtrument ſubordinate; but, as there is an unity in the work, ſo alſo in the manner of it; by the ſame power, wiſdom, liberty, and authority; only the order of operation being obſerved: and we find all the works proper to God aſcribed to Chriſt; as creation, *All things were made by him:* Preſervation, *Upholding all things by the word of his power:* Redemption; the donation of the Spirit; raiſing himſelf from the dead; the inſtitution of ordinances and offices in his church; and the judging the world: in all theſe he is God's Fellow.

(5.) He is God's Fellow in point of *honour* and *worſhip:* all men are to *honour the Son, even as they honour the Father;* they are to believe in him, *Ye believe in God, believe alſo in me*, John xiv. 1.; they are to hope and truſt in him, *Kiſs the Son, leſt he be angry, and ye periſh from the way. If once his wrath begin to burn, bleſſed are all that truſt in him.*

(6.) He is God's Fellow in point of *happineſs* and *felicity*, Rom. ix. 5. *Of whom, concerning the fleſh,*

flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever, Amen. As he was blessed and happy from all eternity in his Father's bosom, being *ever by him*, and *brought up with him*, and being *daily his delight; rejoicing always before him;* and *rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth, and his delights with the sons of men*, Prov. viii. 30, 31.: So he ever is, and will be, blessed with him. It is true, there was a time when the Son of God was humbled; when this God, blessed for ever, became a curse for us; but notwithstanding, his essential glory was never diminished; as God, he was as happy and blessed on the cross, and in the grave, as ever he was. Well, thus, *as God*, is he every way God's fellow. O! how fearfully was he humbled! God's fellow, and yet a babe, a servant, a sufferer, a sacrifice to the awakened sword of justice. The Governor of all becomes a subject: should an emperor become a fly, it would not be such a humiliation. O! how sadly was the world mistaken about Christ, that took him to be a base fellow, a pitiful fellow! but little did they know that he was God's fellow. O! how glorious is the love of Christ to sinners! God's fellow receiving the stroak of the sword of divine justice in their room.

2. Why he behoved to be God's Fellow that was our Redeemer? It was necessary that our Redeemer should be God's Fellow;

(1.) In regard of *merit:* his obedience to the death could not be sufficient to satisfy the law and the Lawgiver; to be a full ransom, and a full price of redemption, if it had not been truly and properly meritorious; and this it could not be, if he had not been God's equal, as well as man. Our sins were an infinite evil, and God's justice required infinite satisfaction; now, there could be no satisfaction, of infinite value, but by a person of infinite value; and there is no such person, but God: and therefore our Redeemer must be God's equal.

(2.) In regard of *power:* our Redeemer must be such an one as could go through all the difficulties that lay in the way of redemption; triumphing over all opposition from God, men, and devils, from heaven, earth, and hell. The weakest of these were too strong for human nature; therefore that our Redeemer might overcome death, bind the strong man, break down the gates of hell, cut in sunder the bar of sin, he must be God as well as man, even God's equal, God's fellow. And that he might be able for the application, as well as the impetration of man's redemption, not only able *to save to the uttermost, all them that come to God through him*, but able to draw poor stubborn souls to himself, by his own power, and make them willing.

(3.) Our Redeemer must be God's Fellow in regard of the *dignity of the work:* his honour and dignity, in being a Redeemer and Mediator between God and man, was too great for any creature, supposing any creature had been able for it; this crown of glory was not fitting for any mere creature's head. An office of dignity, on an unworthy person, is most unsuitable: this dignity was so great, that even Christ himself, though God's equal, might not take it upon him, till he was called to it of God, Heb. v. 4, 5.

(4.) Our Redeemer must be God's Fellow in regard of the *covenant of grace*, which was the ground work and foundation of all: since our Redeemer was to make a covenant with God for us, it was necessary that he should be with God at the making of it, and know the depths of God's counsel in it, and perfectly know for whom he was to satisfy, and upon what condition. Now, this covenant being as antient as eternity; and seeing God should have our Redeemer by him, to conclude the covenant and bargain with him, who of all the creatures were capable of this? who, of all the creatures *have known the mind of the Lord, and being his counsellor have taught him?* God might have said to all the creatures, as to Job, in another case, Job xxxviii. 4. *Where wast thou, when I laid the foundations of the earth?* Where was you when the plot of redemption was laid? when the names of my redeemed ones were put in the book of life? But our Redeemer was then *by him*, Prov. viii. 30. He becomes our everlasting Father; begetting us, with the Father, in the womb of eternal election.

(5.) Our Redeemer must be God's Fellow in regard of the *place* he was to have in the covenant, with *respect to God:* who among all mere creatures was fit to have all power in heaven and in earth committed to him? Power to bequeath such blessings as peace, pardon, reconciliation, justification, and eternal life; power by his blood to confirm and establish all the promises of the covenant? Christ Jesus did, *through the eternal Spirit*, (that is, his Godhead,) *offer up himself, without spot to God;* and then the apostle infers, *for this cause, he is the Mediator of the new testament;* yea, Christ was to be Surety of this testament; Surety *for God to us;* to make out all the blessings and promises of the covenant to us; and Surety *for us to God*, to satisfy law and justice in our room; what creature was able to do this? or if any creature should be supposed to be able, was it fit that God should put such a trust in any creature? No.

(6.) Our Redeemer must be God's Fellow in regard of the *place* he was to have with *respect to us:* our Redeemer must be the object of our faith and love; what creature in heaven or earth, could be a sufficient prop and foundation for our faith? Had any mere creature undertaken to be our Redeemer, we could never fully have depended upon him, but would always been afraid he had miscarried: therefore it was requisite to quiet our fears, that our Redeemer should be God's Fellow; see Isa. xxxv. 3. *He is God, therefore fear not:* our hearts could never have been at full rest otherwise. I remember, when Israel were going through the wilderness, they were to meet with much opposition; God promises to send an *angel with them;* it is said, *all the people mourned for these evil tidings*, that God himself would not go up; yea, Moses himself was fearful of the mismanagement of a mere angel; therefore says Moses, *If thou go not with us, carry us not up hence*, Exod. xxxiii. 2, 3, 4, 15. And again, ver. 12. *Thou hast not let me know whom thou wilt send.* They thought his sending of an angel, was as good as his sending none at all. Thus, you see, people's fears would never be quieted by the government of an angel, though one of them was able to destroy a whole host in one night: even so, our hearts could never be at rest, though God sent an angel for our deliverance; therefore God sent his own Son, his

his Fellow, that he might fully truſt him, and depend upon him; that we might place all our ſatisfaction in him, as a full portion, ſo as to ſeek no further.—Thus you ſee, he is God's Fellow; and why, as our Redeemer, he behoved to be ſo.

2*dly*, Conſider the account we have of his *human nature*, *The* MAN *that is my Fellow*. Here I would ſhew you, 1. What *kind* of a man Chriſt became. 2. Why our Redeemer behoved *to be a man*.

1. What *kind* of a man he became? Why, *The Word was made fleſh, and dwelt among us: Great is the myſtery of godlineſs, God manifeſted in the fleſh: He took not on him the nature of angels, but the ſeed of Abraham*. More particularly,

(1.) He was a *poor* man; a man very poor and mean in outward reſpects: poor in his birth; he was not born of a queen, nor laid in a palace; but born of a poor virgin, and laid in a manger: He was poor in his life; ſeveral *people miniſtred to him of their ſubſtance*: yea, *The foxes had holes, and the birds of the air had neſts, but the ſon of man had not where to lay his head. Though he was rich, yet for our ſakes he became poor*. Let not poor people quarrel at their lot; Chriſt, God's equal, was a poor man.

(2.) He was a *diſtreſſed* man; *A man of ſorrows, and acquainted with griefs*: a man of the ſame infirmities with us, except ſinful ones: *In all things it behoved him to be like unto his brethren; that he might be a merciful and faithful High-prieſt*, Heb. ii. 17.; and, *He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without ſin*, Heb. iii. 15. He was hungry, thirſty, weary, tempted, afflicted, and every way diſtreſſed. Let no diſtreſſed perſon think it ſtrange that they are ſo, ſince God's Fellow was a diſtreſſed man.

(3.) He was a *true* man; he had a true body and a reaſonable ſoul: his body was nailed to the tree; they pierced his hands and his feet: his ſoul was exceeding ſorrowful, even unto death. As man he went through all the ages of men; firſt, he was conceived; then, he was a babe; next, a youth; and at laſt, came to the perfect ſtature of a man. But,

(4.) He was a *good* man, an holy man; immaculate was the conception of the holy child Jeſus: we come defiled into the world, but Chriſt brought no ſin into the world with him; and all the devils could not make him ſin; for, *The prince of this world could find nothing in him*, either of original or actual ſin: *He was made ſin for us, who knew no ſin; but was holy, harmleſs, undefiled, and ſeparate from ſinners*. Never was there ſuch an holy man upon earth: ſee Heb. v. 7. *He was heard, in that he feared*; or, *he was heard for his piety and holineſs*. Since Adam fell, never was there a man but this, that was heard and accepted of God for his own piety and holineſs.

(5.) He was a *wiſe* man; the wiſeſt man that ever was: Solomon was very wiſe, but behold, a wiſer than Solomon is here. He anſwered the learned doctors, to their amazement, when he was twelve years old: Yea, all that heard him were aſtoniſhed at his underſtanding and anſwers, Luke ii. 47. And ſometimes aſked queſtions to which no man was able to anſwer a word, nor durſt aſk him any *more queſtions*, Mat. xxii. 46. and no wonder, for he was the *power of God*, and the *wiſdom of God; and in him are hid all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge*: and hence he revealed the glorious truths that were before concealed. He was a wiſe man indeed. Yet,

(6.) He was a *mortal* man as we are, and he actually died as we muſt; he was put to a painful and ſhameful death; and his curſed death, which yet we may call his bleſſed death, we are to commemorate this day. This man fell a ſacrifice to the awakened ſword of infinite juſtice; the Shepherd was ſmitten and ſlain, for he was a mortal man; 'if it be lawful to 'call him a man,' as Joſephus, a Jew, ſaid. For,

In a word, he is a *wonderful* man; to all eternity his name ſhall *be called wonderful*, Iſa. ix. 6. This wonderful man is our peace-maker with God; *This man ſhall be the peace when the Aſſyrian cometh into our land*. This wonderful man is our only covert from the furious ſtorm of divine wrath; *A man ſhall be an hiding-place from the ſtorm, and a covert from the tempeſt*. But,

2. Why muſt our Redeemer *be a man*? Why, for the following reaſons.

(1.) He muſt be a man in regard of the *tranſaction* between the Father and the Son. Not only was God's truth engaged in the promiſe, that the ſeed of the woman ſhould be ſent; that to *us a child ſhould be born, to us a Son given*, and that a *virgin* ſhould *bring forth a ſon, and call his name Immanuel, God with us, God in our nature*; and not only was God, in his infinite wiſdom, reſolved in the weakneſs of our nature, to perfect his own ſtrength, and get the greater glory; and that as *by one man's diſobedience, many were made ſinners; ſo by the obedience of one, many ſhould be made righteous*; but alſo, it being agreed between the Father and the Son, in the covenant of redemption, or grace, that the Son ſhould offer up a ſacrifice for us; it was alſo agreed, that there muſt be *ſomewhat to offer*, Heb. viii. 3. Somewhat of greater value than all the world; for, nothing could be a ſufficient ſacrifice for the expiation of ſin. If Chriſt had not been man, he could have had nothing to offer up as a ſacrifice to God: God himſelf provided a ſacrifice, as he did a ram in the room of Iſaac: *Sacrifice and offering thou wouldſt not; a body haſt thou prepared me*. This body, this ſacrifice, was provided in the counſel of peace; and being thus provided, Chriſt comes chearfully to offer it, *Lo, I come; I delight to do thy will, O my God*.

(2.) He muſt be a man in regard of *us*; he would not have redeemed us, if according to the law, the right of redemption had not belonged to him as our kinſman, Lev. xxv. 25. and being man, he is fit to communicate to us the things of God in ſuch a way, as we are capable to receive. If God ſhould appear to us immediately, in his terrible glory, we would be afraid of him, as Iſrael were, and run away from him; and hide ourſelves, as Adam did: yea, thus we have a merciful High-prieſt, that is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. As man he had experience of our afflictions; are we ſorrowful? ſo was he; *Sorrowful, even unto death*: are we grieved? he was *acquainted with grief*: are we in poverty? ſo was he: are we ſmitten? ſo was he: are we deſerted? ſo was he: having a natural fibneſs to us, being bone of our bone, and fleſh of our fleſh.

(3.) He muſt be man in regard of *juſtice*: juſtice required that the ſame nature that ſinned ſhould be puniſhed for ſin, and make ſatisfaction for ſin: God ſaid, *The ſoul that ſinneth ſhall die*: now, die we muſt, either in our own perſons,

perſons, or in our Surety, in our own nature. If any angel had fulfilled the law, what had that been to us? if an angel had ſuffered God's wrath, what had that been to us, to man? Though God allowed the change, or commutation of perſons, yet not the commutation of natures; the ſame nature that ſinned muſt ſuffer.

(4.) He muſt be man in reſpect of the *devil*; the devil conquered man, and man muſt conquer the devil: Satan muſt be foiled by the ſame nature that was foiled by him; *The ſeed of the woman muſt bruiſe the head of the ſerpent. For this cauſe, therefore, the Son of God was manifeſted in our fleſh, that he might deſtroy the works of the devil.*

(5.) He muſt be man in regard of *ſin*, which muſt be cured by the contrary antidote: our ſin was pride, Gen. iii. 5.: being but men we deſired to be Gods; therefore the cure is by humility, wherefore God becomes man. Man broke the law, and man muſt keep the law: by our ſin we tranſgreſſed the boundaries of God's law; Chriſt, therefore, is *made of a woman, made under the law.* Sin defaced the glory of God, therefore he who is the *brightneſs of the Father's glory, and the expreſs image of his perſon*, becomes of no reputation; and comes in the form of a ſervant. Sin is a Deicide, ſtriking at the being of God, ſeeking his life; therefore he that had a life equal with God's, laid down his life, for the ſatisfaction of this wrong. *Awake, O ſword, againſt the man that is my Fellow.*

(6.) He muſt be a man in regard of *paſſibility* or ſufferings; *Without ſuffering, or ſhedding of blood, there was no remiſſion.* He that will ſave us then, muſt die for us, and ſhed his blood for us; which he could not do, had he been merely God; *For God is a Spirit.* He becomes man, that he may be in caſe to enter the liſts with juſtice: juſtice could not get at him with one ſtroak; but as ſoon as he was man, then, *Awake, O ſword, againſt the man that is my Fellow, ſaid the Lord of hoſts.* But, why could not the ſword of juſtice awake againſt him till he was man? Why, as God, ſin could not get hold of him; and ſo juſtice could not get a hit of him for ſin: the law could not challenge him; the curſe could not reach him: but whenever he becomes man, our Surety, then they all flee about him; and compaſs him about like bulls of Baſhan. As he becomes man for us, he becomes ſin for us; and then he lay open to the curſe; and juſtice took him by the throat: the ſword awaked. When Chriſt ſaw the dreadful ſword of wrath, that was to be thruſt through his heart, indeed it put the man to his knees, *Father, let this cup paſs from me*; the human nature trembled, and ſwate great drops of blood, in his proleptic agony: However, the man was a God as well as a man, and therefore he wreſtled through. This might lead me,

3*dly*, To ſhew you the need of his being both *God* and *man* in *one perſon: The man, God's Fellow.* The cauſe of God, and the cauſe of man is referred to Chriſt; therefore he partakes of both natures, that he may be faithful to God, and merciful to man: a fit Mediator between God and man, to lay his hand upon both parties, while he partakes of both natures.—Our Redeemer muſt be both ſubject to the law, and fulfil the law meritoriouſly: now, if he had not been man, he could not be ſubject to the law; and if he had not been God, he could not have merited by fulfilling the law; but now, being God-man, by his obedience, he hath *magnified the law, and made it honourable.*—Our Redeemer was to give his ſoul an offering for ſin: now, if he had not been man, he could not have had a ſoul to offer; if he had not been God, his ſoul could not have upheld itſelf; but muſt have died when his ſoul was exceeding ſorrowful even unto death: but now, his divine nature did ſupport his human body, and his human ſoul, under the weight of that burden which would have cruſhed a world of men and angels.——Our Redeemer muſt both ſuffer and ſatisfy: now, if he had not been man, he could not have ſuffered; and if he had not been God, he could not have given ſatisfaction by his ſufferings: but, being God-man, his ſufferings are dignified with infinite value and virtue.—Our Redeemer muſt both die for us, and conquer death: now, if he had not been man, he could not have died; and therefore he took on our nature, that he might *taſte death for every man*: if he had not been God, he could not have deſtroyed death, conquered death; but now, *he is declared to be the Son of God with power, by the reſurrection from the dead.* There is the man that is God's Fellow. But now,

4*thly*, Conſider the *account* we have of his mediatory office, *My Shepherd.* Here you may a little view, 1. How he comes to be called a *Shepherd.* And, 2. How the Lord of hoſts comes to call him his Shepherd; *My Shepherd.*

1. then, How he is called a *Shepherd.* This will appear by noticing a few ſcriptures wherein he is ſo deſigned. He is called the *ſhepherd of Iſrael*, Pſal. lxxx. 1. He is called *the ſhepherd of ſouls*, 1 Pet. ii. 25. *You were like ſheep gone aſtray, but you are returned to the ſhepherd and biſhop of your ſouls.* He is called *the good Shepherd*, John x. 11. *I am the good ſhepherd:* O but it ſets him well to commend himſelf! *I am the good ſhepherd; the good ſhepherd gives his life for his ſheep.* He is called the *great ſhepherd*, Heb. xiii. 20. *Now, the God of peace, that brought again from the dead, that great ſhepherd of the ſheep, by the blood of the everlaſting covenant, make you perfect*, etc. He is called the *chief ſhepherd*, 1 Pet. v. 4. *When the chief ſhepherd ſhall appear, ye ſhall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.* He has all the qualities of a good and great ſhepherd. Does a ſhepherd take care to *provide* for his flock and feed them? ſo does Chriſt; *The Lord is my ſhepherd, I ſhall not want: He feeds his flock like a ſhepherd*, Iſa. xl. 11. He feeds them with the bread of life. Does a ſhepherd *water* his flock? ſo does Chriſt; he gives them not only meat for their nouriſhment, but drink for the refreſhment of his weary flock, even the water of life, that flows from below the throne, through the conduit of the goſpel; by which I underſtand the Spirit, that *well of water ſpringing up to everlaſting life;* and the influences of his grace, by which he ſtrengthens, purifies, and comforts his people.——Does a ſhepherd lead his flock to convenient paſtures? ſo does Chriſt; *Give ear, O Shepherd of Iſrael, thou that leadeſt Joſeph like a flock: He leads them to green paſtures, and beſide the ſtill waters* of goſpel-ordinances and promiſes: and theſe paſtures are ſweeter to them *than honey or the honey-comb.*——Does the ſhepherd *heal* his diſtreſſed flock? ſo

does

does Christ; his name is *Jehovah-Rophi, I am the Lord that healeth thee.* Is there any here that are poor diseased sheep, plagued with atheism, unbelief, enmity, and pride? plagued with a backsliding heart? what think you of that Shepherd that says, *I will heal your backslidings, and love you freely:* Does the shepherd *seek out* the lost sheep till he find it? so does Christ; *He came to seek and to save that which was lost.*—Does the shepherd take *special care* of the poor tender sheep, that is so far behind that it can hardly follow the flock? so does Christ; *He gathers the lambs in his arms, carries them in his bosom, and gently leads those that are with young.*——Does the shepherd prevent the *straying* of the sheep, and bring back such as go astray? so does Christ; he prevents their total apostacy, according to his covenant, Jer. xxxii. 40. *I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.* Hence comes it, that his sheep never go back into perdition, Psal. xxxvii. 24. *Though he fall, he shall not utterly be cast down; for the Lord upholds him with his hand.* Hence comes their recoveries after falls, because this Shepherd gathers and brings back his straying sheep. See a sweet scripture to this purpose, Ezek. xxxiv. 11, 12, 13, 16, 23. compared particularly with ver. 16. As this may be a sweet word to poor sheep, that have nothing, and see they have nothing; no good, no grace, no faith, no love, no repentance, no good qualifications of their own, nothing to recommend them to God, but their want and neceffity; and to the weak sheep, that finds he can do nothing, he cannot pray, cannot believe, cannot mourn, cannot communicate, and therefore sees an absolute need of Christ to be their righteousness and strength: so it may be an awakening word to the fat and strong sheep; these that are fat and full in themselves, and think they are increased with goods, and stand in need of nothing; they have a good heart to God; they are not so ill, they think, as some persons: and those that are strong, they think they can pray, and hear, and believe, and communicate well enough; what should hinder them? whereas the poor and weak will be fed with mercy; the fat and the strong, will be fed with judgment. Let the poor weak sheep, though sensible of great strayings, yet conceive hope; this Shepherd seeks that which was lost, and brings again that which was driven away. Was you driven away with a cheek-wind; driven away by the devil; driven away from your Shepherd by temptation and powerful corruption? Why, yet he brings again that which was driven away.——Does a shepherd *defend* his flock from troubles, and such as would make a prey of them? so does Christ; when grievous wolves, whether in church or state, would destroy the poor sheep, whether in their persons or principles; yet *upon all the glory there shall be a defence:* and *no weapon formed against them shall prosper:* for, *There is no enchantment against Jacob, nor divination against Israel.*——Does a shepherd *know* all the sheep of his flock, by his own mark upon them? so does Christ; *The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his.* As his sheep hear and know his voice from the voice of a stranger, so he knows them, and calls his own sheep by name, John x. 3. But,

2. How does the Lord of hosts come to call him HIS *Shepherd? Awake, O sword, against* MY SHEPHERD. Why, he is God, the Father's Shepherd in several respects; which I touch at only in a word.

(1.) He is God's Shepherd, because God *made* him so; he has the Father's commission for this effect, John vi. 27. *Him hath God the Father sealed.* Christ was appointed and authorized; he was elected for this effect; *behold, my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighted.* He transacted with him for this effect; *I have made a covenant with my chosen.* He formally called him to this employment, and set him up to be a Shepherd, Ezek. xxxiv. 23. *I will set up one Shepherd over them, and he shall feed them; he shall be their Shepherd.* He qualified him for this work, by a supereminent unction; *I have put my Spirit upon him, and he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.*

(2.) He is God's Shepherd, because God *gave him the sheep*, John xvii. 6. *Thine they were, and thou gavest them me:* they were thine by election, and thou gavest them me, to be redeemed by me. This donation of the sheep to Christ is begun in election, and accomplished in effectual vocation; *all that the Father hath given me, shall come to me.*

3. He is God's Shepherd, because God *recommends all his sheep to his special care*, John vi. 39, *This is the Father's will, which has sent me, that of all which he has given me, I should loose nothing.* God has given him the *heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost ends of the earth for his possession.* All whom he chose to be the objects of his special love, he lodges as a trust in the hands of Christ: he gave him the charge of the sheep, and his instructions are, not only to lose none, no not the least of them, the weakest of them; but to lose nothing: and as he will lose none, no person; so he will lose nothing, no part of the person; neither soul nor body.

(4.) He is God's Shepherd; Why? God *appointed* him to lay down his life for his sheep, John x. 18. *I lay down my life for my sheep; I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again: this commandment have I received of my Father.* Christ suffered death, not only voluntarily, but in a way of subjection to his Father, that so the merit of his death might be every way full and acceptable to the Father. And so again,

(5.) He is God's Shepherd, because God *approves* of his undertaking and work, as his Shepherd, and loves him, for this very reason, John x. 17. He approves of his doing and dying: his soul is delighted in this Shepherd; *Mine elect in whom my soul delighteth.* He openly declares his affection in him; *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* The Lord is well pleased for his righteousness sake.

(6.) In a word, he is God's Shepherd, because God the Father and Christ are *equally concerned in keeping the sheep*, John x. 27—30. The Father does so intrust Christ with the sheep, as yet he casts not off the care of them; they are in the Father's hands as well as Christ's: *He and his Father are one;* though personally distinct, yet essentially one. The man that is God's Fellow, in this has fellowship with the Father, that the Father's sheep are his sheep; and his sheep are the Father's sheep: and they are equally concerned and engaged in keeping

ing the ſheep; only Chriſt, as Mediator, is engaged for them as the Father's ſervant and commiſſioner; *my ſhepherd.*—Now, thus much concerning the character of the perſon whom the ſword of the Lord of hoſts muſt awake againſt: and, O if we had a view, by a ſaving faith, of this glorious one, God's Shepherd, the man that is his Fellow, God-man Mediator, we could ſay no leſs than that *he is white and ruddy, the chief among ten thouſands.* The white and red of his infinitely fair face would charm and allure us. Now,

II. The *ſecond* thing, what for a *ſword* muſt awake againſt this man? Why, in general, it is the ſword of God's awful juſtice; which is metaphorically called a *ſword*, becauſe of its terrible piercing, wounding, killing nature. Now, the ſtroaks of this ſword are either mediate or immediate. 1. *Mediate*, by the hands of men; particularly the ſword of the civil magiſtrate. Or, 2. *Immediate*, by the hands of God himſelf, without the intervention of ſuch outward means. Now, the ſword of juſtice, that awaked againſt Chriſt, and ſmote the Shepherd, is to be conſidered in both theſe reſpects; for his ſuffering, as our Surety, by the ſtroak of juſtice's ſword, was both external upon his body, and internal upon his ſoul.

(1.) There was his external ſufferings in his body: and herein juſtice did ſtrike more mediately by the hand of man; and eſpecially in his ſevereſt bodily ſufferings; juſtice did employ and make uſe of the ſword of the civil magiſtrate. Magiſtrates have the ſword of civil power and authority put into their hands, and they ought not to bear the ſword in vain: they are a power which God has ordained, and armed with the ſword, for the puniſhment of malefactors; though this be the right uſe of the magiſtrate's ſword, yet ſometimes the magiſtrate makes unjuſt uſe of it; as in this caſe, when the civil government, Herod, Potius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Iſrael, were gathered together againſt the holy child Jeſus, Acts iv. 27. But whatever in juſtice was therein, on man's part, yet, on God's part, impartial juſtice did therein act, while it did thereby bring about the death and ſufferings of the Surety, which the hand and counſel of God determined before to be done, Acts iv. 26.

(2.) There were his internal ſufferings in his ſoul; and herein juſtice did ſtrike more immediately; for, *it pleaſed the Lord to bruiſe him*, and *to make his ſoul an offering for ſin*, Iſa. liii. 10. Thus the ſword of juſtice was ſuch as pierced both his ſoul and body. This two-edged ſword was edged with the violence of earth, and with the fury of heaven; it was edged with the curſe of the law, and with the wrath of God. But more particularly, what for a ſword is this? O rouze up your ears and hearts to hear and conſider what for a ſword it was that awaked againſt the man that is God's Fellow!

1. It is a *broad* ſword; ſo broad that it covers all mankind, and hangs over all Chriſtleſs ſinners, who would all have fallen a ſacrifice to it, unleſs Chriſt had come between them and it. When this ſword did awake againſt Chriſt, he found it as broad as the curſe denounced againſt mankind, upon the back of our fall in Adam, which you may read, that you may the better underſtand what the man that is God's Fellow underwent, when he ſubſtitute himſelf in our room, and undertook to ſuffer the puniſhment due for our ſins, the curſe pronounced againſt Adam, and in him againſt all his poſterity, and which, in all the parts of it, lighted upon Chriſt; you read of it generally, Gen. ii. 17. *In the day thou eateſt, thou ſhalt ſurely die*; or, *dying, thou ſhalt die*: and more particularly, Gen. iii. 17, 18, 19. *Curſed is the ground for thy ſake, in ſorrow ſhalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns alſo and thiſtles ſhall it bring forth to thee, and thou ſhalt eat the herb of the field. In the ſweet of thy face ſhalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground, for out of it waſt thou taken: for duſt thou art, and unto duſt ſhalt thou return.* Where you ſee the curſe has three parts. 1. The frailties and infirmities that human nature was ſubject to after the fall. 2. The calamities incident to man's life; *Thou ſhalt eat thy meat with the ſweat of thy brows: thorns and thiſtles ſhall the ground bring forth.* 3. Death; *duſt thou art, and to duſt thou ſhalt return*: which has in it the death of the ſoul as well as the body. Here is an abridgment of all the curſes of the bible; and this broad ſword muſt awake againſt the man that is God's Fellow, and our Surety, for this curſe in all its parts ſeized upon him. The

(1.) Was the frailties and infirmities of human nature, a part of the curſe? this ſeized upon Chriſt at his incarnation; for his body was of the duſt like ours, ſubject to the like infirmities with ours; he took not on him our nature in its prime and glory, but after broken and ſhattered with the fall, Rom. viii. 3, *He came in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh, and for ſin condemned ſin in the fleſh.*

(2.) As to the *calamities* and *miſeries* that attended man's life, this part of the curſe ſeized on him alſo; he eat his bread with the ſweat of his brows, when he followed the calling of an handicraftſman; and after he entered into his public miniſtry, he travelled from place to place, watched whole nights in prayer; and thus might be ſaid truly to eat his bread with the ſweat of his brows. As for other calamities never one met with more; the world denied him a lodging; the fig-tree denied him figs; he was blaſphemed by his enemies, betrayed by one of his diſciples, and forſaken by them all.

(3.) As for the *death* threatened in the curſe; why, *dying, he died* indeed; for the ſword did run through his body and ſoul at once, when *he endured the curſe, and deſpiſed the ſhame*: his body was ſore tortured, and his ſoul was *ſore amazed, and very heavy*, Mark xiv. 33. His bodily ſufferings were extremely great, as you may ſee from the evangeliſts; and yet as nothing in compariſon of his ſoul-ſufferings, while he endured the wrath of God immediately upon his ſoul.—Here was a broad ſword indeed, as broad and extenſive as all the curſes of the law, all the wrath that the elect deſerved for their ſin; for God deſigned not to paſs one of their ſins, without a ſatisfaction made to juſtice, but to ſue the cautioner for them all: O but he needed a broad back that could bear the ſhock of ſuch a broad ſword! Well, ſo he had; for he was God as well as man; *Awake, O ſword, againſt the man, my Fellow.*

2. It is a *long* ſword: if we may ſo call it, in-

infinite in length from the point to the hilt of the ſword: it is as long as eternity; and this makes the puniſhment of the damned eternal, becauſe the ſword of divine wrath, that pierces them, is ſo long, that it never can reach to the hilt, in ſuch finite worms as they are. The duration of the wrath and the curſe is eternal; becauſe the ſinner, being a mere creature, cannot at one ſhock meet with the infinite wrath of God, and ſatisfy juſtice at once; therefore God ſupports the poor damned creature for ever under wrath; becauſe it cannot, being finite, ſatisfy infinite juſtice: but our Shepherd, being God-man, the man, God's Fellow; and therefore being of infinite worth and value, of infinite ſtrength and power, was able to ſatisfy juſtice, and bear all at once, that which the elect could never have borne. Yet he met with the eſſentials of that which ſin deſerves, *viz.* death and the curſe; the hiding of his Father's face, and the ſuſpending and keeping back of that conſolation, which, by virtue of the perſonal union, flowed from the God-head to the manhood; and alſo, had the actual ſenſe and feeling of the wrath of God; the awakened ſword of the juſtice of God actually ſmiting him: ſo that, though men wondered how he could be dead ſo ſoon, not knowing what ſtroaks of infinite juſtice he met with; yet theſe ſtroaks lighting upon the like of him, the man God's Fellow, was equivalent to the eternal puniſhments and torments of the damned.

3. It is a *bloody* and *inſatiable* ſword: this ſword of juſtice was not ſatisfied with the blood of Sodom and Gomorrah; it was not ſatisfied with the blood of the old world; it was not ſatisfied with the blood of bulls, goats, and all the legal ſacrifices of old; yea, the blood of the whole creation cannot give it ſatisfaction, though it were bathed therein; without the ſhedding of more blood, better blood, there is no remiſſion, no ſatisfaction to juſtice, no real ſatisfaction with God; no ſalvation of the ſinner; therefore, *Awake, O ſword, againſt the man that is my Fellow:* till it be drunk with the blood of this man, it never gets a ſatisfying draught of blood. Well then, ſays this man, *Lo, I come;* let juſtice take a full draught of my blood: well, *Awake, O ſword;* let the blood of this man, my Fellow, be ſhed; ſhed at his circumciſion, ſhed in the garden, ſhed in his being crowned with thorns, ſhed in his being ſcourged, ſhed in his crucifying; well, thus the blood of God's Fellow was ſhed. What ſay you now, O ſword of juſtice? Are you pleaſed? Are you ſatisfied with blood? Yes, I have got my fill of blood; *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed;* I am pleaſed and ſatisfied to the full with his obedience to the death; I have got all the ſatisfaction I wanted from my Shepherd, and I have no more to demand of him or his ſheep either. O glory to God, that ever this bloody inſatiable ſword did awake againſt one that could give it blood enough, ſatisfaction enough; and yet,

4. It is a *dreadful, terrible, flaming,* and *devouring* ſword: ſo it is repreſented, Gen. iii. 24. where it is ſaid, *Cherubims were placed, and a flaming ſword, which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life.* The leaſt flame of this ſword of juſtice is enough to burn up the whole creation: and O! how terrible will this ſword be for ever to them that live and die in a Chriſtleſs ſtate! The dreadfulneſs of this ſword is no where to be ſeen ſo lively as in its awaking againſt the man that was God's Fellow: his human nature trembled at the ſight of it; John xii. 27. *Now is my ſoul troubled, and what ſhall I ſay?* He ſaw the dreadful ſtorm coming, the black cloud ariſing, and ſo much wrath in it, that he knew not how to expreſs himſelf, Mat. xxvi. 38. and Mark xiv. 34. There he cries out, *My ſoul is exceeding ſorrowful, even unto death.* We never hear of one groan from Chriſt for all his bloody ſufferings; when crowned with thorns, ſcourged, and laid on the croſs; *As a ſheep before her ſhearer is dumb, ſo he opened not his mouth:* but on the firſt entrance of his ſoul-ſufferings, he fell a lamenting, *My ſoul is exceeding ſorrowful;* the original words are moſt emphatic, *he was begirt with ſorrow:* he was plunged over head and ears in the wrath of God: all the faculties and powers of his ſoul were begirt with ſorrow; *he began to be ſore amazed,* Mark xiv. 33. The word ſignifies the *greateſt extremity of amazement,* and ſuch as makes a man's hair ſtand, and his fleſh creep; and it is added, he was *very heavy;* if we conſult the derivation of the word, it ſignifies, *a ſinking of ſpirit;* his heart was like wax melted at the ſight of that terrible wrath. But the evangeliſt Luke has yet a ſtronger expreſſion, Luke xxi. 44. *Being in an agony, his ſweat was, as it were, great drops of blood, falling to the ground; being in an agony; engaged in a combat,* as the Greek word ſignifies: he had before combated with principalities and powers in the wilderneſs; but now he is combating with the Father's wrath. He was in an agony, and ſwate great drops of blood; all ſweats ariſe from weakneſs and preſſures of nature; therefore a dying ſweat is a cold ſweat; but never one, but Chriſt, ſwate a bloody ſweat; and great drops of blood, in ſuch abundance, that it came through his garments, and fell to the ground; and this was all but the firſt onſet, a little ſkirmiſh before the main battle: for the main fight was to be on mount Calvary, after they nailed him to the croſs; then, on a ſudden, the curtain of heaven is drawn, the ſun loſes his light; he was now combating with all the powers of hell and darkneſs; and therefore the field he was to fight in was dark. The puniſhment of loſs and ſenſe both was due to us for ſin, therefore he ſuffered both: the puniſhment of loſs, for all comfort now fails Chriſt; angels appeared before ſtrengthening him; but now not an angel dares peep out of heaven for his comfort; yea, now his God fails him, in reſpect of his comfortable preſence: formerly his heart failed him, in ſome reſpects, but now his God; which makes him cry out, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* Never was there ſuch a cry in heaven or earth, before or ſince: yea, now he ſuffered the puniſhment of ſenſe alſo due to us; for now all the wrath of God was poured down immediately upon his ſoul: all the ſluices of divine fury are opened, and all the waves and billows of his vengeance paſſed over him. *Darkneſs was over all the earth:* all things huſhed into ſilence, that Chriſt might, without interruption, grapple with his Father's wrath, until he cried, *It is finiſhed,* and *gave up the ghoſt.* What think you

of this dreadful ſword that awaked againſt our Surety, the man God's Fellow, when he was to expiate our ſins?

5. It is a *bright* ſword, a *clear*, a *glittering* ſword; there is no ſpot of ruſt or ſtain upon this ſword; no: the ſword is ſpotleſs. Juſtice, holy juſtice: there is no unrighteouſneſs with God. As there is no drop of unrighteouſneſs in the cup of the damned, who are all damned by an act of holy juſtice; ſo there was no drop of injuſtice in the cup of wrath, which Chriſt, as Surety, drank up to the bottom. Chriſt had ſaid of old, *Lo, I come*; I come to be cautioner, and enter myſelf in the room of poor ſinners, to pay their debt; juſtice, indeed, could not have required our debt of him, if he had not undertaken it; but having entered himſelf cautioner for our debt, he became liable to the payment of it: hence, when Chriſt ſaw the ſword, and was crying, *Father, ſave me from this hour*, he immediately corrected himſelf with a *but*; BUT *for this cauſe came I into this* hour, John xii. 27. And in the beginning of the twenty-ſecond pſalm, which you know is one of the moſt clear prophecies of Chriſt's ſufferings, after he had cried out, ver. 1. *My God, my God; why haſt thou forſaken me?* Which is not the expreſſion of any quarrelling complaint or diſcouragement, but of ſinleſs nature, when arraigned before the tribunal of God, affected with the horrour of divine wrath, and not being able eaſily to endure that there ſhould be a cloud between God and him; I ſay after theſe words he adds, ver. 3. *But thou art holy:* he cannot complain of injuſtice; thou art juſt and holy in exacting all the debt at my hand, which I became ſurety for: I have all the ſins of the elect to anſwer for; and therefore I juſtify thee, O Father, in giving me this ſtroak of thy awakened ſword: *Thou art holy; thou art clear when thou judgeſt.*——It is a clear, bright, ſpotleſs, and holy ſword.

6. It is a *living* ſword: do you think that God is ſpeaking to a piece of cold iron, when he ſays, *Awake, O ſword?* Nay, this ſword is God himſelf, the living God: God's juſtice is God himſelf, a juſt God. Of this living ſword you read, Heb. x. 31. *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.* They that fall into hell, they fall into the hands of the living God; and there they are an everlaſting ſacrifice to this ever-living ſword. Chriſt, when he came to ſatisfy juſtice, he fell into the hands of this living God; and if he had not been God's equal, God's Fellow, he could never have got out of his hands again. If this ſword be a living ſword, even the living God, O but it muſt be a great and ſtrong ſword, as the ſword of God is called, Iſa. xxvii. 1. It takes the ſtrength of God to weild it; and ſo he does here, *Awake, O ſword:* It takes the ſtrength of God to bear the blow of it, and ſo it is here; *Awake, againſt the man that is my Fellow.* One blow of it given to the angels and ſeraphims, would have brought them all down from the battlements of heaven to the bottom of hell. *Awake, O ſword:* God is here ſpeaking to himſelf; as if he had ſaid, Let me ariſe in my armour of vengeance and fury, and fall upon my Shepherd, the man that is my Fellow: it is a living ſword that can awake itſelf.—Thus you ſee what for a ſword it is that awakes againſt Chriſt. O to ſee and believe this truth this day!

III. The *third* thing was to ſhew, in what *manner* this ſword did awake againſt Chriſt, and what is imported in the phraſe, *Awake, O ſword.* How the ſword did awake againſt Chriſt has been partly declared already in the account of the ſword itſelf: however it may a little further appear, in the import of this wonderful call, *Awake, O ſword*, etc.

1. It imports, as if the ſword had been *ſleeping*, and now muſt awake againſt him: Chriſt having no ſin of his own to anſwer for, the ſword of juſtice had nothing to lay to his charge; and ſo was ſleeping, as it were, with reſpect to him, having nothing to ſay againſt him, being the infinitely holy God in himſelf, until once he made the bargain with his Father, to become our Surety and Cautioner; and whenever he became ſin for us, and took on him our debt, then juſtice had a right to purſue him; and therefore, *Awake, O ſword.*

2. *Awake, O ſword*, it imports, that not only while the counſel of peace was held between the Father and the Son, did juſtice delay the execution, though Chriſt was the Lamb ſlain from the foundation of the world, in the decree and counſel of God, but that after this glorious tranſaction, the ſword deſigned againſt the Son of God, had long *ſlumbered*: the ſword had ſlumbered above four thouſand years after Adam's fall; the Lamb was not ſlain all that time, but only in dark typical repreſentations of his death; but now, he muſt be actually ſlain; therefore, *Awake, O ſword.* God was now ſpeaking of the day of Chriſt, the goſpel-day in the firſt verſe of the chapter, where our text lies, ſaying, *In that day, there ſhall be a fountain opened to the houſe of David, and to the inhabitants of Jeruſalem, for ſin, and for uncleanneſs:* Now, how ſhall this fountain be opened? Why, the ſword of juſtice muſt pierce the ſide and heart of the Son of God, and ſo open a fountain of cleanſing blood; therefore, when the decree breaks forth, he ſays, *Awake, O ſword.*

3. *Awake, O ſword;* it imports, that the ſword of juſtice did not *raſhly* ſmite the man that is God's Fellow: A man in his ſleep, or half ſleeping, may give a raſh unadviſed ſtroak to his fellow; but before God gave the ſtroak to the man that is his Fellow, he did awake his juſtice, as it were, out of ſleep, and proceeded upon the matureſt deliberation; *Awake, O ſword.* It was no unadviſed ſtroak that Chriſt got by the ſword of juſtice; it was the fruit of a glorious tranſaction: neither did the ſword ſtrike him without a warrant, by particular orders from the Judge of all: It was warranted to brandiſh itſelf againſt him; *Awake, O ſword.*

4. It imports, that juſtice was *lively* and *vigorous* in executing the vengeance due upon our Surety for our ſin: Juſtice did not give him a ſleepy, lazy, drowſy blow; but a ſtrong, lively, awakened blow: as it is ſaid, in another caſe, Iſa. ii. 9. *Awake, awake, put on ſtrength, O arm of the Lord;* ſo *Awake, O ſword*, put on ſtrength. Well, juſtice ariſes, as it were, like one out of ſleep, puts on its cloaths of vengeance, and armour of power, rallys its forces, goes forth with warlike robes, and attacks the man that is God's Fellow with all its force; and acts, like itſelf, with impartial equity, without ſparing our Surety, becauſe of his quality, Rom. viii. 32. *God ſpared not his own Son: Awake, O ſword.*

5. *Awake, O ſword,* it imports, the great *concern* and *earneſtneſs* that was in God's heart to have his juſtice ſatisfied: O ſword; *awake, O ſword.* God ſpeaks here with affectionate concern: O ſword! O juſtice! thou muſt be honoured, glorified, and ſatisfied, one way or other: and ſeeing I have propoſed to my eternal Son to bear the ſtroak of vengeance in the room of elect ſinners; and ſeeing he has undertaken it, my very heart is ſet upon the accompliſhment of this glorious work; my juſtice is one of the pearls of my crown; I will not ſhew mercy to the detriment of my juſtice. A ſacrifice I muſt have, a ſacrifice I will have; therefore, *Awake, O ſword.*

6. I think it imports, not only God's concern to have his juſtice ſatisfied this way, but his *great delight* in the ſatisfaction; *Awake, O ſword, againſt the man that is my Fellow.* With what infinite pleaſure and ſatisfaction does the ſword of juſtice give the bloody wound to this glorious perſon? *It pleaſed the Lord to bruiſe him, and to put him to grief,* Iſa. liii. 10. Why, how is this conſiſtent with the ineffable love he had to his eternally Beloved? Yes, moſt conſiſtent; for the Father loved the Son in dying, and for dying; John x. 17. *Therefore doth my Father love me, becauſe I lay down my life, that I might take it again.* He loved his Son for this very act of obedience which he yielded to him; Chriſt's obedience to the death was the higheſt and moſt acceptable worſhip and ſervice to God, that ever was, or ever will be: it is a ſacrifice of ſuch a ſweet ſmell that it drowned the ſtink of all the ſins of an elect world; a ſacrifice more pleaſing to God than all their ſins were diſpleaſing: and therefore, with infinite pleaſure and ſatisfaction, he ſays, *Awake, O ſword.* This leads me to

IV. The *Fourth* thing propoſed, What *ſpecial hand* Jehovah the Lord of hoſts, had in making this awful ſword to awake againſt this glorious perſon? *Awake, O ſword,—ſaith the Lord of hoſts.* It was the Lord of hoſts, the eternal Father of this eternal Son that muſtered the hoſts of vengeance againſt him, and had the main and principal hand in Chriſt's ſufferings, which we are to commemorate this day. Jehovah's hand was ſupreme in this buſineſs; and that in theſe four reſpects.

1. It was Jehovah the Lord of hoſts that *determined* all before-hand, and agreed with his Son for that effect. It was concluded in the counſel of God what he ſhould ſuffer, what ſhould be the price that Jehovah would have, and the ſacrifice he would accept of from his hands. It was not the Jews, nor the Scribes and Phariſees, nor Pilate, but principally it was the Lord's doing, and the accompliſhment of his eternal counſel, Acts iv. 27, 28. *Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Iſrael were gathered together, to do whatſoever thy hand and thy counſel determined before to be done.* In all they were doing they did nothing, but what was carved out before in the eternal counſel of God; and therefore ſays Peter, Acts ii. 23. *Him being delivered by the determinate counſel and foreknowledge of God, you have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and ſlain.*

2. As he, the great Jehovah, the Lord of hoſts, determined, that the ſword ſhould awake againſt him, ſo he *prepared the ſubject* capable to receive the ſtroak of juſtice's ſword; Heb. x. 5. *A body haſt thou prepared me.* He gave him a nature, a ſoul and body capable of ſuffering: the ſtroak of juſtice fell only upon the man Chriſt, upon his human nature; though the dignity of his divine perſon did infinitely inhance the merit of his ſufferings; yet his divine perſon, his divine nature was never reached, nor reachable, by the ſword of juſtice: the eternal Word was untangible and incapable of ſuffering, till the *Word was made fleſh.* Now, this fleſh, this human nature, he prepared.

3. It was Jehovah, the Lord of hoſts, that *ordered* and *over-ruled* all his ſufferings, when it came to the execution of his antient decree. He who governs all the counſels, thoughts, and actions of men, did, in a ſpecial manner, govern and overrule the ſufferings of the Mediator. Though wicked men were following their own deſigns, and were ſtirred and acted by the devil, who is ſaid to have put it into the heart of Judas to betray Chriſt; yet God had the ordering of all, who ſhould betray him; what death he ſhould die; how he ſhould be pierced; and yet not a bone of him broken.

4. It was Jehovah, the Lord of hoſts, that had an *active hand* in reaching the ſtroak to Chriſt; he was the chief party that purſued Chriſt with the ſword of juſtice in his hand; *It pleaſed the Lord to bruiſe him, and to put him to grief:* It was he that was exacting the elect's debt of him; and therefore Chriſt looked over Pilate and Herod, and all the wicked inſtruments uſed in this work, as of no conſideration in this matter; he looked over them to the Lord Jehovah his Father, and ſays to the chief of them, Pilate, (that cowardly ſelf-condemned judge) *Thou couldſt have no power over me, except it were given thee from above.* It was this intereſt that his Father had in his ſufferings that made him ſay, John xviii. 11. *The cup which my Father hath given me, ſhall I not drink it?* His Father purſued him as Cautioner in our room; and to his Father he cries when the ſword was running through his heart; *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* He ſpared not his own Son when he cried, but would have him drink out the bitter cup to the bottom; *Awake, O ſword, againſt my ſhepherd, and againſt the man that is my Fellow, ſaith the Lord of hoſts; ſmite the ſhepherd.* The meſſage comes from him, and he gave the ſword a charge, and orders it to ſmite him; it was this, more than the whips, the thorns, the nails, the ſpear, that made him cry out. Another and a higher hand brought his ſoul to more bitterneſs, than all the ſufferings he endured from men.—Thus his ſoul was crucified more than his body; and his heart had ſharper nails to pierce it than his hands and feet.

V. The *Fifth* thing, *viz.* The *reaſons* of the doctrine; Why the Lord of hoſts ordered the ſword of juſtice to awake againſt his Shepherd, the man that is his Fellow? Surely it was neceſſary, that the ſword ſhould awake againſt him; *Ought not Chriſt to have ſuffered theſe things?* ſays our Lord himſelf, Luke xxiv. 26. However innocent he was in himſelf; yet our ſins, which were laid upon him, deſerved to be thus treated; and therefore he, as our Surety, who had the guilt of the world lying upon him, ſays, Pſal. lxix. 5. *Thou knoweſt my fooliſhneſs; and my wickedneſs is not hid from thee:* They

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are the words of Chriſt, of whom David was a type. He had enough of ſin imputatively; and our ſins had never been expiate, our judge never atoned, our ſouls never ſaved, our ſtate never ſecured, juſtice never ſatisfied, the bond never cancelled, if the ſword had not awaked againſt him. Ought he not then to have ſuffered the ſtroak of the ſword? Yea, he gave his oath for it to his Father, from eternity; and all the promiſes, prophecies, types, and ſacrifices of old pointed out this. God was ready to come down with fury in his heart, and red-hot thunder-bolts in his hand, to ſink all mankind to hell: and ought not Chriſt to ſuffer and interpoſe? yea, glory to God, that he did. But more particularly,

1. The Lord of hoſts, the rector of the univerſe, deſigned by this method to *rectify* what was out of courſe, by the ſin of man, and to bring all things to rights. By the fall, the univerſal frame ſuffered a convulſion: the covenant of works was broken; the devil was reigning and raging in the earth; and all the honour of God's workmanſhip in the firſt creation, was like to be loſt. Now, the ſupreme Rector comes with the ſword of juſtice to rectify theſe diſorders, by drenching his ſword in the blood of his eternal Son. Was the covenant of works broken? behold here is the condition of it fulfilled, by his active and paſſive obedience; yea, both the two covenants of works, and of grace, were at once fulfilled in his obedience to the death: this is the proper condition of each of theſe covenants.—— Was the devil reigning and raging on the earth? Behold! by this blow of juſtice's ſword, given to Chriſt, the devil and all our ſpiritual enemies are deſtroyed; *For this cauſe was the Son of God manifeſted, that he might deſtroy the works of the devil.* Hence, when Chriſt is lifted up upon the croſs, receiving the ſtroak of juſtice's ſword, it is ſaid, *Now, is the judgment of this world; now is the prince of this world caſt out*, John xii. 31. *By death he deſtroyed him that had the power of death; that is, the devil.* By the bruiſe of his heel, his human nature, he broke the ſerpent's head, and his power.—Again, was all the honour and beauty of God's workmanſhip like to be loſt? behold, the man that is God's Fellow, ſuſtaining the ſtroak of Jehovah's ſword, reſtores all; Pſal. lxix. 4. *Then reſtored I that which I took not away.* What was taken away? why, the devil, Adam, and Eve took away the glory due to God, the obedience due to the law, and the happineſs that belonged to man in his firſt creation. Well, ſays Chriſt, it is much to bring them all back again; but I will do it; though I took them not away. I will reſtore to man his happineſs; he has loſt the favour of God, I will reſtore it in juſtification; he has loſt the image of God, I will reſtore it in regeneration; he has loſt the fellowſhip of God, I will reſtore it, being God's Fellow; I will bring them to fellowſhip with God, by ſuſtaining the ſtroak of the ſword which they ſhould have ſuſtained for ever. I will reſtore to the law its due obedience; yea, I will magnify the law and make it honourable, by my obedience to it, in ſo much that the Lord of hoſts ſhall *be well pleaſed for my righteouſneſs ſake*; and ſo I will reſtore to God the honour and glory that he loſt by the ſin of man. And this leads to a

2. Reaſon, why the Lord of hoſts made the ſword of juſtice to awake and ſmite his Shepherd, the man that is his Fellow? Why, that thus he might get all his divine attributes *glorified* to the higheſt. *Glory to God in the higheſt*, was the ſong of angels when he appeared in our nature, to receive this awful ſtroak. God's honour was not more impaired and embezzeled by the ſin of man, than it was reſtored and repaired by the death of Chriſt. If all mankind, and all the angels with them, had fallen a ſacrifice to the ſword of divine juſtice, it could not have repaired the honour of God for one ſin: though they had all been offered up in one whole burnt-offering, it could not have ſatisfied infinite juſtice; yea, though they had all been damned in hell, to all eternity, juſtice could never have got full ſatisfaction. But here is *juſtice* glorified to the higheſt; *By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are ſanctified*; and at the ſame time vindicated the ſpotleſs holineſs and righteouſneſs of God, that it may be known that God is holy and juſt, who will needs avenge ſin in his own Son, the holy and innocent Cautioner, when he interpoſes in the ſinner's room. This is the declared deſign of God's awakening the ſword of juſtice againſt Chriſt; Rom. iii. 25. *Whom God hath ſet forth to be a propitiation for ſin, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteouſneſs, that he might be juſt, and the juſtifier of him that believeth in Jeſus.* If God had exacted the ſatisfaction of the ſinners themſelves, by ſending them to hell, it might have declared his juſtice and righteouſneſs much; but here it is more glorioufly declared, and glorified to the higheſt: for, if we conſider Chriſt in himſelf, and the elect in themſelves, his death and ſufferings are more than if all the elect had ſuffered eternally in hell. Here is *mercy* alſo and free grace glorified to the higheſt, while the ſinner is liberate and not put to pay the debt in his own perſon. Here is divine *power* glorified to the higheſt; in the crucifying Chriſt whom the power of God ſupported under that load of wrath that would have cruſhed ten thouſand worlds. Here is *wiſdom* glorified to the higheſt; *The manifold wiſdom of God*, that there ſhould be two natures, yet but one perſon; that mercy ſhould be fully magnified, and yet juſtice fully ſatisfied; that ſin ſhould be puniſhed, and yet the ſinner unpuniſhed; that the ſinner ſhould eſcape, and yet God ſhould take vengeance upon ſin. O the wiſdom of God in a myſtery!

3. Reaſon why the Lord of hoſts ordered the ſword of juſtice to awake and ſmite the Shepherd, the man that is his Fellow; it was even for the *honour* of the Shepherd, and the *glory* of the man his Fellow. God deſigned that for his *ſuffering of death*, he ſhould be *crowned with glory and honour*, Heb. ii. 9. That for his humbling himſelf, and becoming obedient to the death, he ſhould be *highly exalted above all, and have a name above every name*, Phil. ii. 9. That for drinking of the brook in the way, he ſhould lift up his head; that after he had drunk of the brook of divine wrath in our room, he ſhould lift up his head above all principalities and powers, and have *all power in heaven and earth given to him*, and a number of elect to praiſe him for ever. O it is a wonderful thing to think, what he gave and what he got! What gave he? His body, his ſoul, his blood, his life: What got he?

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Even ſome of the black, ugly race of Adam to embrace him: he makes his *ſoul an offering for ſin*, and then he *ſees his ſeed*, he *ſees the travel of his ſoul, and is ſatisfied.* He thinks all his pains well beſtowed, when he gets his bride in his arms. O here is love! behold incarnate love! bleeding love! dying love! Shall not this glorious Lover be exalted of God for ever, and exalted by all the redeemed with the higheſt praiſes, for opening his breaſt to receive the wound of the awakened ſword of juſtice? yea, more, the ſong will be, *Worthy, worthy is the Lamb that was ſlain. Thou waſt ſlain, and haſt redeemed us to God by thy blood.* And this leads to the

4. And laſt reaſon, why the ſword of juſtice was ordered to awake and ſmite the Shepherd, the man that is God's Fellow, *viz.* That a *fountain of blood* might be opened for the benefit of the ſheep. The Shepherd was ſmitten with the ſword of juſtice, that the ſtroak might open a fountain for the watering of the ſheep: Zech. xiii. 1. *There ſhall be a fountain opened for ſin and for uncleanneſs.* A fountain for watering and waſhing of the ſheep. And how is it to be opened? even with the ſword of juſtice: *Awake, O ſword, againſt the man, my Fellow.* Now, the Shepherd's blood, ſhed by the ſword of juſtice, is for the benefit of the ſheep many ways: Why?

(1.) It is *peace-ſpeaking* blood; it ſpeaks *better things than the blood of Abel:* It ſpeaks peace and reconciliation with God, which is founded upon the blood of Chriſt: this is the wine that cheers the heart of God and man. The juſtice of God took a drink of this blood till it was cheared and ſatisfied; and when the ſoul of the ſinner gets a drink of this blood, O but this red wine rejoices his heart.

(2.) It is *heart-cleanſing* blood; the blood of the Shepherd ſhed by the ſword of juſtice, is for the waſhing of the ſheep; *The blood of Chriſt cleanſes from all ſin.* It cleanſes meritoriouſly from the guilt of ſin, in juſtification; it cleanſes efficaciouſly from the filth of ſin, in ſanctification: it cleanſes *only;* for no means, no duties, no tears, no prayers, no ſermon, no ſacrament, no ordinances, no communion-table, will cleanſe you from ſin, but only the blood of Chriſt. It cleanſes *infallibly;* for all the devils in hell, and all the evils in the heart, ſhall not be able to mar the efficacy of this blood, if it be ſprinkled on you by the hand of the Spirit. The whole company that are ſtanding about the throne, have *waſhed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.*

(3.) This blood, which the ſword of juſtice draws from the Shepherd, is *healing blood;* for the healing of his ſheep: *By his ſtripes we are healed.* Were your diſeaſes never ſo deſperate, here is a healing medicine for them: it can heal the *hardneſs* of the heart; *They ſhall look on him whom they have pierced and mourn:* It can heal the *barren ſoil* of the heart, and turn it to a fertile ground; Hoſ. xiv. 6. *From me is thy fruit found:* from my Spirit, as the efficient; and from my blood, as the procuring cauſe.

(4.) It is a *ſweet-ſmelling* blood; it has a ſweet-ſmelling ſavour in the noſtrils of the Lord of hoſts; and perfumes the prayers and duties of the believer; *We are accepted* only *in the Beloved.* Our perſons, our prayers, our preaching, our communicating, would all ſtink, unleſs they be dipt in the blood of the Lamb.

(5.) This blood of the Surety, ſhed by the ſword of juſtice, is *bliſs-purchaſing* blood; and one of the grand bleſſings purchaſed is the Holy Ghoſt: the Spirit is one of the greateſt inſtances of the love of God in Chriſt. Whenever Adam ſinned, the holy Spirit left him, and the unclean ſpirit came in his room; but when the ſecond Adam came, he brought the Spirit of God again with him: *I have put my Spirit upon him; and he ſhall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.* And, O what is the world without the Spirit of God? what is a man, a miniſter, a ſacrament, a city, a nation, without the Spirit of God? What makes matters ſo far wrong in a land, but that there is ſo little of the Spirit with miniſters and people? There is no life where the quickening Spirit comes not: O we will have dead preaching, dead hearing, dead communicating, lifeleſs work this day, if the purchaſed Spirit do not come! When he comes, life comes with him. *Can theſe dry bones live?* can theſe dead, formal, lifeleſs, unbelieving, hypocritical, and carnal hearts live? Yea, undoubtedly they can, if the Spirit blow: O let your hearts cry, *Come, O north-wind; blow, thou ſouth: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon theſe ſlain that they may live.* Cry for the purchaſed and promiſed Spirit, that we may live, and be lively in our work this day.

(6.) This blood has *purchaſed* all ſpiritual bleſſings: it has purchaſed pardon of ſin; *We have redemption through his blood, even the remiſſion of ſin.* It has purchaſed recovery after falls, and freedom from total apoſtacy to all that believe; *I will heal their backſlidings. Though he fall he ſhall not utterly be caſt down; for the Lord upholds him with his hand,* Pſal. xxxvii. 24. Good news to believers, ſay you, he has purchaſed, all good for them; but not to the like of me; ſuch an unbelieving impenitent ſinner as me. If that be your thought, man, it is an ignorant blunder; I tell you better news, this blood of Chriſt, ſhed by the ſword of juſtice, has purchaſed faith, to the faithleſs; repentance, to the impenitent; grace, to the graceleſs; and nothing did he purchaſe to any but as guilty ſinners, deſtitute of all good. Here is a good market for you that have no good, no grace: others that are increaſed with goods, and think that they have a good heart to God, good deſires and inclinations, and hope thereupon for God's favour, may be doing with their old covenant of works, where they and their money ſhall periſh: but for you that are poor, guilty, filthy, periſhing ſinners, deſtitute of all good in yourſelves, here is good news to you; here is grace, free grace, full grace, rich grace, all grace; grace to juſtify the guilty, grace to ſanctify the filthy, grace to ſtrengthen the weak, grace to ſupply the needy. You that want grace, may come here and get it; you that have grace, may come here and get more: this blood has purchaſed all grace, and the purchaſer ſtands ready to communicate it; for he has no other thing to do with his mediatorial grace, but to give it out to ſinners, to men, to rebels; *He has received gifts for men, even for the rebellious, that God the Lord might dwell among them.* O the noble purchaſe of this blood! It has purchaſed freedom from the law, both from the curſe and command of the covenant of works, in ſo much that the believer is neither under the mandate, nor the ſanction of the law, as a covenant of works: by

by the obedience of Christ to the command of that covenant they are *made righteous*, Rom xv. 19. *Who also hath redeemed them from the curse of the law, being made a curse for them*, Gal. iii. 13. The believer indeed is under stronger obligations to obey the law, as it is a rule of life and holiness, than ever Adam was in a state of innocency; but as it is a covenant of works, and condition of life, he has not a farthing of debt to pay to it, if the righteousness of Christ be complete and full; yea, this makes the law of God his delight, when he attains to the faith of this, that he has nothing to do with it as it is a covenant.

In a word, by this blood, shed by the sword of justice, there is a purchase made of *access* to God. The Son of man was lifted up upon the cross, to open the gates of heaven, which our sin had shut; he rent the vail from top to bottom, *and we have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus*. The sword awakened against the Son, that he might bring us to the Father; 1 Pet. iii. 18. *Christ has once suffered for sin; the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God*. We were at a distance from God, lying peaceably in the devil's arms; *but they that were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ*. All the sermons, all the means in the world, will not bring us near to God; the means by which he draws men to himself, is just by his blood and righteousness; *when I am lifted up*, says Christ, *I will draw all men after me*. Well, he was lifted up upon the cross, where he received the blow of God's awakened sword; he was lifted up into heaven, to his Father's right-hand, and he is lifted up upon the pole of this gospel; and has he said, *I will draw all men after me?* O say, Amen. Lord, let this be a drawing day.

VI. The *sixth* thing was the *application*. Now, many, many things might be deduced from this doctrine, by way of application. I shall at the time offer you but a few *general inferences*, and refer the rest to be accommodated more particularly to the rest of the work of the day, as the Lord shall please to guide and direct. Well, is it so, that by special orders from Jehovah, the Lord of hosts, the man Christ, his Shepherd and his Fellow, did fall a sacrifice to the awakened sword of infinite justice? Is it so as you have heard? then we may hence see, and behold,

1. The *infinite malignity* of sin, and the *dreadful demerit* thereof. Did it overflow the old world with a deluge of water? did it consume Sodom and Gomorrah with a storm of fire and brimstone? did it cast angels and men that are under it into Tophet, *the place whereof is fire and much wood, which the breath of the Lord doth kindle*; so as the *smoke of their torments ascend for ever and ever?* In all this may the demerit of sin be seen; but much more here in Christ, a sacrifice to the awakened sword of divine vengeance. Go to Golgotha, and see the man that is God's Fellow, drinking up the cup of his Father's indignation! suffering unto blood! suffering unto death! *For God spared him not*, being now in the room of sinners: behold the earth trembling under the mighty load of this terrible wrath; for there was a great *earthquake* while the sword of God's wrath was running through the man that was his Fellow; the *heavens grew dark* when this awful spectacle was exposed; the *sun was eclipsed*, contrary to the common rules of nature, which made an heathen philosopher cry out, "That either the frame of nature was "dissolving, or the God of nature suffering." And what shall we that profess to be Christians say to these things? what shall we that are sinners say concerning that abominable evil, sin, which wrought this bloody tragedy? It was sin, and our sin too; for *he was wounded for* OUR *iniquities; the Lord laid on him the iniquities of* US *all*, Isa. liii. 6. O! how heavy did the man that is God's Fellow find the weight of sin to be, when it pressed him to the ground, and made him sweat great drops of blood! when the sword of wrath, which he sustained in our room, was above his head.

2. Hence behold both the *goodness* and *severity* of God: his *goodness*, in finding out this way of satisfaction to his own justice, and wounding his own Son, that sinners, for whom he was Surety, might not be wounded eternally: and the *severity* and *justice* of God, in exacting such a full satisfaction, that though all the elect had been satisfying eternally in hell, justice had not been made to shine so splendidly and gloriously. O if we could think and speak aright of this wonderful mystery! O wonder that we are not more affected with it! that we, miserable wretched sinners, should have been pursued eternally by justice, and could do nothing to avert the stroak of it; and that such a great and glorious person, as the the Man, God's Fellow, should interpose himself; and hereupon the Father should spare the poor sinful enemies, and make way for them to escape, by diverting of his justice from pursuing them, and by making it take hold of the Son of his bosom; exacting the debt severely from him! O wonder that the Lord should pass by the enemies, and satisfy himself upon his own Son!

3. Hence behold the *wonderful concurrence* of the glorious persons of the blessed Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to carry on the work of our redemption; for here is the Lord of hosts, Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, one God, essentially considered, prosecuting the work of redemption; and saying, with respect to Christ, the second person of the Godhead, considered as he became man and Mediator, *Awake, O sword, against the man that is my Fellow*. Not that God the Father delighted in the suffering, as such, of his innocent Son; for, *he afflicts not willingly even the children of men*; but considering the end and the effect that was to follow, the seed that he should beget to eternal life, and the captives whom he was to redeem; in this respect, *It pleased the Lord to bruise him*; when he might have suffered all mankind to ly still in their forlorn condition, it pleased him to give his life a ransom for many. Here the whole Trinity is in concert, each person to perform his own part; wherein all the bright perfections of the divine nature do gloriously conspire. O! how does *God commend his love to us, in that whilst we were yet sinners, Christ died for us?* Rom. v. 8. And, O how he loved us, who *washed us from our sins in his own blood?* Rev. i. 5. Again,

4. Behold herein the *holy sovereignty* of God, that over-rules all the actions of men, even these wherein they have a most sensible hand,

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and are moſt inexcuſable. Though Judas that betrayed, Pilate that condemned, the innocent Son of God, acted moſt ſinfully; yet the Lord himſelf had an active over-ruling hand in carrying on his own deſigns. What Judas and Pilate did, was not by gueſs, but juſt the execution of God's antient decree: how pure and ſpotleſs is God in venting and manifeſting his grace, holineſs, and juſtice, when men are venting their corruption, impiety, and injuſtice! Here is a principal diamond in Jehovah's crown, that he is able, not only to govern all the natural ſecond cauſes that are in the world, in their ſeveral courſes and actions, and order them to his own glory; but even devils, wicked men, and hypocrites, their moſt corrupt and abominable actions, and make them invariably ſubſervient to the promoting of his own holy ends and purpoſes, and yet be free of their ſin, for which they ſhall count to him: and as it was no excuſe to the crucifiers of the Son of God, that they did what before was decreed of God; ſo it ſhall be no excuſe to any man in a ſinful courſe, that God has a hand in every thing that comes to paſs, who yet is juſt and holy in all. This may alſo ſtay our hearts, when the devil and his inſtruments are, as it were, running mad, that they can do no more than what God permits; nay, ſome way commiſſionates them to do: no ſword of men, or devils, can do any execution, unleſs God ſays, *Awake, O ſword.*

5. In this text and doctrine we may ſee and behold, what a *glorioufly well-qualified* Redeemer we have; he is *God's Shepherd, the man his Fellow*: behold what intereſt he has in God! and that both by nature, being God's Fellow; and by covenant, being God's Shepherd: behold what intereſt he has in us; and that alſo both by nature, being man, and by covenant, by virtue of the covenant of grace, being our Shepherd by God's appointment and conſtitution. O how fit is he, who is the eſſential Wiſdom of the Father, to reveal the counſel of God's love from eternity! How fit is he, who is the middle perſon of the Godhead, to be the Mediator and Midſman! How fit is he, who is the eternal Son of God, to bring many ſons and daughters to glory! The eternal Word that made the world, alſo to redeem the world! How fit, as God-man; being man, to pay man's debt; as God, to give it a value: man, to deal with man; and God, to deal with God! What an able Saviour muſt he be, who is God's Fellow, *able to ſave to the uttermoſt?* Help is laid upon one that is mighty indeed! What a willing Saviour muſt he be, who is God's Fellow! He could not have been forced to ſuffer, nor dragged to the work, if he had not been willing: nay, with chearful willingneſs he flew, as it were, upon the point of the ſword; *Lo, I come.* What a ſufficient ranſom has he given, ſince he is God's Fellow! O this price of redemption cannot be over-valued! What a well-furniſhed Saviour is he, to give life to whom he will. God's Fellow, the party offended, dying to conciliate friendſhip with the party offending! O what a gift is Chriſt, *when God ſo loved the world, as to give his only begotten Son; his Fellow, his equal!* It is more than heaven, and earth, and the whole univerſe! O how ſure and permanent muſt this redemption be, that is managed by the Lord of hoſts, and his Fellow! What a ſure and ſweet way to the Father, is the man Chriſt, ſince he is God's Fellow! Think not ſtrange that he was able to triumph over all enemies, to outwit the old ſerpent, to riſe again from the grave, to conquer hell, and purchaſe heaven; for the man was God's Fellow. How highly is our nature advanced in Chriſt! though not changed into the divine, yet perſonally united thereto: Chriſt has not loſt his dignity, by becoming man; he is the man God's Fellow. O what a well-qualified and glorious Redeemer is he! qualified by the Lord of hoſts himſelf, who had made him his Shepherd, who is our Shepherd! *The Lord is my Shepherd*, ſays the believer; and he is *my Shepherd*, ſays Jehovah, though in different reſpects: I have made him the Shepherd of my ſheep. O if God's Shepherd be your Shepherd, poor ſoul; if your heart be pleaſed with the choice that he has made of a Shepherd; and God's elect be your elect, God's choice your choice, happy, happy were it for you, that ever you was born. O that a flock of ſheep were gathered to him today!

6. We may hence ſee the *terrible ſtate* of unbelievers and Chriſtleſs ſinners, on the one hand; and the *comfortable ſtate* of believers, on the other.

(1.) On the one hand, I ſay, we may here ſee the *dreadful ſtate of unbelievers*, and the *damning nature of unbelief.* The ſword of divine juſtice, the ſword of God's wrath, is hanging over the head of all thoſe who come not under the cover of the blood of Chriſt, that was ſhed by this awful ſword. It is a lofty, but a terrible word you have in Deut. xxxii. 40, 41. *I lift up my hand to heaven and ſay, I live for ever; if I whet my glittering ſword, and my hand take hold on judgment, I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and a reward to them that hate me; I will make mine arrows drunk with blood.* The ſword of God's vengeance muſt be drunk either with the blood of the ſinner, or the blood of the Surety, in the ſinner's room. Now, they who, through unbelief, deſpiſe and reject Chriſt, the ſacrifice to juſtice, which God has provided, they muſt themſelves be a ſacrifice thereto: ſee how fearfully this is ſet forth, Heb. x. 27, 28, 29, 31. *If we ſin wilfully, after we have received the knowledge of the truth;* that is to ſay, if we wilfully and finally reject Chriſt; if we live and die in unbelief, refuſing the remedy that God has provided, notwithſtanding it is made known to us in the glorious goſpel, there is no remedy for us but periſhing; *there remains no more ſacrifice for ſin, but a fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which ſhall devour the adverſaries.* O ſinner, there is not a day you hear ſermon, and hear Chriſt offered, but if you ſlight him, you go away with a new load of guilt; hence the hell of profeſſors ſhall be the greateſt and hoteſt places in hell: the like of Corazen and Bethſaida, the like of Dunfermline, and the places about, where Chriſt is preached, ſhall go to the center of hell, when others ſhall not have ſo hot a hell. This ſin of unbelief is worſe than the murdering Chriſt; for they knew not that he was the Lord of glory: but this ſin wilfully rejects him, while you know he is the Lord of glory. The ſin of unbelief, what a dreadful thing is it! The man makes God moſt true, a liar, like the devil! and refuſes

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to let God have the honour of a full ſatisfaction to juſtice; will not let God get ſatisfaction for all his ſins, as he might have in the ſacrifice of his Son. O unbelief, unbelief! for a man to have continued all his days, from his infancy, under the drop of the word and calls of the Spirit and the bride, ſaying, *Come, come to Chriſt*, and yet the man lives and dies never hearkening.

(2.) On the other hand, here we may ſee the *comfortable ſtate of believers* in Chriſt, and the *ſaving nature of true juſtifying faith.* The believer cannot but be ſafe and happy; for the ſtroak of the ſword of juſtice has fallen by him, and has lighted upon his Surety, his Shepherd: the death of the Shepherd is the life of the ſheep. Though the ſheep may be ſcattered, and ſcarred with fatherly chaſtiſements; yet the Shepherd being ſmitten with the ſword of vindictive juſtice, no ſtroak of judicial wrath ſhall ever fall upon them; for Chriſt has *borne their griefs*, and *carried their ſorrows*, and *by his ſtripes they are healed:* and all that look to him by faith ſhall be healed, and ſaved in like manner. The object of juſtifying faith is the man God's Fellow, falling a ſacrifice to the ſword of divine juſtice. Though you ſhould believe all the Bible, the whole divine revelation, except this point, *Chriſt ſet forth to be a propitiation in blood*, you have no juſtifying faith; the doctrine of the blood of God, of a crucified Chriſt, this only is the healing balſam to the bleeding wounds of the ſinner, that has any ſenſe of ſin, or fear of wrath. Talk of the law to ſuch a man, it is juſt as if you ſhould bring a murderer to ſee the ghoſt of the man he had killed: O, ſays he, that is the law that I have broken, and ſo he is racked and tormented, leſt the ſword of wrath avenge the quarrel of the broken law upon him; but let him ſee a Chriſt dying on a croſs, with the ſword of wrath running through his heart; a Chriſt hanging between heaven and earth in his room, and all the debt of the elect upon his ſhoulders, here is a full cordial to a fainting ſoul; here is the act of juſtifying faith, *the beholding of this ſacrifice*, and acquieſcing in it as the price of redemption; relying on the blood that was drawn by that awful ſword, and laying the ſtreſs of our ſalvation upon it: that is a laying ſtreſs where God laid it, a coming under the covert of the blood of the man that is God's Fellow, as a ſcreen from the law and juſtice. Here is a noble foundation for faith; we may even dare to approach a provoked God, an angry Deity, the God who is a conſuming fire, and a flaming ſword; why, here is blood, worthy blood, to quench the fire; the man that is God's Fellow bleeding and dying in our nature. We may well ſay with Luther, "Lord, keep me "from a mere God, an abſolute God; a God "not in Chriſt, not reconciled by the death of "Chriſt." But here is the atonement and propitiation; and therefore faith may come boldly to the throne of grace.

7. Hence alſo we may ſee the *malignity* of an *antichriſtian ſpirit*; not only that of *Papiſts*, who bring in their works of merit upon the field of juſtification before God, as if any thing could pleaſe a dreadful God, beſides the blood of his Fellow; but alſo, all others that are enemies to the croſs of Chriſt; enemies to the glorious goſpel of a crucified Chriſt.——Here the *Socinian* ſpirit is condemned as antichriſtian, who ſay, "That God was never alienate "from man; and that God, out of his mere "bounty, without any interveening ſatisfac-"tion, pardons ſin:" But if ſo, why would there ever be ſuch a ſound as, *Awake, O ſword, againſt the man that is my Fellow?* Why would there have been an atonement, if it was not to avert the wrath revealed from heaven againſt all the ungodlineſs and unrighteouſneſs of men? In vain did the ſword awake and ſmite the Shepherd, if, *without ſhedding of blood there was remiſſion.*——Here alſo, the *Libertine*, and *Latitudinarian* ſpirit is condemned. O! what ignorant ſottiſh fools are they, who make a mock at ſin, which being imputed to the Lord Jeſus, made him ſweat and bleed in the anguiſh of his ſoul! O what madneſs are they guilty of, who prefer the ſatisfaction of their brutiſh luſts, to the ſalvation of their precious ſouls, the redemption whereof is ſo precious, that it ceaſeth for ever, unleſs the blood of God be ſhed for it!——Here alſo the *Arminian* ſpirit is condemned, and every *Legal* ſpirit, under whatſoever denomination, who make faith, or any act or part of it, or any thing elſe whatſoever, beſides the blood of Chriſt, to be our righteouſneſs before God; ſuch doctrine darkens grace, incroaches upon the prerogative of the Lord our righteouſneſs, and is contrary to the very nature of faith, which is a paſſing from, and diſclaiming all other foundations, and a running to, and pleading upon the blood of Chriſt, ſhed by the awakened ſword of juſtice. The doctrine of our text expoſes the malignity of a legal ſpirit, which is ſo natural to men, and rages ſo much at this day; as if men, by their terms and conditions on their part, could pacify a God of terrible majeſty, whom yet nothing will appeaſe, but the blood of the man that is his Fellow: ſurely they know not the perfection of God's holineſs, the terrour of his juſtice, the ſeverity of his tribunal, the ſpirituality and extent of his law, nor yet their own corruption, weakneſs, and wickedneſs by nature, who will dare to make any thing the ground and condition of their acceptance with God, but the doing and dying, the blood and righteouſneſs of Chriſt. Some make faith, others repentance and new obedience, the ſtrict and proper condition of the new covenant; but if we will not ſhut our eyes, we may ſee that Chriſt's obedience, ſuffering, and ſatisfaction is the only proper and ſtrict, ſo called, condition thereof: the parties of the covenant of grace, are God and Chriſt; Chriſt anſwering for all the elect therein: now, the condition of the covenant muſt be a condition performable and fulfilled by one of the parties, to wit, Chriſt; and the condition is, That he, in his obedience to the death, become a ſacrifice to the ſword of divine juſtice; and upon this condition all ſpiritual and eternal bleſſings are promiſed to the elect; faith, repentance, and all good are promiſed upon this ground; for, ſays God, upon his *making his ſoul an offering for ſin, he ſhall ſee his ſeed:* they ſhall get the good things promiſed; faith, love, knowledge, fear, and obedience, which are all the fruits of this grand condition of the covenant: faith is indeed of abſolute neceſſity, and the only means whereby we come to be juſtified; *It is by faith, that it may*

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be by grace; that is, faith renounces itself, and all other graces and good things, in point of acceptance with God, and looks for it only in the righteousness of Christ, which alone covers our iniquities, and makes us to be accepted of God. *Not by works of righteousness that we do,* nor by faith as a work, or as the fulfilling of a condition, upon which, being performed by us, or wrought of God in us, we may plead for God's making out his part of the covenant; O no: our only plea before God is this object of faith; the bloody sacrifice, made by the sword of justice, upon the man that is God's Fellow; even that our Lord Jesus has paid our debt, by fulfilling the law in our room, and satisfying for the breaches thereof. As faith is necessary, seeing *without faith it is impossible to please God;* so is repentance necessary; *For, except we repent, we shall all likewise perish:* holiness is necessary; *For without holiness no man shall see God:* they are necessary as qualities of the covenanted, purchased, and promised blessings of the covenant. None that are actually in the covenant, are without them; and so all that are without them will perish and die in their sins: but let our souls detest the bringing in these, or any thing else, in conjunction with Christ, and his blood and righteousness, so as thereupon to look for any benefit, favour, or acceptance with God; but let us look for all holiness, as well as happiness, only in and through Jesus Christ, and upon the account of his giving himself a sacrifice to the awakened sword of justice. And so I come to the

8. And last inference, that I name at the time, *namely,* hence we may see, What is the *great duty* of all who hear this gospel, *namely,* to embrace the man that is God's Fellow, to flock in to this Shepherd, and come to him as the sacrifice and propitiation in his blood, in whom the sword of divine justice has got satisfaction. Let me then exhort you, in the name of the Lord, to this duty, before I close. I may afterwards speak to different sorts of persons, and I may afterwards tell you whom I call to the communion-table, but at present I am calling you all to come to Christ. If you think of communicating; in God's name, stand aback from his table, if you will not come to his Christ; and whether you be thinking of communicating or not, man, woman, young or old, that hear me, I charge you, in Jehovah's name, to hear the word of salvation, and apply it particularly to your own souls, whoever you be. Is it so, that the sword of the Lord of hosts is bathed in the blood of the Shepherd, the man that is God's Fellow, then, as you would not fall a sacrifice to this sword of God's wrath for ever, O close with the man that is God's Fellow, as he that fell a sacrifice to this sword in your room. Have you no apprehension of the wrath of God, and of your dreadful condition by nature, wherein you are lying bound to be a sacrifice to the wrath of God, the Lord's hand being stretched out to lay on the stroak, and the wrath of God abiding on you, liable to the law's sentence, which is the curse of God, and the vengeance of his awakened sword, until once you get the man that is God's Fellow put in your room? All that the gospel aims at is this, that you would seek to change rooms with Christ: guilty sinners, here is the way to get your debt paid, your Judge pleased, justice satisfied, God atoned, sin expiated, and everlasting peace and reconciliation between God and you made up. The sword of the Lord of hosts is hanging over your heads, crying, Vengeance, vengeance upon the guilty sinner: This is the sad and certain tidings of the law, *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things, written in the book of the law to do them.* But behold the man that is God's Shepherd and Fellow; the curse of the law, the vengeance of God, the sword of Jehovah, has lighted upon him that it might not light upon you: there is the glad news and good tidings of the gospel. Is there not here a suitable object, and a sufficient foundation of faith, that Christ is set forth of God to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare the righteousness of God, that he might be just, and the justifier of them that believe in Jesus? Now, unworthy, wretched, guilty, filthy, bloody sinner, will you take a worthy match; the man that is God's Fellow? *Will you go with this man?* Will you take him in his garments rolled in his own blood, when the sword of justice did awake against him and smote him to death? The great God of hosts was in sad earnest, when he gave his Shepherd, his glorious Fellow, the bloody blow; and now he is in earnest in his call, swearing, by a solemn oath, *As he lives, that he takes no delight in the death of sinners;* and declaring, by his drawing forth the heart-blood of the man that is his Fellow, that he is willing to save you upon the account of this sacrifice, that his justice has got: only welcome the news as a *faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation:* and put in for a share of the benefits of this sacrifice, for it is the best, and the last, that ever you will hear of; and if it be slighted, *There remains no more sacrifice for sin.* As the eternal God is willing, so his eternal Son is able and willing both to save you; and if he had not been so, he would never have sustained the stroak of avenging justice in the room of sinners, who is that good Shepherd that laid down his life for the sheep. When he was smitten, by the sword of justice, he willingly undertook and underwent it; he longed for the bloody baptism, and was straitened till it was accomplished. When he was smitten, by the hands of men, *He hid not his face from shame and spitting,* but *was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth:* He never quarrelled or complained because it was for our cause. Would he not quarrel with these that smote him; and will he quarrel with a poor sinner that desires to come to him, and to plead the benefit of his satisfaction? No, no; he will *rest in his love,* Zeph. iii. 17. or, as the word signifies, *He will be silent, or dumb in his love;* he will not upbraid you for your falls, nor quarrel you for your former misdemeanours: he will be more content with your recovery, than ever he was discontent with your apostasy: he will be more pleased with your coming to him, than ever he was displeased with your sins, and departures against him. Come then, by the love and good-will of God in Christ, by the blood and bowels of the Lord Jesus Christ, I adjure and entreat you not to exclude yourselves, by unbelief, from all the benefits of this sacrifice, that Christ offered of himself to the sword of divine wrath, but accept of this

this propitiation, and lay your poor guilty ſouls under the covert of the blood of this man that is God's Fellow: behold! God brings near this blood of Jeſus, to you, even to you, that are the moſt hardened ſinners in all this houſe: Iſa. xlvi. 12, 13. *Hearken unto me, ye ſtout-hearted and far from righteouſneſs; behold, I bring near my righteouſneſs.* Chriſt and his blood and righteouſneſs is ſo near to you, that you may lay hold on him, and touch the hem of his garments, and be whole. In the name of God, I proclaim the acceſs that you have all to come to Chriſt, and to look unto, and depend upon him for ſalvation; *Look unto him, all ye ends of the earth, and be ye ſaved.* I am warranted to preach this goſpel *to every creature:* there is no rational creature within theſe walls, that ſtand in need of ſalvation, but you have it, unleſs you wilfully reject it; *Whoever will, let him come.* Will you tell me, dare you ſay but you ſtand in need of Chriſt to come in between you and the ſword of the Lord of hoſts? Is the ſword, the awakened ſword of God's wrath and vengeance a light matter? are you content to bear the laſhes of it, in your own perſons through all eternity? If not, then will you be content to change rooms with Chriſt? content that he be *made ſin for you, and that you be made the righteouſneſs of God in him?* 2 Cor. v. 21. Content that all your ſin and guilt be laid upon him, and that all his merit and righteouſneſs be imputed unto you? If you be not pleaſed with this ſweet bargain, what in all the world will you do with your ſin and guilt? Can you anſwer well enough for it at God's tribunal? What will you do with all your plagues and maladies? Can you heal them yourſelves? What will you do with all the curſes and threatenings of God's law, when grim death will ſtare you broad in the face, and when the laſt fetch of your breath ſhall ſummon you to come and anſwer before the juſt tribunal of God? What will you do with the flaming ſword of wrath, that hangs above, hovers over your head, and will light upon you fearfully, as ſure as God lives, unleſs you be pleaſed with this bargain, that Chriſt bear all the weight of your ſalvation, and all the weight of God's wrath for you? God ſeeks no more, and he ſeeks no leſs than this. You will ſay, Who would not be pleaſed with this bargain? alas! Are there not many here that are not pleaſed? While you think that there muſt be ſome other things to pleaſe and appeaſe God; may be you think you ſhould have ſome good qualifications to pleaſe him; that your hearing, reading, praying, communicating, will pleaſe him; your tears, good motions and affections will pleaſe him: if you think ſo you do not think honourably of God. Will any of theſe things appeaſe the awful Judge, and ward off the avenging blow, when he ſays, *Awake, O ſword!* No, no. If you be not pleaſed with the man that is God's Follow, and him alone to be your Surety, his blood alone to be your covert from the ſword of wrath, God cannot be pleaſed with you, though you ſhould weep an ocean of tears, give all that you have to the poor, and give your body to be burnt; you both loſe your ſoul and all your labour to the bargain. The queſtion is, are you content that Chriſt alone anſwer for you? that he alone ſtand between you and the ſword? If you think to put any thing elſe along with Chriſt, to ſtand between you and the ſword, it is but a rotten rag, and the flaming ſword will burn through it, and get at you with its devouring vengeance. Chriſt alone then muſt have the whole ſtreſs of your ſalvation laid on him: are you content? will you have ſalvation freely, through the blood of Jeſus?

The glorious goſpel is much clouded at this day, with legal terms, conditions, and qualifications. If my doctrine were upon condition that you did ſo and ſo; that you believe, and repent, and mourn, and pray, and obey, and the like, then you ſhall have the favour of God; I dare not for my life ſay, that that is the goſpel: but the goſpel I deſire to preach, is, will you have a Chriſt, to work faith, repentance, love, and all good in you, and to ſtand between you and the ſword of divine wrath? Here there is no room for you to object, that you are not qualified, becauſe you are ſuch an hardened, unhumbled, blind, and ſtupid wretch; for the queſtion is not, will you remove theſe evils, and then come to Chriſt? but, will you have a Chriſt to remove them for you? It is becauſe you are plagued with theſe diſeaſes that I call you to come to the Phyſician, that he may heal them. Are you qualified for hell and damnation? and have you much miſchief and miſery about you? Why, there needs be no better qualifications for you to come to Chriſt: we would indeed have ſome good qualifications in theſe whom we invite to a communion-table; they ſhould be humbled, believing, penitent people; becauſe it is preſuppoſed that they have come to Chriſt, and received ſome good out of his hand: but when I call you to come to Chriſt, and ſeek no good qualifications of you at all, prior to your coming to him, but that you come with all your black and helliſh qualifications, that he may take them away, and put ſome good qualifications upon you; ſo that, whatever bad things be about you, it ſhould rather be an argument for your coming, than an hinderance of your coming to him; for never, never will you get your ills mended, till you come to him to do it for you.

But neither is there any room for you here to object, that your guilt is ſo great, and God's juſtice is ſo terrible, that you have no hope; for what am I telling you all this time, but that the terrible ſword of juſtice is ſatisfied and appeaſed, to the full, with the blood of the man that is God's Fellow? Here is the way that God himſelf hath laid down for getting ſatisfaction; and there is no other way: though you man, woman, had the guilt of all the world lying on your back, all that is required of you is juſt this, to be heartily pleaſed and content that God get ſatisfaction for all your ſins in this way: and if you be, the ſword ſhall be put up in the ſcabbard, and never reach you: God will get his juſtice ſatisfied more glorioufly this way upon you, than though he ſhould damn you in hell to eternity.

Come, come then, before I cloſe; away with all your objections, and let God be glorified, to the higheſt, in your embracing this way of ſalvation to your ſouls, and this way of ſatisfaction to juſtice. Behold! once for all, I make you the richeſt offer that ever was heard

heard tell of; in the name of the Lord of hoſts I offer you the Man that is God's Fellow, to be a complete Saviour to you, to ſtand between you and the ſword of divine wrath, and to be the Burden-bearer for you; to bear the weight of all the curſes of the law, the weight of all God's wrath, the weight of all your ſalvation for you; and to do all your work in you and for you. O ſoul, am I not offering a ſuitable and worthy match to you? He is a man indeed, but a wonderful man, the man that is God's Fellow: What ſay you? *Will you go with this Man?* Will you match with this Man? It is true, I am unworthy to offer the like of him; for *the latchet of his ſhoe* no man nor angel is *worthy to unlooſe;* but, as I ſaid, it was in the name of the Lord of hoſts that I was making the offer: So I tell you again, it is the great Jehovah that is offering his Son to you this day; and it becomes ſuch a glorious God to make ſuch a glorious offer; and it becomes no vile ſinner here to refuſe the offer; and refuſe it or chuſe it you muſt, there is no mids; for, be what you will, I again offer, in the name of the Lord of hoſts, the Man that is his Fellow. Are you a child of wrath? I offer him as a Saviour to redeem you, and deliver you *from the wrath to come.* Are you a poor bankrupt? I offer him who is the *heir of all things,* and has unſearchable riches to pay all your debt. Are you a poor ignorant creature? I offer you him as *made of God unto you wiſdom.* Are you guilty? I offer him as made unto you *righteouſneſs.* Are you polluted? I offer him to you, as made unto you *ſanctification.* Are you miſerable and forlorn? I offer him to you, as made of God unto you complete *redemption.* Are you hard-hearted? I offer him in that promiſe, *I will take away the heart of ſtone.* Are you content that he break your hard heart, according to his promiſe? Come then, put your hard heart in his hands. Are you a wretched backſlider, that has backſlidden an hundred times, a thouſand times more than an hundred? I offer him in that promiſe, *I will heal your backſlidings.* Are your corruptions ſtrong and prevalent? I offer him in that promiſe, *I will ſubdue your iniquities.* Are you pleaſed that he do ſo? Are you afraid, that you revolt more and more? I offer him in that promiſe, *I will put my Spirit within you, and cauſe you to walk in my ſtatutes. I will put my fear in your heart, and you ſhall not depart from me.* Are you afraid you was never elected? meddle not with that ſecret; but according to the revealed will of God, I offer God's *chief Elect* to you, in whom his ſoul is well pleaſed; and if your heart go in to the offer, and you make him your Elect too, by chooſing him, then your election is ſure. Are you afraid you have ſinned the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt? I tell you, that as your fear of that ſays you was never guilty of it, ſo I offer the Man that is God's Fellow; and if you be content to have him, you ſhall never be guilty of it. Are you full of enmity againſt God? I offer him as a Saviour that can kill your enmity: Do you conſent that he do ſo? Are you an impenitent creature, deſtitute of repentance? I offer him *as a Prince and a Saviour, exalted to give repentance and remiſſion of ſin.* Do you conſent? Have you received him formerly? I offer him anew, that you may receive him again, and take a more large armful of him than ever. Have you never received him to this day? I offer him, after all the ſlights you have given him, to be now received and believed in. Are you unable to believe in him? have you no power to cloſe with the offer? Why, I offer him to you as the Author of faith, to work it in you powerfully. Do you conſent that he put forth his power for this effect? What ſhall I ſay? Are you unwilling to believe? Though that be the greateſt let and impediment of all; behold, I offer the man that is God's Fellow, as a Saviour by power, as well as by price, *to work in you both to will and to do.* Are you content that he put forth his power to break your enmity, and make you willing? God knows it is neither in you to will nor do, and that you have neither will nor power of your own; and faith lies not in bringing forth ſome great things by your own power, but in employing the power of God to work all your works in you, and for you. Behold then, the power of God is in your offer, while the man that is God's Fellow is offered: the ſtrength of God is offered; *Let him take hold of my ſtrength, that he may make peace with me, and he ſhall make peace with me;* and ſeeing the ſtrength of God is offered, Oh! give it employment, ſaying, in your heart, O come, come powerful arm of Jehovah, and make me go in to his call. The goſpel call and offer uſes to be the channel of almighty power and grace.

Now, what in all the world have you to object more? Why, have you ſo many objections more, as you think all the miniſters of earth cannot anſwer them? I offer you the man that is God's Fellow, to anſwer them all: are you content that he take all the work, and get all the glory? If you conſent to this, he ſeeks no more of you. Are you a captive to the ſword of God's juſtice? I offer you the man that is God's Fellow, in whoſe bowels the ſword was bathed: and now the flaming ſword that guarded the way of the tree of life is taken away, and here is the tree of life full of the apples of grace, glory, and eternal ſalvation; and the branches of the tree are hanging down among your hands, in the midſt of the church of Dunfermline. O take, and eat, and live for ever. What ſay you now? I alude to the words of Jephthah, Judges xi. 9. *If I fight for you and prevail, ſhall I be your head?* O yes, yes, ſay they: ſo ſays Chriſt to you, if I ſatisfy juſtice for you; if I quench the flames of that fiery ſword, and drown all your enemies in the red ſea of my blood, ſhall I be your head? ſhall he be your head, man? ſhall he be your head, woman? Does your hearts ſay, Yes, yes? Does your hearts ſay, Amen, amen? Yea, ſay you, I think my heart ſays, Amen to the bleſſed offer, and that I would willingly and chearfully conſent; but my heart is deceitful, and I know not if my conſent be of a true ſort, or only a temporary flaſh, a preſumptuous confidence that will evaniſh: well, if that be your objection, come, I offer you the man that is God's Fellow, who can anſwer that among the reſt, and can ſay to your ſoul, *Fear not, for I am thy God; I am thy ſalvation.* Are you content to take him for this end, to diſcover the defect of your faith, and to work in you the faith of his elect? Can you ſay, That it is not in your faith, but in Chriſt himſelf, that you are ſeeking ſalvation? Can you ſay, Whatever be wrong about me, or about my faith,

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yet I see there is nothing wrong about Christ; and I would have him to right all that is wrong about me? Can you say, However I be in the dark about my faith, and whatever sort of faith it is that I have, yet sometimes I have found my unbelief, and that I could no more believe, than I could move the earth from its centre; but yet the joyful sound of gospel grace has touched my heart; and made me take up so much glory and excellency to be in Christ, that I think all the world nothing, in comparison of him; and I think my heart's desire is, O to have him for my prophet, to take away the darkness of my mind; for my priest, to take away the guilt of my sins; and for my king, to take away the power of my lusts. Is your heart saying, "Gladly would "I have him; gladly would I have him, that "I may thus be blessed in him, and that his "name may be glorified in me?" Are these the breathings of your soul? Then, upon my peril, I undertake to be the happy messenger, to tell you, in the name of the Lord, that whatever you think of your faith, and of yourselves, as the blackest monsters of sin and guilt that ever were out of hell; yet you have the faith of God's elect, and you are married and matched with the man that is God's Fellow: yea, the Lord of hosts is your Father and Friend, reconciled in him, so as there is no fear of the sword of justice with respect to you. You are the sheep, and it awaked in all its fury and vengeance against the Shepherd, that the sheep might escape; and in testimony thereof, he invites you to commemorate this bloody sacrifice in the sacrament of the supper, where you shall see the sword bathed in his heart's blood in your room, and hear the Lord of hosts giving his solemn orders, for that effect, that he might be smitten, and you spared, saying, *Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd, against the man that is my Fellow.*

The End of the Sermon.

DISCOURSE before the SERVICE of the TABLE.

NOW, we are to proceed to the great work of the day: and that I may accommodate my former purpose to the present work, you may remember the doctrine I am upon is, *That by special orders from Jehovah, the great God of hosts, the man Christ, his Shepherd and Fellow, did fall a sacrifice to the awakened sword of infinite justice, in the room of the sheep.*

There are some general inferences I have drawn from this doctrine; and now there are these four more particular inferences may be drawn from it, with a more immediate reference and relation to the great sealing ordinance we have before us.

1. Hence we may see what is the *nature* and *end* of this sacrament.

2. Hence we may see *who they are* that stand debarred and excluded from meddling with these sacred symbols of the body and blood of Christ.

3. Hence we may see the *character* of these who have a right to approach, and are invited of God to it.

4. Hence we may see in what *manner* believers are to approach, and come to a communion table.

Now, a word to each of these, and then we shall proceed to the work.

1. Then, the doctrine I am upon, may give us some insight into the *nature* and *end* of this sacrament. Why, it is just a celebrating the memorial of the death of the man that is God's Fellow, when, as the glorious Shepherd, he yielded himself a sacrifice to the awakened sword of justice, in the room of the sheep. In this sacrament, Christ is set forth evidently crucified among us, and therein we may hear the Lord of hosts saying, *Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd, against the man that is my Fellow; smite the shepherd.* This sacrament is appointed to be a commemorative sign of the death of Christ; *As often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, you shew forth the Lord's death till he come. Do this in remembrance of me;* of me, who became a sacrifice to the sword of justice; by which sacrifice all spiritual blessings, peace, pardon, reconciliation with God, grace, glory, and all good things, are purchased. The sword of justice having bathed itself, to satisfaction, in the blood of this sacrifice, the sacrament of the supper is a feast upon the sacrifice, 1 Cor. v. 7. *Even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us; therefore let us keep the feast. This is the feast of fat things, and of wines on the lees well refined.* Upon the body and blood of Christ, represented by the elements of bread and wine, which is just a feeding upon, and viewing, by faith, the value and virtue of the sacrifice for satisfying God, for expiating sin, for vanquishing hell, and for purchasing heaven, and all the means that lead unto it; as also, for sealing the covenant of grace, and all the promises of it, which are all yea and amen in Jesus Christ, the testament being ratified and confirmed by the death of the Testator, Heb. ix. 16. But again,

2. From this doctrine we may see *who they are* that stand debarred and excluded from meddling with these sacred symbols of the body and blood of Christ in this sacrament; namely, in general, all unbelievers, who never having seen their wicked state, as liable to the stroak of divine wrath, because of their sin and guilt, have not fled under the covert of the blood of the Shepherd, of the blood of the man that is God's Fellow, who was smitten in the room of the sheep. What have these to do with the sign, who never apprehended the thing signified, namely, the propitiation of the blood of Christ? And therefore, in the great and awful name and authority of the great and glorious Jehovah, I solemnly debar and excommunicate, from the table of the Lord, all who never found themselves in any measure pursued by the avenger of blood, the sword of the Lord of hosts, and never have fled for refuge to the blood of Christ, the man that is God's Fellow, to stand between them and the avenging sword of justice; these that will not come to Christ, let them not dare to come to his table, nor come to abuse the symbols of his blood; who, by unbelief trample his blood under their feet, and will not make use of it as the sacri-

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fice to satisfy justice in their room. But, that it may appear more distinctly, whom I here debar, in the name of the Lord, I shall tell you who they are, that never made any saving use of the blood of Christ, the man that is God's Fellow, but slight and neglect this sacrifice and offering for sin, which he has made of himself to the sword of justice, and so stand debarred and excommunicated from the table of the Lord.

(1.) All these who think to make their peace with God, without minding the *necessity* of any thing *interveening between him and them*; not knowing that peace with God must be founded upon the blood of the man that is his Fellow. Some are utterly careless how their peace be made, or whether it be made or not, they hope for it, and think to come at it, but they cannot tell how; and are careless to know the way. Others presume, and think God loves them, because they love themselves; and though they know they have sin, they think God will not be so ill-natured as to reckon with them; they think God loves them, but they cannot give a ground for it. Others think that God is merciful, and therefore they conclude they will be pardoned and accepted; because a merciful man sometimes seeks no satisfaction, so they think much more will a merciful God seek none; not knowing, that though God be merciful, he will not shew mercy to the prejudice of his justice. But the thought of these people is upon the matter, that they would have obtained mercy though Christ had never become a sacrifice to the sword of justice, without respect to the mediation of the man that is his Fellow.—These therefore I debar, in God's great name, from the table of the Lord.

(2.) Another sort, who despise this sacrifice made to the sword of justice, is, all these who take the *legal way* of making their peace with God. Not as if they thought to appear before God without sin and holiness, as the covenant of works requires; but who think, that if they sin, they will make amends; and that either by something negative, that they have not done, or something positive, that they have done; or some internal qualification, that they rest upon. Some think to make amends to God by something *negative*; that they have not been so ill as other people; and if they go to hell, they think few will go to heaven; and if they were to die, they think they care not, they have done no person any injury; they have carried very harmlesly, like the Pharisee, *God, I thank thee, I am not like other men; I am no drunkard, or adulterer, or oppressor, or swearer*; and when they see any profane persons, they are puffed up with a good opinion of themselves, because they are not so profane as they: these I debar, in the name of the Lord. Others think to make amends to God by something *positive*; they do many good duties, like the same Pharisee, that boasted, *I fast twice a week, I give tithes of all that I possess*; if any duty be performed, or any good be done by them, their fingers are ready to stick to it; they rest there, and hope God will be pleased and pacified on this account: these I debar, in the name of the Lord. Others, upon this same head, think to make amends by some *internal qualification*, that they rest upon: if at any time they have liberty, and motions of affection in prayer, stirrings of conviction in hearing; and joys of heart, like the stony-ground hearers; any sorrow of heart, or sadness for sin, these they think will do their turn; and they think they need no other sacrifice to God, but a broken heart; sadly mistaking the nature of a true evangelical brokenness of spirit. It is certain, both from scripture and experience, that many hundreds of professors dash and perish on this stumbling-block; *They call themselves of the holy city; yea, and stay themselves upon the God of Israel*, Isa. xlviii. 2. *They seek him daily, and delight to know his ways; yea, delight in approaching to God*, Isa. lviii. 2. Expectation of happiness, grounded upon some weak performance, and some internal motions and qualifications, do cut the throat of many civil and discreet men, that are not grosly profane.—All these, therefore, that make any of these things the ground of their hope of peace with God, I debar and excommunicate from the table of the Lord, as being strangers to the true ground of peace, the Man that is God's Fellow, becoming a sacrifice to the sword of justice.

(3.) Another sort, who make no right use of this sacrifice offered to the sword of justice, are these, who, though they make use of Christ, as the object of their worship, yet make not use of his blood as the *ground* of their justification and peace with God: as if they would not altogether neglect Christ, and yet they neglect his offering, and would make use of himself, but not of his sacrifice; like the man that came to him, saying, *Good Master, what shall I do, that I may inherit eternal life?* he was going upon the ground of his own righteousness; so some they may come to Christ, to desire his help to enable them to do duty, that by doing thereof they may work out their own salvation; and be helped this way to make their peace with God: thus by grace, sought and received from him, they hope to be their own Saviour and peace-maker, with God; and so were never brought to ground the making of their peace with God, upon Christ's sacrifice and offering alone. These therefore I also debar from this holy table.

(4.) A fourth sort, that never made right use of this sacrifice to justice's sword, and propitiation in the blood of Christ, are all these, who never got such a view of the *love of God*, in this sacrifice, as to *kill the love of sin in them*, and to bring down the reigning power of sin; for the great end of Christ's sufferings was to *bring us to God*; the great end of his giving himself a sacrifice to the sword of justice, was *to redeem us from all iniquity*; and *to purchase to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works*. And hence they are yet strangers to Christ, who never felt any measure of the virtue of this sacrifice, in sanctifying, purifying, and making them study holiness. And therefore I debar from this table, all *impenitent sinners* and breakers of God's commandments; all whose names are in that black catalogue, Mat. xv. 19. Rom. i. 29,—32. all whose names are in that black list, Gal. v. 19,—21. and all whose names are in these black rolls, 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. Rev. xxii. 15.—All *Atheists* that practically deny the being of God in their lives and conversations; and ignorant persons that know not the principles of religion, and the nature of this ordinance; and profane persons, who mock

at ſacred things, neglect public ordinances, on week-days or ſabbath-days, and neglect family-worſhip, and ſecret prayer.—All *profane ſwearers*, whether by God, or the devil, or faith, or conſcience, or whatſoever is not more than, yea and nay.—All *ſabbath-breakers*, who put no difference between that and other days.—All that are unfaithful in their relative ſtations; as magiſtrates or ſubjects, maſters or ſervants, parents or children.—All *murderers*, and theſe who give way to the killing ſins of malice, paſſion, revenge; and the ſelf-murdering ſins of drunkenneſs, gluttony, and tipling.—All *whoremongers*, *adulterers*, *fornicators*, *Sodomites*, and *unclean perſons*, who never mortified the deeds of the body.—All thieves, oppreſſors, and cheats, that ſtudy to over-reach their neighbour in their dealing.—All *falſe witneſſes* and *liars*, that make no conſcience of ſpeaking the truth; *perjured* perſons, that make no bonds of unlawful oaths; *covenant-breakers*, and ſuch as are enemies to a covenanted work of reformation in theſe lands.—All *covetous perſons*, whoſe hearts are glued to the world.—In a word, I debar all *formaliſts*, and *hypocrites*, and *legaliſts*; all that never ſaw and bewailed their heart-plagues of atheiſm, enmity, pride, hypocriſy, and unbelief: all who know not the difference between the law and the goſpel; the covenant of works and the covenant of grace; and between legal and evangelical preaching.—All that never felt any thing of the *power of God's word on their heart*, in convincing them of ſin, original and actual, and drawing them to Chriſt, as their righteouſneſs and ſtrength, for juſtification and ſanctification.—I debar all who *hate to be reproved* of their faults, and contemn their reprovers: and all who can be *witneſs* to the ſins and faults of others, and yet never give any ſort of teſtimony againſt them.—I debar all who *love not the godly*, nor care for their company: all who love not the Bible, nor ſearch the ſcriptures: all who love not Zion, nor care how matters go with the church of Chriſt; whether its members be divided or alienate; whether its intereſt ſink or ſwim: All who can go lightly over the belly of their own conſcience, for fear of outward loſſes or croſſes, and eaſily croſs their light to pleaſe men.—I debar all that are not *lovers of the truth*, but eſpouſers of error; Socinians, Arminians, and Antinomians, who are properly ſo called, for ſome are wrongfully and ignorantly ſo deſigned.—I debar all that think they have *believed all their days*, and never were convinced of unbelief, nor found religion a work above them, and their natural powers.—I debar all who have *no errand to the Lord's table* but to take a little bread and wine, and think it an eaſy work to communicate; nor ever had any fears or jealouſies about their miſcarrying in that work: All who come only to keep up a *name among profeſſors*: and all that have no other tokens for communion, but that which they have got from their miniſters or elders: all who have been at no pains whatſoever to prepare for this work.—And all, on the other hand, who think they are prepared enough, and have no other thing to reſt upon but their own preparation.—All theſe, and others of that ſtamp, I do, in the name of the living and eternal God, debar from this holy table, as being ſtrangers to the Man that is God's Fellow, and ſtrangers to the ſacrifice whereby he has ſatisfied the awakened ſword of infinite juſtice: therefore as you would not take a cup of poiſon to deſtroy yourſelves, as you would not eat and drink damnation to yourſelves, and bring down the guilt of the blood of Chriſt upon your head, do not dare to venture to this holy table; for, *He that eats this bread, and drinks this cup of the Lord unworthily, ſhall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.* And if you will venture notwithſtanding, remember, though you have got a token from me, or any perſon elſe, your blood is upon your own head, if you find yourſelf now debarred, and yet come to trample upon the blood of the Man that is God's Fellow.

But now, leſt I ſhould fright any of the children from their food, who are apt to take theſe things to them, more than they to whom they are principally *directed*, therefore I proceed,

3. To a *third* inference, with relation to this ordinance, that may be drawn from our doctrine, *namely*, Hence we may ſee the *character* of thoſe who have a right to approach, and are of God invited thereto; namely, in general, all *believers*, who, through grace, have been made to flee unto the covert of the blood of the Shepherd; into the covert of the blood of the Man that is God's Fellow, to ſcreen them from the ſword of divine wrath. As we dare not, for our ſouls, allow or encourage any to approach this ordinance, who are unbelievers, under whatſoever names and deſignations they may be called; ſo, on the other hand, we dare not, for our ſouls, diſallow, or diſcourage from this work, any the leaſt, the weakeſt believer in Chriſt, that has gone in with the call of the goſpel, and cloſed with, and embraced this ſacrifice whereby juſtice is ſatisfied: And therefore, in the name and authority of the ſame glorious God, and gracious Lord, I invite to this table of the Lord, all ſuch, whatever their ſins have been, though guilty of the ſins that I have named, or whatever elſe; all ſuch, I ſay, whatever their guilt be, who have taken this goſpel-method of getting their ſin and guilt expiate and removed, namely, by hiding their guilty ſouls under the wings of Chriſt's righteouſneſs, who gave himſelf a ſacrifice to ſatisfy the ſword of juſtice. But that it may be known more diſtinctly whom I mean by ſuch believers in Chriſt, as I am calling to the Lord's table, you may examine yourſelves more particularly from the doctrine, *Let a man examine himſelf, and ſo let him eat.* I hope you that are to communicate as believers, have been examining yourſelves before this; but if you be yet in the dark, there are theſe four marks may be drawn out of our text and doctrine, for clearing whether you be believers indeed, that have cloſed with the man that is God's Fellow, as a ſacrifice to the ſword of juſtice in your room.

(1.) Have you ſeen, ſometime or other, the ſword of juſtice awaking againſt *your own ſouls*, the avenger of blood purſuing you? Have you heard ſuch a knell as that in your heart, *Awake, O ſword*; awake, O law; awake, O vengeance; curſes, and threatenings againſt a man for his ſins? Have you been ſo filled with the fear of hell and wrath, as you have been put to cry, *Men, and brethren, what ſhall I do to be ſaved?* Or, have you been put to more concern

cern about ſalvation, than ever you was about any thing elſe in the world? And have you ſeen, in this caſe, the natural tendency of your heart to reſt upon ſome other thing for peace with God than this ſacrifice, which Chriſt offered of himſelf to the ſword of juſtice? There is ſuch a natural inclination in all to reſt upon ſome other thing for peace with God, and it is a good token when it is diſcovered, and becomes a burden and a ground of a challenge, that they have had a ſinful inclination to put duties, prayers, tears, enlargements, and the like, in Chriſt's room. *Before the law came, I was alive*, ſays Paul; and thought I had a ſtock of righteouſneſs in myſelf to be the ground of my peace with God; *But when the commandment came, ſin revived, and I died:* when, by the law, I got the knowledge of ſin, I died to all conceit of myſelf and my righteouſneſs; *What things were formerly gain unto me, theſe I counted loſs for Chriſt.* Now, if you have been thus purſued by juſtice, which you ſee no ſacrifice will ſatisfy, but that of the man that is God's Fellow, and have been burdened with your natural inclination to ſome other ſacrifice, I think the Lord has begun the good work upon you, and therefore I call and invite you to the table of the Lord.

(2.) Have you ſeen the *glory* and *excellency* of this ſacrifice? What a glorious ranſom God has found out for his own ſatisfaction, that thouſands of rams could not do it, but that one Lamb could do it, even the Lamb of God ſacrificed? Have you ſeen the ſword quenching its thirſt in the blood of the Lamb? and have you taken up the love and mercy of God in providing ſuch a Lamb, ſuch a ram caught in the thickets, when your neck, like Iſaac's, was upon the block? Have you ſeen him to be a worthy ranſom, becauſe of the worthineſs of the perſon ſacrificed, he being God's Fellow, God-man in one perſon, and ſo acting in his Father's name, and by his appointment, when he yielded obedience to the death, as being his Shepherd, whom he ſealed for this end? And has the view and apprehenſion of him, in this mediatorial glory, drawn forth your eſteem of him and of his offering and ſacrifice, ſo as you could venture heaven, and your eternal ſalvation upon it; ſo that you deſire to ſay, *To him that loved me, and waſhed me in his own blood, to him be glory?* Is the view of this ſacrifice that which chears and delights you moſt? and is it matter of wonder to you, now and then, that when the ſtroak of juſtice was ready to come upon you, Chriſt ſhould have interpoſed between you and the fatal deadly blow? Can you ſay, *You count all but loſs and dung, that you may win Chriſt, and be found in him*; ſo that you care not what be caſt over-board, if you but get to that ſhore, even Chriſt and his righteouſneſs? Then welcome are you to the table of the Lord; I invite you in his glorious name.

(3.) Have you found your *ſouls in ſafety* from the ſword of juſtice, under this ſhadow of the blood of the man that is God's Fellow? Nothing rightly ſatisfies the awakened challenges of conſcience, but that which ſatisfies the awakened ſword of juſtice; and that is the ſmiting of the Shepherd, and the blood of the Lamb that is his Fellow. Now, have you ſeen God's juſtice ſatisfied thereby, and found your conſcience ſatisfied with the ſame? Have you, ſome time or other, found your ſoul at peace under this covert of blood, knowing that the ſword was put up in its ſcabberd, it being fully ſatisfied with the blood of God? Here is a being pleaſed with what the Lord of hoſts is pleaſed; and you have thus, being juſtified by faith, had peace with God, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Where go you, when under challenges for ſin? Do you find moſt peace in this ſacrifice, even when you have the deepeſt and moſt kindly impreſſion of your ſin? For the Legaliſt, he can believe well enough, when he has no challenges for ſin, but under theſe challenges, his faith fails him. But for you, believer, under all challenges, do you find this is always your ſhift, the blood of Chriſt, the ſacrifice of the man who is God's Fellow? Is this alſo your only ſhift when you think of death, or of appearing before the judgment-ſeat of God? Do you make ſuch uſe of Chriſt's offering to juſtice, as that it is your conſtant deſire to put Chriſt in your room? Is the language of your ſoul, O! I deſire no accompting and reckoning with juſtice; nay, I dare not count and reckon with Chriſt, but my ſoul, as it were, leaves Chriſt in its room, and runs away from reckoning with juſtice, to hide itſelf under his wings, who can count to the utmoſt farthing. Dear ſoul, who has attained to ſomething of this in reality, I invite you, in my Maſter's name, to come to his table.

(4.) Is it oft-times matter of exerciſe to you, to get over *all other ſacrifices to this alone*, whereby the awakened ſword of juſtice is appeaſed? Can you ſay, it has been matter of exerciſe to you, not only how to get over your ſins unto Chriſt, but alſo, how to get over your graces and duties to him, ſo as you might not truſt therein, to the prejudice of truſting in Chriſt? Paul not only, while in nature, but even after converſion, found an inclination to count ſome thing gain, beſide Chriſt; and therefore, in oppoſition to this inclination, he does with a *doubtleſs*, cry down *all things*, and *count them dung and loſs, for the excellency of the knowledge of Chriſt*, Philip. iii. 8, 9. Taking in his gracious actings, and actions, as well as others, and found a need to caſt away the good, as well as the bad, in point of juſtification. Did you ever find it a harder exerciſe to be quit of your duties, tears, and inlargements, in point of dependence, than to be rid of your ſins? The believer has one exerciſe of faith, how to be quit of ſin; and another new exerciſe, how to be freed from reſting on duties, and how to be ſingly ingaged in reſting on Chriſt: his mind is not quiet in all his duties, till he come hither, even to be found in Chriſt, to have his peace with God founded upon Chriſt, and not upon duties. The Legaliſt, when he gets duties performed, then he has peace; but the believer, though he ſhould be about duties a whole day, and is indeed more engaged in duties readily than the Legaliſt himſelf, that relies thereon; but let him be about duties a whole day, yet perhaps he has little or no peace, becauſe he would be over all duties, to Chriſt himſelf, as his reſting place; and ſo has no peace till he enjoy him to his ſatisfaction. Hence alſo, he is oft-times full of fears and jealouſies, leſt, through unbelief, he put ſome other thing in the room of Chriſt's ſacrifices. A natural man may, perhaps, ſuſpect his

his duties, leſt they be wrong; but the believer is more taken up in ſuſpecting his faith, ſaying, *Lord, I believe, help my unbelief*: he dares not truſt his own faith, knowing his evil heart of unbelief that he has within him. Well, if this be oft-times matter of exerciſe to you, poor ſoul, to get over all other ſacrifices and ſervices, to this great ſacrifice, Chriſt Jeſus, in whom alone the ſword of juſtice is ſatisfied, I invite you, as a believer, to feaſt at the Lord's table, upon the ſacrifice. Does the faith of this ſacrifice purify your heart, ſo that you long to be perfectly holy, ſeeing and lamenting your own unholineſs and impurity, and deſiring daily to bring your impure ſins and luſts to the fountain opened, by the ſword of juſtice, in the heart of a pierced Chriſt?—I then invite you, in the name of the Lord, to this holy table, as one that has ſeen the value, and ſhared of the virtue, and participated of the efficacy of this ſacrifice, given by the man that is God's fellow, to the awakened ſword of juſtice.

In a word, is there any here, who, under a ſenſe of ſin, ſee an abſolute need of this ſacrifice; who under a ſenſe of their unworthineſs, are fearing and trembling to approach to the Lord's table, and yet would give all the world for a ſhare of the ſaving and healing virtue of this glorious ſacrifice; and ſee nothing in the wide world ſo fit for them as Chriſt? I invite them to the Lord's table. Are there any here lamenting the Lord's anger and abſence at this day? lamenting that things are ſo far wrong in the houſe of God, and that there is ſo little power and glory of God ſeen in the ſanctuary, and panting after communion and fellowſhip with him, crying, *O that I knew where I might find him! O that it were with me as in times paſt!* O for an heart to love Chriſt! O for a ſealed intereſt in him! O for the healing balſam of the blood of the Lamb to cure the ſad plagues of my heart, which I ſee to be as black as hell! O come and take a drink, poor ſoul, at the Lord's table, even a full draught of the blood of Chriſt, which cleanſes from all ſin! Is there any here, any poor creature, that ſees and laments his own weakneſs, and the power of ſin and corruption in him, pained to the heart with his numberleſs backſlidings from the Lord Jeſus? I would gladly have a knot caſt between Chriſt and his ſoul, that may never looſe, ſuch ſtrength of grace communicate, as that he may never go back from God: I invite you to come forward to the Lord's table, and get a ſtrengthening meal. Perhaps there is ſome trembling weak believer here, that is doubting, whether he has grace, or not; whether he be a believer, or not; O cry to the Spirit of God to be ſent to clear you, by ſhewing to you the things that are freely given you of God. I ſhall only aſk you, who are fearing you have no intereſt in him, no portion in the ſon of Jeſſe, the man that is God's fellow; tell me, will you quit your part of him? Could you freely chooſe to take the world, and your luſts, and let others take Chriſt who pleaſe? would you find in your heart to reſt contented with other things, and give any body your part of Chriſt? what ſay you to that, poor doubting ſoul? Is your heart now melting, burning, and relenting within you, and ſaying O miniſter! what is that you are ſaying? that wounds me to the bottom of my ſoul! quit all my part of Chriſt! O no, no, no! If I were ſure of my intereſt in him, I would not quit my part in him for ten thouſand, thouſand, thouſand worlds; and even as it is, though I dare not aſſert, that I have an intereſt in him, yet I would not ſay that I would quit my part in him, no, for all that lies within the boſom of the univerſe. Is that the language of your heart? Well, Chriſt hears that, and he will mind it as a token of ſome heart-kindneſs to him. Can you ſay, that God would be juſt and righteous though he ſhould ſend you to the bottom of hell, inſtead of allowing you to ſit at this table; and if ſuch a dog as you, get a crumb from him, it will be a miracle of mercy? Can you ſay, that though doubts and darkneſs, and innumerable evils be now ſurrounding you, yet, for what you know, it was a day of power you met with at ſuch a time, in which a ſaving work, as you thought, was begun, and now you would willingly have it cleared up to you? Can you ſay, that though you have a thouſand objections againſt yourſelf, and your own heart and frame, yet you have no objections againſt Chriſt? at leaſt if any reaſonings and high imaginations againſt him be riſen and raging in your heart, you would gladly take hold of him, that he may caſt all down, and take and keep the throne himſelf? Do you ſee the way of ſalvation, through free grace, and through his perfect righteouſneſs, to be an excellent way, worthy of God, and ſuitable to man, becoming the wiſdom and glory of God, and that you are well pleaſed with this way? Can you finally ſay, that you are one of the pooreſt creatures in all the world; poor and needy, deſtitute of all good, of all grace, of all faith, love, repentance, holineſs, and any other ſpiritual quality in yourſelves; but that you ſee an infinite fulneſs in Chriſt, that can ſupply you, and out of which you deſire to be ſupplied, with all that you need? and can appeal to heaven, that in him only you deſire to be found, who is *all in all?* Can you ſay, Yea and Amen to theſe things? Then, poor ſoul, I charge and command you, in the name of the Lord of hoſts, to venture forward to this table, as you would not diſpleaſe him, and grieve his holy Spirit by ſtaying away, when he calls you and commands you to do this in remembrance of him, and of his kindneſs to you. You know not if ever you will get another opportunity, poor ſtraying, wandering ſheep; though you be ſuch a weak creature, as that you think, if you be among the flock of Chriſt at all, you are the worſt among them all for ſin; and the laſt among them all for grace; and ſtraying ſo far behind all the reſt of the flock, that you will never get up among the reſt, unleſs the great Shepherd take you up in his arms, and carry you; I charge you, in his name, to come forward, and ſee the glorious Shepherd ſmitten with the ſword of juſtice in your room.—And now, hoping I have prevailed, or rather that the Lord has, and will prevail, with his little flock, to come to the Lord's table, and hear the Lord of hoſts ſacramentally ſaying, *Awake, O ſword, againſt my Shepherd, the man that is my fellow*, I cloſe with

4. *A fourth* inference from this doctrine with relation to this ordinance: hence we may ſee in what *manner* it is that believers ſhould ap-

proach to a communion-table, ſince the ſword of Jehovah's wrath is ordered to ſmite the Shepherd, the man that is God's Fellow. Then you ought to commemorate this ſacrifice, and come to his table,

(1.) With *wonder* and *aſtoniſhment*. O come! wondering that the ſword of the Lord of hoſts, that infinitely juſt God, ſhould paſs by you, man; and you, woman, that was an enemy; and ſatisfy himſelf upon the man that was his Friend, the man that was his Fellow, by ſmiting the Shepherd in the room of the ſheep: that the man that is God's Fellow ſhould be made ſin for you; made a curſe for you; made ſhame for you; made a ſacrifice to juſtice for you; and made the channel in which the wrath and diſpleaſure of God ſhould run ſo as to run by you, and never light upon you. O wonder! wonder, men and angels!

(2.) Come with *praiſe*, *gratitude*, and *thankfulneſs* to the Lord of hoſts, and to the man that is his Fellow, for ſuch a wonderful contrivance of ſalvation. What poſture did grace find you in, poor believer? even lying open to the ſtroak of God's drawn ſword of juſtice; and our Lord Jeſus, on the one ſide, ſtept in and ſaid, Hold, Lord, let that ſtroak fall upon me, and let them go free; and upon their ſide, there was God's good pleaſure, condeſcending to accept of his offer, ſaying, *Awake, O ſword; ſmite the Shepherd, and ſpare the ſheep.* Poor ſoul, that deſires to flee to him for refuge! Chriſt has changed rooms with you, by interpoſing to keep the ſtroak off you, and receiving it into his own bowels: and, O what infinite obligations to love and thankfulneſs does this lay you under! How will he be praiſed for ever among the redeemed for this love! Come, ſinging *unto him that loved us, and waſhed us from our ſins, in his blood,—to him be glory.*

(3.) Come with *boldneſs*, *confidence*, and *chearfulneſs*. What a ſhame and diſhonour to the glorious Shepherd is it, that the ſheep ſhould be always trembling and quaking, while they are under ſuch a ſure and ſafe covert, as the blood and righteouſneſs of the Shepherd! If we were coming to deal with God about ſalvation, upon the footing of any thing in us, we might indeed be confounded with deſpair, and could not ſtand far enough away from God; but when you are to deal with him upon the ſcore of the God-pleaſing, juſtice-ſatisfying blood of the man that is his Fellow, we cannot come with too much boldneſs: on this ground let us *come boldly to the throne of grace*, having *boldneſs to enter to the holieſt by the blood of Jeſus.* Is it the blood of God's Shepherd, the blood of the man that is his Fellow! Is it not thy valuable blood, or not? Then, why ſhould you give way to diffidence? What a ſhame is it that we dare ſcarcely truſt to his ſacrifice! Therefore,

(4.) Come with *full aſſurance of faith;* aſſured of the love and good-will of God in Chriſt, in whom his ſword is pacified, and through whom peace with God is proclaimed, and a ceſſation of arms to all eternity. If you can attain to this full aſſurance of faith, poor weak believer, you will, no doubt, come forward, as the Lord ſhall help you, under covert of this honourable ſacrifice; come hoping againſt hope, and believing againſt unbelief; ſaying, *Lord, I believe, help my unbelief.* Come lamenting your unbelief, and crying to him for faith. Come depending on him for grace to communicate in a ſuitable way, and for grace to take a hearty draught of the ſword-ſatisfying blood of the man that is his Fellow.

SERVICE at the TABLE.

NOW, believers, what was Moſes's work when the angel of the Lord appeared in a flame of fire out of the midſt of the buſh, Exod. iii. 2. when the buſh burned with fire and was not conſumed? Why, ſays Moſes, *I will turn aſide, and ſee this great ſight.* That ſame ſhould be your work and exerciſe now, at a communion-table; *turn aſide, and ſee this great ſight;* what ſight? the greateſt ſight that ever was ſeen, the eternal Son of God in the buſh of our nature, and this buſh burning in the flames of divine wrath, for our ſakes, and in our room and ſtead, and yet the buſh not conſumed. O! with what holy fear ought you to look upon this great ſight! *Put off thy ſhoes from off thy feet*, ſays God to Moſes, *for the place where thou ſtandeſt is holy ground:* and Moſes hid his face, for he was afraid *to look upon God.* You may perhaps think, if you were as great a ſaint as Moſes, you would not be afraid; but, O the ſight of God is an awful thing to the greateſt ſaint on earth, and humbles them to the duſt! But, if you be a ſaint at all, I will tell you, you will be reckoning yourſelf the greateſt ſinner out of hell, the chief of ſinners; and if it be ſo, ſure I am, this great ſight may be more wonderful in your eyes to ſee the ſword of divine wrath drunk in the blood of the glorious Surety, in your room. Solomon ſays, *He that is ſurety for a ſtranger ſhall ſmart for it*, Prov. xi. 15. Behold the Son of God become Surety for you, that was a ſtranger and alien; but he muſt *ſmart for it:* or, as it may be rendered, *He ſhall be ſore broken.* So was the Son of God, our Surety; he was broken in ſoul, broken in body, broken to pieces; and we have here the ſymbols of his broken body; for, *In the ſame night in which he was betrayed, he took bread*, as you ſee us take it here, after his example.——

Now, ſpectators; now, communicants; if you have the eye of faith, you might ſee a broken Chriſt repreſented under this broken bread; now you may hear God ſaying, *Awake, O ſword, againſt my Shepherd. All we like loſt ſheep had gone aſtray; and we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord*, the Lord of hoſts, *has laid on him the iniquities of us all.* Sin brings down the ſword of vengeance; but, behold your ſin laid upon the Shepherd, and thereupon the Lord of hoſts ſaying, *Awake, O ſword, againſt the Shepherd.* O rare and raviſhing contrivance! O admirable and amiable contrivance! O beautiful and beneficial contrivance! Eternally bleſſed be the Contriver! and eternally bleſſed be the Shepherd! O infinitely kind and compaſſionate Shepherd, that laid down his life for the ſheep, and *feeds his flock like a ſhepherd!* yea, feeds them with his fleſh and blood; for, having broken it, he gave

to his disciples, saying, *Take ye, eat ye; this is my body broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.*——ME! what for a ME, is this? who was it that was smitten by the sword of justice? Why, it is even the Shepherd, the man that is God's Fellow, his own Son: we have sinned, and he is smitten for it; the sword awaked against him, and we go free: O sinner, sinner! O guilty sinner, filthy sinner, wretched sinner! who in all the world would have done that for you that Christ has done? Who in all the world could have suffered that for you, that Christ has suffered? O communicant, apply, apply his doing and dying to yourself in particular, and say, O marvellous and matchless love! O boundless and bottomless love! *He loved me, and gave himself for me!* Or if you cannot attain to the particular application, that he did it for you; yet, O wonder, wonder, that ever he did and suffered so much for any; for he suffered the hell of all the elect; God made a gap or wound in the breast of Christ, with the sword of his justice, and then poured in a whole hell of wrath upon him. O! is it not good your part, to remember him, who remembred you when the sword of justice was ready to be sheathed in your bowels, and to drink in the blood of your soul? No sooner did the Son of God behold the sword at your breast, and the hand of justice fetching the bloody stroak, but he cries out, O Father, hold thy hand; let all that vengeance that is due to those poor guilty creatures, fall upon me; behold I open my breast to receive the stroak of justice in their room. They have broken thy law, but here am I to fulfil it for them; they have enraged thy justice, but here am I ready to satisfy justice for them; they have drunk up iniquity like water; but lo! I will drink up the gall and vinegar of thy vengeance for them: *Lo! I come;* let the sword light upon me with all its vengeance. Come, come then, my beloved Son, says God, the Lord of hosts, you know what this work will cost you; will you stand your hazard? Yes, yes, says Christ: what will I not do for thy glory, and for those miserable sinners? What will I not suffer for them? let it be infinite vengeance, I bear it for them.—Content, content, then says the Father; and therefore, *Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd, and against the man that is my Fellow; smite the Shepherd.* Well, the Shepherd, the man, the wonderful man, is smitten, and the bloody stroak opens a wide gap in his heart, from whence streams a river of blood; *A river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God:* and of this river you are called to drink this day. Christ having sacrificed himself a peace-offering to the Lord of hosts, He, as the antitype of Moses, did sprinkle the blood of the sacrifice on the people; and therefore, *in the same manner, after supper, also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, this cup is the New Testament in my blood; this do, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me; for, as oft as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew forth the Lord's death till he come again.—Without the shedding of blood there is no remission;* but there is blood shed; take it, and remission of your sins with it; it is worthy blood, the blood of the man that is God's Fellow: the sword of justice has got such a full draught of this blood, that it craves no more. As long as God's justice is demanding vengeance, no man can stand before God: but here justice has no more to crave; for the satisfaction Christ gave was full measure, heaped up, and running over; he *offered himself to God, for a sweet-smelling savour;* justice was pacified and satisfied, and love got a vent towards man: and hence, instead of a cup of wrath, you have a cup of love to drink. What was justice seeking from Christ, when the sword was running through his heart? Why, justice was even pursuing him for your debt, and exacting all of the Surety that was due by you. May it not affect the heart of any debitor, that has the least spark or remains of ingenuity, to see his cautioner dragged to prison for his debt? But here you see more, the sword of justice not only arresting your Surety, but running him through, and killing him. O may not this fill you with hatred of your sins, and love to your Surety, that was so well pleased to be thus dealt with for you! Let not unbelief say, that you cannot think that this blood was shed for such a hellish sinner, such a wonderful sinner as you; for it would not be such wonderful blood, if it was not for the cleansing of such wonderful sinners: be your sins what they will, lay them under the covert of this blood, the blood of the man that is God's Fellow; as sure as he was smitten you shall escape; for, *He was wounded for our sins.* True, when he was wounded by the awakened sword, he might have cried, O Father, these sins are not mine; these transgressions are not mine; these faults and miscarriages, these black crimes are not mine; why should I be smitten for them? No, no: there was never such a word in his mouth. Love breathed out some other language; 'I 'was content, as a Surety, to take all that sin 'and guilt upon me; and now, I am as con-'tent to bear the weight of all that wrath and 'vengeance that their sins deserved.' O mighty love!

Now, my dear friends, a time of a communion action should be a busy time, when you see the sword of justice awakened against Christ. O lay all the enemies of God, especially his enemies within you, under the stroak of this sword of justice: bring all your *lusts* and *idols* to the justice of God, saying, *Awake, O sword* of justice *against these my sins, and smite them.*—What think you of this love, believers? What think you of this love, communicants? What think you of this love, spectators? If it had not been for this, instead of weeping at a communion-table, you had been weeping in hell. Awake, O sword, against my lusts, and give this lust a stroak, and that lust a stroak; awake, O sword, against this pride and passion of mine, and give it a stroak; awake, O sword, against that enmity, unbelief, and legality of mine, and give them a stroak; awake, O sword, against my atheism, carnality, and worldly-mindedness, and give these a stroak; awake, O sword, against my filthiness and frowardness, my uncleanness and vileness of heart and way, my Delilah sins, and O give them a stroak. Bring forth all your sins, and particularly the sins that easily beset you, bring them forth to the sword, the sword of justice, to be hewed in pieces, like Agag, before the Lord; saying, *Lord, let the sword that awaked against my Lord, awake against my lusts, that they may be crucified with him.* O take vengeance on thy enemies within me! O it will be a blessed com-

communion-day if it were but a day of vengeance upon your ſins and luſts. O! cry down the vengeance of the ſword of juſtice upon them.

And as you ſhould bring forth all your ſins, ſo bring forth all your *wants:* whatever you want to your own ſouls; to your friends; to your family; to your children; to your neighbour, and chriſtian acquaintance, that deſire you to mind them; lay all your wants before the man that is God's Fellow; who, as he is the ſacrifice for your ſins, ſo he is the ſtore-houſe for your ſupply; *my God ſhall ſupply all your need, according to his riches in glory, by Chriſt Jeſus,* Philip. iv. 19. Want you any thing for the church of Scotland? Our great want at this day is a ſpirit of zeal, a ſpirit of love, and a ſound mind; the want of God's holy Spirit makes much diviſion and diſorder; O cry down the Spirit! And do not wonder if the Shepherd be ſmitten, that the ſheep be ſcattered; this was fulfilled when *all the diſciples were offended becauſe of him, in the night wherein he was betrayed; and all forſook him and fled; they were ſcattered, every one to his own,* like ſo many timorous ſheep, *and left him alone,* John xvi. 32.—*But I will turn my hand upon my little ones:* ſome make that word a threatening, that, as Chriſt ſuffered, ſo ſhall his diſciples: they ſhall be baptized with the bloody baptiſm he was baptized with. Think not ſtrange, if a ſcaffold of blood ſhould be your trial; if you be a believer indeed, you ſhall notwithſtanding overcome by the blood of the Lamb, by the blood of the Shepherd, the man that is God's Fellow. *I will turn my hand upon the little ones:* ſome make it a promiſe, that God will gather together the ſcattered ſheep: the little ones among Chriſt's ſcholars, may be divided and diſperſed, but they ſhall rally again. O look for a time when he will return; and, in mercy, *turn his hand upon the little ones.*

Now, let all the little ones, the poor, weak, feeble ſheep of the flock, follow and lean upon the great Shepherd that was ſmitten for them, and he will ſupply all your wants, ſubdue all your iniquities, pardon all your ſins, and bear all your burdens, and ſanctify all your croſſes, and do all your work in you and for you. If you have not now gotten what you would have, cry to him, and wait upon him, and let it be the top of your deſires and endeavours, to have more and more fellowſhip with the man that is God's Fellow, eſpecially in his being the only ſacrifice to the ſword of juſtice in your room. Upon this ſacrifice wherewith God is ſo infinitely well pleaſed, let all your hope of grace and glory depend.

Now, go in peace, and may the *God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jeſus, that great Shepherd of the ſheep, through the blood of the everlaſting covenant, make you perfect, in every good work, to do his will; working in you that which is well pleaſing in his ſight, through Jeſus Chriſt; to whom be glory for ever and ever.* Amen.

SERMON IV.*

CHRIST the PEOPLE'S COVENANT.

ISAIAH xlii. 6.

——I will give thee for a covenant of the people.—

MY dear friends, if your ears be open, there are three things that you may hear this day, 1. You may hear what *miniſters* will ſay; but that is a matter of ſmall moment; and it is but a poor errand, if you be only come to hear what a poor mortal, ſinful fellow-creature will ſay to you. Little matter what we ſay, if God himſelf do not ſpeak in to your hearts. Therefore, 2. You may hear what *God* ſays to you: this is matter of great moment; for God's ſpeaking can make us both hear and live, though we were as dead as ſtocks, or ſtones. He ſpake the old creation out of nothing, and he can ſpeak a new creation out of us, who are worſe than nothing. Indeed it will be a wonder, if he do not ſpeak terrible things in righteouſneſs unto us, becauſe of our ſins; and really if he ſpeak to us out of Chriſt, it will be dreadful. Therefore, 3. You may come to hear what *God* ſays to *Chriſt,* and this is the greateſt moment of all. To hear what miniſters ſay to the congregation, is a little thing; to hear what God ſays to you, is a great thing; but to hear what God ſays to Chriſt, is one of the greateſt things that can be heard. God in his word ſpeaks to the ſons of men, and perhaps you have noticed that. But he ſpeaks alſo to the Son of God, to his eternal Son; and perhaps that is what you have little noticed to this day. Why, what ſays he to Chriſt? Is it any thing that we the people are concerned with? Yes, what he ſays to Chriſt is of the greateſt concern to us, and it is this, *I will give thee for a covenant of the people.* O, might the great and eternal Father ſay to his great and eternal Son, who is one God with him and the eternal Spirit, behold there is a company of people meeting in Dunfermline about a communion-table, with a view to the ſealing of the covenant; but their work will be to little purpoſe, if they view not THEE, my beloved Son, to be the ſpring, the ſpirit, the life, the all of the covenant: their covenant will be but a poor bargain without THEE; and therefore, *Behold, I will give* THEE *for a covenant of the people!* O a ſweet ſaying as ever was ſaid in the world! and no wonder, for it is a part of a ſermon whereof God himſelf is the Preacher, and Chriſt is the text, and the Spirit is the

* This was an Action-Sermon, preached immediately before the Celebration of the Lord's Supper, at Dunfermline, Auguſt 19. 1722. To which is annexed, The Subſtance of ſome Diſcourſes, after the Sacrament, upon the ſame Subject. This piece has already undergone Six Editions.

voice

voice that conveys it. If we had much of this Spirit with us, we might see how sweetly this glorious Preacher handles this wonderful text, from the beginning of the chapter: O how sweetly does he speak of him in the first four verses! and how sweetly does he speak to him from the fifth verse and downward!

1. How sweetly does he speak *of him? Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth*, etc. That Christ is the subject here treated of, you need not question, if you compare this first verse with Mat. 12. 18. where Christ expressly applies it to himself: and now, when the Father here speaks of Christ, every word is a word of commendation; he commends him for a *good* servant in his mediatory work, *Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth:* He commends him for a *well-qualified* Saviour, *I have put my spirit upon him; and he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles:* He commends him for a *meek* Saviour; *He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street*, ver. 2.: He commends him for a *tender-hearted* Saviour; *A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench; he shall bring forth judgment unto truth*, ver. 3.: He commends him for an *able* Saviour, that will go through with his work, maugre all impediments; *He shall not fail, nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth*, ver. 4.; and *the isles shall wait for his law*; the isle of Britain not excepted, and not forgetting Scotland in the north-end it.

2. How sweetly does he speak *to him* from ver. 5, 6. And here notice both the divine preface to this part of the sermon, and then the divine discourse. 1. The *preface*, shewing the glorious dignity of the Preacher, ver. 5. *Thus saith the Lord.* Here the glorious JEHOVAH is commending himself, as it well becomes him, and none but him to do. Who is it that is speaking? It is the Lord, the great Lord of heaven, earth, and mankind: it is the Lord of all the heavens that is speaking; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it: it is the Lord of all mankind that is speaking; he that gives breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that dwell therein.—Why then, he is the God that hath authority to make the following covenant with the Messiah, and give a commission to him. Therefore, 2. Notice the divine *discourse* itself, and what he says to Christ, ver. 6. *I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people*, etc. He had spoken sweetly of him, and here he speaks as sweetly to him; and in this speech is opened up to us the great mystery of the covenant of redemption betwixt the Father and the Son from eternity; and the opening thereof in time makes it a covenant of grace to us. And here we may see several parts of the indenture he binds and obliges himself unto.

The *first* piece of the indenture is, *I have called thee in righteousness.* Here is the vocation; he takes not this office of being Mediator upon him, without being called thereto; and God called him thereto in righteousness: he was rightly called; for the right of redemption fell into his hand: he was rightly called; for he was able for the work, and fit for it: he was rightly called; for he was willing to the work, and voluntarily offered himself, *Lo, I come; — I delight to do thy will, O my God:* He was rightly called; for as God did him no wrong, so he did himself right, and provided for the glory of all his perfections in this way.

The *second* piece of the indenture is, *I will hold thine hand;* that is another thing he says to him: go, says he, and I will hold thee by the hand all the way; I will bear the expences of that hard service: Christ goes this warfare on God's charges; he bears equal burden in the work of our redemption. We misplace our love, if we love not the Father as well as the Son; the three glorious persons of the adorable Trinity had all one will to it, and they go hand in hand about it; *I will hold thine hand.*

The *third* piece of the indenture, or the other thing he says to Christ, is, *I will keep thee;* I, says the great JEHOVAH to the God-man Mediator, I will keep thee, when the sins of an elect world shall all meet upon thee; when the curses of the law, the terrour of justice, the vengeance of heaven, and the fury of earth shall invade and incompass thee, I will keep and preserve thee, and make all these red-seas to divide and make way for thee to pass through triumphantly.

The *fourth* piece of the indenture is in the words of our text, and it is one of the great and glorious things he says to Christ; *I will give thee for a covenant of the people, a light to the Gentiles*, etc. Whatever be their malady, I will give thee to be a suitable remedy. Have they broken covenant? I will give thee to be a better covenant. But what of that, while they are ignorant? Why then, *I will give thee for a light to the Gentiles.* But what though they have light, if they have not sight too? for a blind man hath no benefit of the sun; why then, *I will give thee to open the blind eyes.* But what though they have both light and sight, if they be still in a dark prison, bound and fettered there? Why, I will give thee for this end, *To bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house.* O but these are sweet promises made to Christ, and in him to us; and the leading one, that comprehends the rest, is in these words, *I will give thee for a covenant of the people.*—Where, without critical division, you may notice these two things. 1. The gracious designation and title that Christ bears, *a covenant of the people.* 2. His glorious ordinance and appointment thereto, *I will give thee* for that end.

1. The *glorious designation* and *title of honour* that he bears; he is called, *a covenant of the people:* and here he is described by his relation to the covenant, and by his relation to us by this means. His relation to the *covenant* is such, that he is designed, *the Covenant itself;* he is the head and heart of the covenant; he is the foundation and cape-stone of the covenant; the bottom and top of the covenant; the Alpha and Omega of the covenant; the first and the last letter of the covenant; the *all in all* of the covenant. The first covenant-head brake and fell; and he falling, all his seed fell. The second covenant-head stands; and he standing, all his seed stand in him; *My covenant shall stand fast in him.*—Again, his relation to *us* by this means. To whom is he a covenant? Even a *covenant of the people*, of the Gentiles. O good news to us poor Gentiles!

2. His

2. His *glorious ordination* and *appointment* unto this buſineſs; *I will give thee*: and here alſo every word hath ſome glory in it. Here is the glorious *perſon ordaining* him, in the pronoun *I*; I JEHOVAH do it: here is the glorious *perſon ordained*, in the pronoun THEE; *I will give* THEE: here is the glorious *manner* of the ordination, it is by way of free and gratuitous gift; *I will* GIVE *thee*: and here is the glorious *reaſon* and *moving cauſe* of the whole, even the *ſovereign will* of God; *I* WILL *give thee*. But the further explication of theſe particulars, I refer to the proſecution of the doctrine.

OBSERV. *That by divine ordination, Chriſt is the covenant of the people.*

The only ſcripture I name for the confirmation, is Iſa. xlix. 8. *Thus ſaith the Lord, in an acceptable time have I heard thee: and in a day of ſalvation have I helped thee: and I will preſerve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to eſtabliſh the earth, to cauſe to inherit the deſolate heritages.* Where you ſee the viſion is doubled, becauſe it is true.

The method I would endeavour, through grace, to follow, is,

I. To offer ſome *remarks* concerning the covenant in general.
II. Shew *how* Chriſt is the covenant, and in what *reſpects* he bears that name.
III. Enquire for whoſe *benefit* he is ſo; and thus ſhew that he is the covenant of the people.
IV. By whoſe *authority* he is ſo; and here ſpeak of his divine ordination, and being given of God for that end.
V. Offer ſome *reaſons* of the doctrine, why he is given to be a covenant, and why a covenant of the people.
VI. Draw ſome *inferences* for application.

I. The *firſt* thing is, To offer ſome *remarks* concerning the covenant in general; and I confine them to theſe four, which are imported in the text and doctrine.

1. The *firſt* remarkable thing imported in the text, is, 'That the *covenant of works is broken*, and 'cannot ſave us; and we are broken, and cannot 'ſave ourſelves.' There was a covenant of works made with the firſt Adam and his ſeed, before the fall; and therein God was upon theſe terms with man, *Do, and Live*; and if you do not, you ſhall die. In this law of works, there was a precept, and a ſanction. The precept is, *Do this*; that is, perform perfect and perſonal obedience: the ſanction is, *If thou do not, thou ſhalt die*; importing, that the reward of obedience was eternal life; *The man that doth theſe things, ſhall live in them:* and that the puniſhment of diſobedience was eternal death; *The ſoul that ſinneth ſhall die*, Gen. ii. 17. Now, as by the fall of mankind, the precept of *doing* is broken, and the penalty of *dying* is incurred, and eternal life forfeited; ſo our ſalvation is impoſſible without a perfect righteouſneſs; a righteouſneſs of obedience, performing the precept of the law, and ſo intitling to life; a righteouſneſs to ſatisfaction, undergoing the penalty of the law, and ſo delivering from death. The former is impoſſible for us; for, *we are dead in ſins and treſpaſſes*, and ſo can never perform any duty acceptable to God, far leſs complete and perfect obedience. The latter is impoſſible; for, being both finite and ſinful creatures, we can never give infinite and ſinleſs ſatisfaction; and ſo we are broken and loſt by the breach of this covenant. There are four things upon this particular, that I preſume, you all profeſs to know; namely, 1. The *tenor* of the covenant of works, 'That, when God had created man, 'he entered into a covenant of life, or works, 'with him, upon condition of perfect obedi-'ence, forbidding him to eat of the tree of 'knowledge of good and evil, upon the pain 'of death.' 2. The *breach* of this covenant, 'That our firſt parents, being left to the free-'dom of their own will, fell from the eſtate 'wherein they were created, by ſinning a-'gainſt God,' and particularly, 'by eating the 'forbidden fruit.' 3. Our *concern* in this original apoſtaſy and fall in Adam,' That the co-'venant being made with him, not only for 'himſelf, but for his poſterity, all mankind 'deſcending from him by ordinary generation, 'ſinned in him, and fell with him, in his firſt 'trangreſſion: *For by one man ſin entered into the 'world, and death by ſin; and ſo death paſſed upon 'all men, for that all have ſinned*, or, in whom 'all have ſinned.' 4. The *fatal, woful effects* of this fall and breach of the covenant of works; namely, 'That by this means we have fallen 'into a ſtate of ſin and miſery; that our ſtate 'is a ſinful ſtate, we being guilty of Adam's 'firſt ſin, wanting original righteouſneſs, and 'our whole nature being corrupted, whence 'proceeds all our actual ſin; and that our 'ſtate is a miſerable ſtate, having loſt commu-'nion with God, being under his wrath and 'curſe, liable to all the miſeries of this life, to 'death itſelf, and the pains of hell for ever. 'Why? *The wages of ſin is death*, and we are 'children of wrath; and, *curſed is every one that 'continueth not in all things written in the book of the 'law, to do them.*' It may be, it is long ſince ye knew theſe things in your catechiſms: but O, how long is it ſince you believed them? or, do you believe them yet? Have you ſeen your fall in Adam, and your woful, ſinful, miſerable ſtate by nature, through the breach of the covenant of works? If you were convinced of this, ſurely the news of another covenant would be welcome to you. But then,

2. The *ſecond* remarkable thing, imported in the text, is, 'That there is a *covenant of grace 'provided*, for the recovery of ſome, by Jeſus 'Chriſt, from a ſtate of ſin and death to a ſtate 'of righteouſneſs and eternal life;' or, you may take it thus, 'God having out of his 'mere good pleaſure, from all eternity, elect-'ed ſome to everlaſting life, did enter into a 'covenant of grace, to deliver them out of the 'eſtate of ſin and miſery, and to bring them 'into an eſtate of ſalvation by a Redeemer.' Hence ſuch ſcriptural expreſſions as theſe, *By grace ye are ſaved;—not by works of righteouſneſs that we have done;—for if there had been a law*, [namely, of works] *which could have given life, verily righteouſneſs ſhould have been by the law*, Gal. iii. 21. Now, this covenant of grace may be conſidered, either in its original tranſaction from eternity, or in its actual manifeſtation in time.

(1.) Conſider it in its *original tranſaction from eternity* betwixt the Father and the Son. God having in his eternal decree of permitting the fall, foreſeen the ruin of mankind by the breach and violation of the covenant of works; gra-

graciously purposed not to proceed against all mankind, according to the demerit of their transgression, in the execution of that death upon them which that covenant threatened; and therefore a council of peace is called from eternity, and the proposal made concerning the shewing mercy to an elect number, in a way that should be to the honour and glory of God's holiness, which says, They must do perfectly; and of God's justice, which says, They must die eternally. Well, none in all the creation of men and angels were able to satisfy this proposal: then says Christ, *Lo, I come*, Psal. xl. 8. I offer myself to be their Surety, to give a perfect obedience to the law, which was the condition of the covenant of works, and to give infinite satisfaction to offended justice, in answer to the penalty incurred through the breach and violation of that covenant. *Lo, I come;* since the law cannot be fulfilled without doing, nor justice satisfied without doing, lo, I come to do both: and seeing this undertaking must be accomplished by one, who is both finite, that he may die; and infinite, that he may conquer death and wrath; I offer to do it in their nature, and by an unspeakable mystery to become flesh; *Lo, I come;* let the impannelled criminal go free. The Father being infinitely well-pleased with this consent, encourages his eternal Son, enters into a covenant with him, calls him, qualifies him, promises to *uphold him in the whole work, and to give him for a covenant of the people;* and that, for making *his soul an offering for sin*, he should *see his seed*, and *see the travel of his soul*, and *be satisfied*, Isa. liii. 11. This is called by many, *The covenant of redemption;* not that it is another covenant of grace, but I take it as another consideration of the same covenant. It was made with Christ as the second Adam, and in him with all the elect as his seed. As it is made with Christ, it is properly conditional to him; the condition being perfect obedience, and complete satisfaction; but as made with the elect in him, it is absolute; consisting of free and absolute promises to them. But,

(2.) Consider it in its *actual manifestation in time:* and here, omitting what might be said of the legal administration of it under the Old Testament, and the evangelical administration under the New, I shall only say, That as the transaction betwixt the Father and the Son from eternity, is the fountain, so this manifestation of it in time is the opening of the fountain; and the grace of God is manifested in this covenant of grace several ways. 1. In that he freely provides a Saviour for lost sinners, shewing, by the gospel, that he hath made this provision. 2. In that he freely offers to sinners a Mediator, and life and salvation in him. 3. In that he not only calls and commands them to come to him by faith, as the means to interest them in him, and to believe in him for salvation: but, 4. Promises his holy Spirit to work in them that faith, and all other saving graces. And though this, and all the other absolute promises of the covenant shall be certainly accomplished, and actually applied to the elect only; yet, in the eternal dispensation of the gospel, and administration of the covenant, they are revealed and exhibited in a general indefinite way and manner, with an universal offer and command to all and every one that hear this gospel, to plead them, and lay hold upon them; that in this way the hearers of the gospel may be left inexcusable that embrace it not; and that the elect may be gathered in, made to believe, and come under the bond of the covenant.

3. The *third* remarkable thing, imported in the text, is, 'That there is an *oneness* and *iden-* 'tity betwixt the covenant of grace, as made 'with *Christ*, and as made with us *in him;* both 'are one and the same covenant:' for here the Father is contracting with the Son, *I will give thee for a covenant of the people;* therefore, that with the Son and with the people belong to one and the same covenant: with respect to Christ, it had its constitution from eternity; with respect to us, it hath its application in time: on this account it is called, *The grace given us in Christ before the world began*, 2 Tim. i. 9. *And eternal life, which God that cannot lie promised before the world began*, Tit. i. 2. As the first Adam was our public federal head, and he and we included in one and the same covenant of works; so Christ, the second Adam, is our public head, and the covenant of grace with him and us, is the same covenant, though he alone is the Head, Surety, and Mediator, to whom some promises and precepts are peculiar: however, he being the covenant of the people, all things promised unto, or to be performed by the people, are secured in the contract with Christ; all the condition of life to be performed is found in him; yea, he undertakes, in that covenant, the removal of all obstructions and impediments from within that would hinder their attainment of covenant-mercy, being *for a light to the Gentiles*, to take away the inward blindness that is found in them; so that, not only all necessaries for redemption, but also necessaries for the powerful and effectual application of that redemption, are first promised in the covenant to him, and then to us in him, upon his fulfilling the condition of perfect obedience. Is justification promised? It is first to him, and then to us in him, Isa. liii. 11. *By his knowledge*, [or, *by the knowledge of him,*] *shall my righteous servant justify many.* Is sanctification and the Spirit promised? It is first to him, and then to us in him; verse first of this chapter, *I will put my Spirit upon him, and he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.* Is glorification promised? It is first to him, and then to us in him; Rom. 8. 17. *If children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.*—He and the people are all in one and the same covenant: he, as the glorious Head, Surety, and Representative, having all fulness in him, both of grace and glory, for our use and behoof; and we, as members of that body whereof he is the head, and in a way of union to him by faith; for, *all the promises*, not only some, but *all the promises of God are in him, Yea; and in him, Amen;* twice in him, importing, That as the covenant of grace, which is the covenant of promise, is made jointly with him and us; so in the constitution of the covenant, the promises are all made to him; and in the application of it, they are made to us in him: primarily, and immediately, they are made to him; secondarily, and mediately, to us in him.

4. Hence the *fourth* thing remarkable, imported in the text, is, 'Christ is the *centre*, in 'whom all the lines of the covenant do meet;' and so by an usual figure, of the part for the whole,

whole, he bears the name of the whole covenant; *I will give him for a covenant of the people:* the covenant of grace is said not only to be made with him, but he himself is the covenant. And this leads me to

II. The *second* thing, *To shew* how *Christ is the* covenant, *and in what* respects *he bears that name?*

We reply, 1. Christ is the covenant of the people *radically* and *fundamentally*, being the root, basis, and foundation upon which the covenant of grace stands; the alone foundation; *Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ*, 1 Cor. iii. 11. He is the sure foundation that God hath laid in Zion, Isa. xxviii. 16. The covenant of works, being built upon something in man, it was not sure work, and so the fabric tumbled down: but the covenant of grace and mercy is built upon a never-failing foundation; it is sure work to eternity; and therefore says God, *Mercy shall be built up for ever:* why? *I have made a covenant with my chosen.* Christ is the ancient and eternal foundation of the covenant; no other foundation is laid in Zion in time, but that which was laid in the counsel of peace from eternity. God hath promised nothing to us in time, but what he purposed and promised in Christ from eternity; *He has chosen us in him before the foundation of the world*, Eph. i. 4. and *promised eternal life in him before the world began.* He is the foundation of all the blessings and privileges of the covenant, *Being made of God unto us wisdom, and righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.* He is the foundation of all the promises, graces, and comforts of the covenant. This were a large field, but I go on.

2. Christ is the covenant *relatively*, in respect of the *relations* he comes under to it: we find in scripture, that he is called *the Mediator of the covenant*, Heb. ix. 15. Why? he brings God and man, that were at variance, to meet amicably: by the price of his blood, he brings God to us; and by the power of his Spirit, he brings us to God, and makes up the difference. He is called *the Testator of the covenant*, Heb. ix. 16. *Where a testament is, there is the death of the Testator.* He hath signed all the articles of it with his own blood, and so confirmed it, and made it a testament.—He is called *the Messenger of the covenant*, Mal. iii. 1. When God would communicate his mind to us, it is in Christ; when we would communicate our mind to God, it is in Christ: whatever message God hath to us, or we to him, Christ bears it, and makes the travel, be the journey never so dangerous; *For this is he that came by water and blood*, 1 John v. 6. He came by sea, by a sea of water for our sanctification; *For if he wash us not, we have no part in him;* and by a sea of blood for our justification; for, *Without shedding of blood there is no remission:* A dangerous voyage for bearing the message.—He is called the *witness of the covenant*, Isa. lv. 5. *I will give him for a witness of the people: He is the true and faithful witness.* As he was an eye and ear-witness to the whole transaction of the covenant from eternity; so he sets his seal to the articles of it in time, and bears witness by his word, by his blood, by his Spirit. This he does effectually, sometimes in the hearts of his people, when he conquers all their unbelieving doubts and jealousies of his word, and suspicions of his love, or of his Father's kindness.—He is called *the Surety of the covenant*, Heb. vii. 22. He is the Surety both for debt and duty: Surety for *debt;* the law demanded of us a debt of infinite suffering, the just demerit of our sins, which, if laid upon us, would sink us for ever; for, *The wages of sin is death.* And also it demanded a debt of perfect obedience and universal holiness and righteousness. Now, we are insolvent debtors, drowned in debt, and unable to pay a farthing; and unless there be a Surety for us, we cannot escape the prison of hell, and the everlasting wrath of the omnipotent God. Behold the Surety steps in, even in this hopeless state we are fallen into, pays the debt to the least farthing, and puts his name in our bond: *Was made under the law, to redeem those that were under the law.* And then he is Surety for *duty*, promising to put his *Spirit within us, and cause us to walk in his statutes.* He is Surety for both sides of the covenant; Surety that all that God hath said and promised shall be accomplished; and Surety that all that we are obliged to do, shall be done for us, and in us. O sweet and gracious covenant!—In a word, he is the *Servant* of the covenant, *Behold my Servant whom I uphold*, Isa. xlii. 1. *Wist ye not*, says he to his parents that were seeking him, *that I must be about my Father's business?* What business? What service? The hardest service that ever was, even to satisfy justice, to fulfil the law, to conquer Satan, to purchase heaven, to save an elect world, to endure the contradiction of sinners against himself, in accomplishing this service.—He is the *Performer* of the covenant; yea, the *Performance* itself. Christ, standing in all these relations to the covenant, may well be called the covenant of the people.

3. Christ is the covenant *substantially*, in respect of his being the very *matter* of the covenant; the principal part of it, the principal promise of it. He is the substance of all the promises, the first thing promised; and whatever is promised else, is for his sake. He is the promised seed spoken of to Adam and Eve, to Abraham, to David, Gen. iii. 15. Gen. xxii. 18. Luke i. 32, 33. He is the substance of the prophecies, *To him gave all the prophets witness*, Acts x. 43. He is the substance of all the shadows and Old Testament types: he is the true brazen serpent, that heals diseased souls; the true manna and bread of life; the true sacrifice and paschal lamb, whose blood, being sprinkled on the door-posts of the soul, saves from the destroying-angel: of all the types he is the Antitype, the substance of the whole Bible, and of all the scriptures, *These are they that testify of me.* It is a strange text, that a gospel-minister cannot find Christ in, since the whole scriptures testify of him; as if it said nothing else but Christ, Christ.—Thus he is the covenant substantially. Again,

4. Christ is the covenant *eminently;* in point of eminency, ornament, and excellency. He is the very ornament of the covenant, the excellency and sweetness of it; he is the blessing of all blessings of the covenant, the mercy of all the mercies; the soul of all the privileges of the covenant: no blessing of the covenant is a blessing without him, for all blessings come with him; *How shall he not with him freely give us all things?* Rom. viii. 32. The covenant is nothing without Christ, the blessings of it are nothing without Christ; he is the sweetness of all

all the blessings of the covenant, the marrow of all the mercies of the covenant, and the fulness of all the promises of the covenant: they are all empty without Christ, for he is *all in all*. And therefore, O empty ordinances, without Christ; O empty sacraments, if Christ be not there; O empty ministers, if Christ be not with them; yea, O empty heaven, if Christ be not there; empty enjoyments, empty comforts without Christ.

5. Christ is the covenant *meritoriously*, and in point of acquisition and procurement. He does all that is necessary for the procuring the blessings of the covenant: his righteousness is the great condition of the covenant, the alone condition of it, properly so called; it is the cause, the procuring cause of all covenant-blessings. All that is promised to Christ or to us, is upon the account of his obedience; Isa. liii. 10, 11, 12. *By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous*, not by the obedience of any man for himself, Rom. v. 19. He is the procurer of justification, Rom. v. 18.; the procurer of remission of sin, Rom. iii. 24.; the procurer of peace, Isa. liii. 5.; yea, the sum of it, for, *he is our peace*; the procurer of our access to God, and communion with him; all *that are afar off are made nigh*, only *by the blood of Christ*; the procurer of sanctifying grace, Isa. liii. 10. 1 Cor. i. 30. and of eternal salvation: his death is the purchase of the heavenly inheritance: and so he is the covenant meritoriously, in procuring all the blessings thereof.

6. Christ is the covenant *efficaciously*, or *efficiently*: as he procures all by the price of his blood, so he applies all by the power of his Spirit. By this powerful Spirit of his in the efficiency of his application, by the means of the law, he discovers to men their sad condition, while under a covenant of works; by the means of the gospel, he discovers the excellencies of the covenant of grace, and also their claim to it, in and by the indefinite general dispensation of the gospel, and the promise of the covenant; so that whoever will, may come and put in for a share. But this is not all; Christ, in his efficiency, does persuade and enable the poor soul to take hold of this covenant, of Christ himself, as the ALL of the covenant, and that with particular application to itself, for its own relief; and not only to accept, but to trust to it for all grace and life, and that upon the warrant of God's word of grace, renouncing all other ways of salvation, and resting only upon this, 1 Tim. i. 15. Acts xvi. 6. Yea, after the person is brought within the covenant, Christ is the great performer of all covenant-duties, he performs all our works in us, Isa. xxvi. 12. We are to present no duty of our own to God for acceptance, or in order to obtain life and salvation by it; but to present him with Christ, he being the covenant to perform all for us and in us, which we are obliged to. In a word, he is engaged as the covenant of the people, to be all, and do all; to procure all, and to see all made effectual that concerns grace and glory: *I will give him for a covenant of the people*, says the Lord. I will not enter into covenant, or deal with them in an immediate way, as with the first Adam, but I will take a surer course, I will give thee for that end; thou shalt undertake all the matter therein; I will look to thee for the performance thereof. Man hath broken covenant; I will not trust him again; but thou shalt be the covenant; the promise of life shall be made only in thee, and the condition of life shall be found only in thee.—Thus he is the covenant.

III. The *third* thing was, to shew, For whose *benefit* he is a covenant; and so to shew that he is *the covenant of the people*. Men and women have a way of excluding themselves by unbelief; but I am sure, my text will exclude none this day, that are here, from a right to accept of this covenant, unless it be the devil himself. He indeed, and all the fallen angels, are excluded; and no doubt he is come here among us this day, to tempt people to exclude themselves, because he himself is excluded. But here is a foundation of faith for all the people that hear this gospel; Christ is the covenant of the people, insomuch that whosoever of all the people will subscribe to this covenant, and go in to it by faith, shall have the everlasting benefit of it.

QUEST. *Why, say you, I am, it may be, none of the people here meant, none of the elect whose names are in that covenant and contract, and therefore my subscribing of it may be in vain.* *Answ.* For the clearing of this, *That Christ is the covenant of the people*, you would know and remember, That there are two copies of this covenant; or rather, if we may so express it, two writs of this *charter*, the one is an original, written in heaven; and the other an extract, written in this Bible. 1. I say, as to the *original*, it is written in heaven, and hath all the names of the *church invisible* inrolled in it, Heb. xii. 23. They are called *the church of the first-born that are written in heaven*. In this writing are the names of all the elect, of all that ever were, are, or shall be actually taken within the bond of the covenant; and these are they of whom it is said, *They are chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world*, Eph. i. 4. And again, *Whom he did predestinate, them he also called*, Rom. viii. 30. And again, *All that the Father hath given me, shall come to me*; and, *All that were ordained to eternal life, believed:* And of them, Christ says, *I lay down my life for my sheep*. This original draught of the covenant, is a writ locked up in the cabinet of God's secret purpose; and *secret things belong not to us*, but the *things that are revealed*; therefore, 2. There is an *extract* of this original writ, and this extract is written in the Bible, which is the book of the covenant: this you have among your hands, and this copy of the covenant is sent open to you all to sign and subscribe, by giving faith's assent and consent to the covenant, or closing with Christ, the covenant of the people, as he is offered in the gospel. Now, though this extract be a true copy, answering exactly to the original; yet, for rendering all inexcusable, to whom these presents are sent, if they do not subscribe, and for gathering in all the elect, this fair extract is directed to all, and every one of you, giving you full and sufficient warrant to sign and subscribe for yourselves; for you cannot possibly see your names in the original, till once you have signified your consent, by subscription, to the copy that is among your hands, which is here let down to the earth, to see how you please it, this day. And if you sign the extract, as it is sent to you, then you may lay claim to the original, and see your name there,

there, which alone is the privilege of these that make the extract their own by signing it; for *the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will shew them his covenant.* He shews them sometimes their name in the original writ of the covenant. It is the settled order of heaven, that although some, who, by faith, subscribe the extracted copy, are kept in the dark about their names being in the original; yet none shall see their names there, but these who subscribe their names here.

QUEST. *But, for what purpose serves my putting my name to the foot of a bond, if my name be not in the bond itself?* Why, then read the direction of this gospel-covenant, and see if your names be there, and answer to your names; for I shall endeavour to be as practical, as I go along, as possible, that I may have the less to do in the application. *For whose benefit then is he thus the covenant?* Why, it is even for the advantage of these whose names are here set down; and though they may not here find their particular names, John, James, Mary, Martha, yet their general names; yea, both their more general and more special names, are here.

1. Their more *general* name is, *the people;* he is *the covenant of the people;* and here all sinners of mankind, who hear of Christ, have a claim to put in for a share in him, seeing the covenant is directed to them; whosoever they be that hear this gospel, all saving benefits are preached to them by Jesus Christ, according to the ministerial commission, saying, *To you is the word of this salvation sent*, Acts xiii. 26. And in this sense the apostle says, Titus ii. 11. *The grace of God that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men:* or, as it may be rendered, as you see it in the margin of some of your Bibles, *The grace of God, that bringeth salvation to all men, hath appeared.* Let them straiten the gospel-offer who will, they do it at their peril; our commission is wide and full, insomuch that this covenant is directed to all to whom these presents may come. If this be your general name, that you are one of the people, be what you will otherwise, then you are concerned to answer to your name, and put in for a share of the grace of this covenant, by subscribing and saying *Amen* to it. Why, say you, that is a general name indeed; I dare not deny but that is my general name; then man, woman, do not put that covenant from you. But, say you, Is there no more special name of the people, whose covenant he is? Yea,

2. Their more *special* name is here set down in black and white; for, who the people are, what people in a special manner is here meant, is cleared in the following words, *A light to the Gentiles, to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness, out of the prison-house.* And here you will find both the name and surname of the people intended; and I believe *your names* and surnames, that hear me, will be found in it. 1. The name is *Gentile.* 2. The surname is *Gentile, dark* and *blind; Gentile, bound* and *imprisoned,*

(1.) I say, the name of the people, whose covenant he is, is *Gentiles;* and, I suppose, this is the name of all that hear me, if there be not Jews here; if I thought there were any, I would drop some promise of Christ to, and concerning them, that might draw them to him also, if the Lord would put forth power with it. However it is to you, Gentiles, that I am speaking; and, O may I venture to say with Paul this day, *To me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, to preach among you, Gentiles, the unsearchable riches of Christ!* This is a part of the mystery of godliness Christ preached to the Gentiles, 1 Tim. iii. 16. It was a mystery to the Jews and primitive Christians, when Christ was first given by a preached gospel to the Gentiles, Acts ix. 17, 18. Why? the Gentiles were called *the uncircumcision*, Eph. ii. 11.; being abominable outcasts, whose entering into the temple, was enough to pollute it: but now the gospel declares, *God will justify the uncircumcision by faith.* The Gentiles were called *aliens without God, without Christ, without hope; aliens from the common-wealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenant of promise*, Eph. ii. 12. But now the covenant of promise is given and exhibited to the people that were aliens. Gentiles were called *dogs; It is not meet to take the childrens bread and cast it to dogs*, says Christ to the woman of Canaan, one of the posterity, it seems, of these accursed nations, that were devoted by that word, Gen. ix. 25. *Cursed be Canaan:* and indeed the Gentiles and Canaanites, as they were contemned by the Jews, and looked upon as dogs; so in comparison of the house of Israel, who were so much blessed, dignified, and privileged of old, Christ seems here to allow it, and assert that they were cursed, that they were dogs. But now the tables are turned, *the Gentiles are called;* and, in this woman, the Lord gives an instance of what mercy was in reserve for these dogs: and we Gentiles may plead the same privilege, at least, with that woman of Canaan, *Truth, Lord, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from their masters table.* The door of Bethlehem, the house of bread, is open, Acts xiv. 27. God hath opened the door of faith to the Gentiles, even to dogs: the door of the covenant is open, and we dare not shut the door upon any dog in all this house; and therefore, as we use to say, *At open doors dogs come in;* allow me in this homely comparison; for, as all the Gentiles, so all the wicked are called dogs; Rev. xxii. 15. *Without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters.* But the door being open to all sinners by this gospel, you may come to Christ for salvation, as freely as a dog will come in at an open door; yea, more freely and boldly; for dogs many times come in uncalled, and therefore we beat them out again; but here is both a call to come, and a promise of welcome; *Whosoever will, let him come; and him that cometh, I will in no wise cast out.* Well, I say, the *Gentiles are called dogs*, and if that be a part of your name, man, woman, answer to your name, and take with your name, and take the blessing that is offered to you by name. If you have no better name than that of a dog, come with that name, and set it down at the foot of the contract, by subscribing your consent to have Christ to be your covenant; and though it be a base name, he will not refuse to take in your subscription. In a word, the Gentiles are called *heathens*, Gal. iii. 8. *The scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.* Good news to heathens and pagans, such as we in our forefathers were; and this is the gospel indeed, that was preached to

Abraham long ago: *In thee ſhall all nations be bleſſed;* in THEE, what THEE? the ſame THEE that is in our text, which preacheth the ſame goſpel alſo; *I will give* THEE *for a covenant of the people;* even the people that are called *Gentiles*, and *heathens*, *uncircumciſion*, *aliens*, and *dogs*. Well, there is the name of the people whoſe covenant he is, they are *Gentiles*.

(2.) The ſirname of the people is *Gentiles*, *dark* and *blind*; *Gentiles bound* and *impriſoned:* and ſee if the ſirname be not yours, Sirs, as well as the name. There are eſpecially two ſirnames here that the people have. The *firſt* ſirname is *dark* and *blind;* this is imported in theſe words, *A light to the Gentiles, to open blind eyes.* Well, is this your ſirname? Are you darkneſs itſelf in the abſtract? Are you in the darkneſs of ignorance, darkneſs of error, in the darkneſs of corruption, in the darkneſs of confuſion, in the darkneſs of deſertion, in the darkneſs of deluſion? O! here is a brave covenant for you to ſign: It is a covenant of light; for he that is the *covenant of the people*, is *the light of the Gentiles*. But all the light in the world, without ſight, will be uncomfortable; and therefore, is another part of your ſirname *blindneſs* as well as darkneſs? Have you not only ſore eyes, and ſee ill, but are you blind, and ſee none at all? Are you blind with reſpect to ſin, and cannot ſee it in its power and guilt? Blind with reſpect to duty, and cannot ſee what to do? Blind with reſpect to God, and cannot ſee him in his beauty and excellency? Blind with reſpect to Chriſt, and cannot ſee him in his glory, fulneſs, and righteouſneſs? Blind with reſpect to ordinances, and cannot ſee the power and glory of God in the ſanctuary? Blind with reſpect to providence, and cannot diſcern the ſigns of the times? Blind with reſpect to your intereſt in Chriſt, and cannot ſee whether that be ſecured or not? Blind with reſpect to your warrant to intermeddle with Chriſt and his inſtitutions? Blind with reſpect to all ſpiritual and eternal things? Why, this covenant of the people is deſigned to open the blind eyes: And if darkneſs and blindneſs be the ſirname of the people, for whoſe benefit Chriſt is the covenant, and if that be your ſirname alſo, why then there is room at the foot of this covenant, to ſet down your name and ſirname both. This covenant of the people is a covenant of light, to the people that are dark; and a covenant of ſight, to the people that are blind. Let all them that find this to be their ſirname, ſubſcribe to this covenant, and ſay, I am one of the dark people, and I come for light; I am one of the blind people, and I come for ſight: there is my name, Lord; let it be recorded among the dark, blind people of which Chriſt is the covenant.—Again, the *ſecond* ſirname of the people, is *bound* and *impriſoned:* This is imported in theſe words, *To bring out the priſoners from the priſon, and them that ſit in darkneſs out of the priſon-houſe.* Now, whatever priſon you are in, Sirs, if your ſirname be a bound priſoner, our text ſpeaks to you. Are you in the priſon of ſin, a bond-ſlave and a ſervant unto luſts? Are you in the priſon of Satan, in the devil's priſon, led captive by him at his pleaſure? Are you in the priſon of the law, a debtor to do the whole law, and a debtor to bear the whole curſe of it? Are you in the priſon of carnality, clogged with things of this world? Are you in the priſon of a black league with death, and covenant with hell? Are you in the priſon of a natural ſtate, as a child of diſobedience, and a child of wrath? Are you in the priſon of temptations, either from without, or within, filled with dreadful ſuggeſtions, and blaſphemous injections? Are you in the priſon of affliction, either upon ſoul or body, ſtate or family? Are you in the priſon of doubts and fears and deſpondency, with your ſoul caſt down within you? Are you in the priſon of unbelief, concluded under it, ſo as you cannot for your life get an act of faith elicite? Are you in the priſon of wretched careleſneſs, unconcernedneſs, and indifferency, not caring whether you be looſed and delivered out of priſon or not? Are you in the priſon of atheiſm, and cannot believe a God, a Chriſt, a heaven, or hell? Are you in the priſon of death, and in bondage through fear of death? Or, are you in the priſon of ſecurity, fearing nothing, but ſleeping in the arms of the devil? What priſon-houſe are you in, man? Anſwer to your name; priſoner in ſuch a priſon-houſe that I have named. Is the door of the priſon-houſe bolted and barred that you cannot get out, and the heavy chains and fetters of hell about you, ſo as you cannot looſe them any more than you can unhinge the axle-tree of the univerſe? Behold, this covenant of the people is a covenant of liberty for the people that are in priſon. If I have not named the priſon, or the chamber of the priſon-houſe you are in, name it yourſelf, and ſay, I am priſoner in ſuch a priſon-houſe; I have been ſo long and ſo long in ſuch a dark priſon, and lo, I ſet down my name, to wit, *a bound priſoner*, conſenting to be liberate by the Son of God, and conſenting that he would work the conſent himſelf, and do all that concerns my liberty. Why, man, down with your name that ſame way; and if you be not ſet at liberty in God's own time and way, you will be the firſt that ever gave in a ſubſcription, and was not received: nay, marked and recorded it ſhall be; for the covenant ſpeaks to you by name and ſirname, ſaying, *Go forth, ye priſoners of hope: The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for he hath anointed me to preach and proclaim liberty to the captives.* This covenant of the people then is drawn up already, and ſigned. See who hath ſigned it, ver. 8. *I am the* LORD, *that is my name.* He hath ſigned it by a name, by which he is known in heaven and earth, even JEHOVAH; I am JEHOVAH, I am the LORD, that is my name. O glorious name ſubſcribing this bond! That is his name; what is yours? Why, can you ſay, I am one of the people they call *Gentiles?* I am a *dark, blind, bound priſoner;* that is my name and ſirname both. Yea, be your name as vile and black as hell, yet down with it in capital letters; for the infinitely fair name of the firſt ſubſcriber will ſet it off; his name will anſwer for all the defects and deformities of yours: and if you wait till you be in a better condition, and have a better name to ſign with, you will wait till the day of judgment, and in the mean time inevitably periſh at death; and all the money of your terms, conditions, and good qualifications, which you will bring as price in your hands, will periſh with you. Nay, you have nothing to do in this covenant, but bleſs God that brought it to your hand, and ſign it with your heart. Chriſt hath a commiſſion from his

his Father, and we in his name, to take in the ſubſcriptions of all the people, whoſe name and ſirname I have mentioned; and I hope I have not miſſed any one here.—Thus you ſee who the people are, for whoſe benefit he is the covenant; and that he is well deſigned *the covenant of the people*, ſeeing all the people here named have a right of acceſs to the covenant, a warrant to ſeal and ſubſcribe to it; and all the people, that are ſubſcribers, have a right of poſſeſſion to the whole good of the covenant, and to the ſeal thereof, the ſacrament of the ſupper.

IV. The *fourth* thing propoſed, was to ſhew, By *whoſe authority*, or by *what authority*, Chriſt is the covenant of the people; and ſo to hint at his *divine ordination* to this buſineſs, in theſe words, *I will give thee.* Where you have, 1. The glorious perſon ordaining, *I.* 2. The glorious perſon ordained, *Thee.* 3. The gracious manner of the ordination, *Give.* 4. The gracious motive and ground, *I* WILL *give thee.* A ſhort word to each of theſe.

1ſt, The glorious perſon *ordaining* Chriſt to this work, *I will give thee*; What *I*? I the LORD, I JEHOVAH, I the firſt perſon of the glorious Trinity. God the Father here is the firſt grand party of the covenant; yea, here is God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, eſſentially conſidered, contracting with the Son, and ordaining him, perſonally conſidered, to this work. Now, this glorious perſon ordaining Chriſt to this work imports,

1. The will of God and of the Father, that Chriſt, the ſecond perſon, ſhould come and bear the *whole weight of the covenants*: Hence Chriſt tells us, *He had commandment from the Father*, and that *he came to do his will*, John vi. 37, 38, 39. God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, by unanimous counſel, ordained and appointed the Son to come in his own perſon upon the errand of man's redemption; and God the Father being the firſt in the order of ſubſiſtency, and ſo the firſt in operation *ad extra*, therefore the giving is primarily aſcribed unto him.

2. His being the perſon ordaining, imports the *divine authority* of Chriſt's commiſſion, in that *he is given of the Father*, and *came from the Father*, John xvi. 28. and xvii. 8.; where Chriſt commends that faith which believes his divine miſſion, his divine ordination to this mediatory work.

3. His being ordained of God, imports, God's *confidence* in him, as being both able for, and faithful to perform the whole work that he gave him to do. He was confident that he would be a faithful and righteous ſervant; *By his knowledge ſhall my righteous ſervant juſtify many. This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleaſed.*

4. His being the perſon ordaining, imports, the Father's *zealous concern* for the redemption and ſalvation of men; *God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son: I will give thee.* His hand is firſt at the bleſſed bargain, ſubſcribing this covenant; ſhewing, that he will do the whole work of the covenant by himſelf, and by his Son Jeſus Chriſt; and will get the whole glory of it: and hence the ſtrain in which he ſubſcribes, ver. 8. *I am the Lord, that is my name, and my glory will I not give to another.* He will let none ſhare of any of the glory of it but himſelf, either in the contrivement, commencement, advancement, or completement thereof.

2dly, The glorious perſon *ordained*, in the pronoun THEE, namely, Chriſt the ſecond perſon of the glorious Trinity, and the other party of the covenant; *I will give* THEE. And Chriſt being the perſon here ordained, imports,

1. His having *cordially aſſented* and agreed to the bargain; God would not have given him, if he had not conſented: but as he and his Father are one, ſo there is but one will betwixt them; and his conſent is recorded among the decrees of heaven; *In the volume of thy book it is written of me, Lo, I come.*

2. His being the perſon ordained, imports, the *inſufficiency* of all others for the work of man's redemption; *Him hath God the Father ſealed: ſacrifice and offering thou wouldſt not, a body haſt thou given me.* Though men and angels had put their ſhoulders to this work, it would never have been done; for *the redemption of the ſoul is precious, and ceaſeth for ever*, as to the creature. He alone is the Meſſiah, choſen, conſtitute, promiſed, typified, to whom all the prophets gave witneſs, and we are not to look for another: inſufficiency is ingraven and ſtamped upon all others.

3. His being the perſon ordained, imports, the *alone ſufficiency* of this glorious perſon for this glorious work. O the glorious excellency of this perſon here given! and, O the glorious ſufficiency of this perſon! *I will give thee. I have laid help upon one that is mighty:* this is he that *is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatneſs of his ſtrength, mighty to ſave*: this is he that *comes from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah, who trode the wine-preſs of his Father's wrath alone, and of the people there was none with him.*

4. His being the perſon ordained of the Father, imports, the *unparallelled love* both of him that gave, and of him that is given; both of the ordainer and ordained: *Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and gave his Son to be a propitiation for our ſins*, 1 John iv. 10. And herein is love, that Chriſt ſo chearfully undertook this work; *He rejoiced in the habitable parts of the earth, and his delights were with the ſons of men*, Prov. viii. 31. Here are both the parties of the covenant, God and Chriſt; that glorious *I*, and that glorious THEE; *I will give thee:* two wonderful Covenanters. God foreſeeing from eternity that mankind would be ruined, by violating the covenant betwixt God and man, ſet on foot a better project, even an inviolable covenant betwixt God and Chriſt: two unchangeable parties, mutually engaging for the relief and recovery of the loſt ſinner; and Chriſt bearing ſuch a part of the work, as to get the name of the whole; *I will give thee for a covenant of the people.*

3dly, The glorious *manner* of this ordination, is imported in the word GIVE; *I will* GIVE *thee. A man's gift makes room for him*, ſays Solomon, *and gives him place among great men*, Prov. xviii. 16. Men are eſteemed and reſpected for the valuableneſs of the gifts and benefits they give; how much more ſhould God's gift make room for him! Chriſt is God's gift; *I will give thee for a covenant of the people.* And this giving of Chriſt implies ſeveral things which cannot concern the manner of his ordination, to be a covenant of the people.

1. In general, and *negatively*, God's giving of Chriſt does not imply, that he was about to alienate his own right to Chriſt from himſelf to us; no, he is ſtill his only begotten Son: when we give a thing to another, we alienate our own right to it; but it is not ſo here: what God gives, we may have the benefit and uſe of it, but God ſtill keeps a right over us and it: hence ſays the apoſtle, *All things are yours, for ye are Chriſt's, and Chriſt is God's.* But,

2. More particularly, and *poſitively*, God's giving of Chriſt for a covenant of the people, implies,

(1.) His *eternal deſtination* by the Father for this end, to be the covenant of the people, before the people had a being: they were not ſo much as conſulted in the matter, when the contract was ſigned in the counſel of peace betwixt the Father and the Son; and we have no reaſon to complain of injury done us here, for we have nothing to contract on our part: the breach of the firſt covenant left us worſe than nothing; for the firſt Adam left us with a burden of debt, a burden of poverty and want; yea, a burden of curſes from the fiery law: and all that we can do, is to increaſe the debt, inſtead of being able to pay it off. Now, I ſay, God's giving him, includes his eternal deſtination by the Father for this mediatorial work, without our having any hand in it, or knowledge of it, or any obligation lying upon God ſo to do as he did, in the eternal tranſaction with his Son concerning the people, whom he deſigned to ſave. There was no obligation lying upon Chriſt, to come in our ſtead, to be our Surety, to take our guilt, and pay our debt, previous to his own conſent; nor any obligation upon God to accept of a Surety, inſtead of the principal debtor: therefore God's giving of Chriſt, muſt imply a tranſaction, wherein the Son conſented to be the covenant, to be the Mediator, to take our guilt upon him; and the Father conſented to ſend him, and accept of his ſuretyſhip for loſt ſinners.

(2.) God's giving of Chriſt, implies his *actual qualifying*, and ſending him to accompliſh that which was contrived from eternity. How he called and qualified him, you ſee in the preceeding verſe; he called him in righteouſneſs, and qualified him with a ſupereminent unction of the Holy Ghoſt; *I will put my Spirit upon him, and he ſhall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles:* Accordingly he *received the Spirit above meaſure.* How he ſent him, you ſee in ſeveral places of ſcripture; he gave him a body, a true body, and a reaſonable ſoul; and then he gave him to the death in the fulneſs of time; for *it pleaſed the Lord to bruiſe him:* juſtice awakened againſt him; *Awake O ſword, againſt my Shepherd,—ſmite the Shepherd.* He was put in the wine-preſs of divine vengeance, and bruiſed there: he was not only bruiſed in his name, being called a *mad-man* and a *devil;* not only bruiſed in his eſtate, while *the foxes had holes, and the birds of the air had neſts, but the Son of man had no where to lay his head;* neither was he bruiſed in his body only, while *they pierced his hands and his feet;* but bruiſed in his ſoul, till it was *exceeding ſorrowful, even unto death,* and till the agonies of his ſoul preſſed the blood out of his body, even *great drops of blood:* no wonder, for he was plunged in the ocean of God's wrath, and ſuffered all the hell that was due to ſin: ſin being imputed to him as the covenant of the people, juſtice did not ſpare him; Rom. viii. 32. *He ſpared not his own Son, but gave him to the death for us all.*

(3.) God's giving of Chriſt implies, that the manner of his ordination of this work, was every way *free* and *gratuitous:* what freer than a gift? God gives Chriſt for a covenant of the people, without regard to any motive, merit, or ſolicitation of the people; yea, and in oppoſition thereto. This gift is free, in oppoſition to merit, either of condignity or congruity. If we be for merit of our own, we muſt be for hell, for that is all that we merit; if wretchedneſs, miſery, and a maſs of confuſion and enmity, be accounted merit, then we may lay claim to it, but no otherwiſe. This gift is free, in oppoſition to conſtraint, force, or neceſſity: God had nothing from without to conſtrain him to contrive the redemption of man, or to give Chriſt for that end; though all mankind ſhould have been for ever drowned in the flood of his wrath, God had remained as he was, as happy as ever; no force was upon him to contrive a remedy for man. This gift is free, in oppoſition to debt, God owed us nothing but wrath; but we owe many millions of talents to his infinite juſtice. In a word, it is free, in oppoſition to all motives from without God himſelf. There was nothing about us, to move him to pity us, ten thouſand things to move him to deſtroy us. Upon what condition in us could God be moved to give his Chriſt to us; ſeeing our beſt condition, before he gave him in poſſeſſion to us, is a condition of ſin and miſery, death, and thraldom? But then again,

(4.) God's giving of Chriſt for a covenant of the people, his giving him thus, I ſay, implies, a *right* and *title* that the people have to receive him; God's giving Chriſt, is the foundation of our title to receive him; faith, which is the only actual acceptance of the gift, is the mean of putting us in poſſeſſion; but it would be the height of preſumption, thus to take and receive, if there were no giving; John iii. 27. *No man receiveth any thing, except it be given him from heaven.* As this receiving then ſuppoſes a giving of Chriſt prior to the receiving, ſo this giving of Chriſt for a covenant of the people, implies the people's right, and title, and warrant to receive him. There is a twofold giving of Chriſt; 1. A giving of Chriſt in point of *actual poſſeſſion;* and thus he is given to the elect ſoul in the day of believing; and this giving is the foundation of his title to all things in and through him; for, *How will he not with him freely give us all things?* Rom. viii. 32. And till a man have an intereſt in Chriſt thus, he hath no ſaving right to any thing, no right to a communion-table; nay, no covenant-right to the food of his common-table. 2. There is a giving of Chriſt in point of *exhibition,* and *goſpel-offer;* and thus he is given to the whole viſible church, in the diſpenſation of the word; and this giving is a foundation of our title to receive Chriſt, and our claim of right to take this gift out of the hand of the Giver. A right of poſſeſſion none have, till they believe, and take the gift that is offered; but a right of acceſs and warrant to believe, all have, whether they believe or not, or whether they take this gift out of God's hands or not. That Chriſt is God's gift to a whole

whole visible church in this sense, is a great privilege, whatever the world think or say about it, and it is a part of my errand this day, to tell you of it: if it be disgusting doctrine to any, and will not go down, we cannot help it; it is Bible-doctrine, and gospel-doctrine, and therefore we must preach it in his name, who commands us to *preach the gospel to every creature*. But I think, it should be welcome doctrine to all that hear me, That Christ is given to all the people in this house, in the same manner that the manna was given to all the people of old, John vi. 32.; where Christ speaking to all the promiscuous multitude, and making a comparison betwixt himself, and the manna that fell about the tents of Israel in the wilderness, says, *My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven;* where the revelation and offer of Christ is declared to be a giving of him, before ever he be received or believed on. It is such a gift and grant, as warrants a man to believe, and receive the gift; for this end is HE given to a perishing world; *God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him, might not perish, but have everlasting life*. As the brazen serpent was given for a common-good to the whole camp of Israel, that whosoever in all the camp, being stung with the fiery-serpents, looked thereto, might not die, but live; even so is Christ given as a common-good to poor stung sinners, that looking to him they may be saved. Christ is given to all, in the dispensation of this gospel. And, O it should be glad tidings of great joy to all people, That *to us a child is born, to us a Son is given, whose name is* WONDERFUL. This giving, in a general and definite manner, to all, in the gospel-offer, may be, and is, for the most part, where there is no receiving: but there can be no receiving of Christ for salvation, where there is not this giving; for, *a man can receive nothing except it be given*. This giving then, implies a right, and title, and warrant to receive: he is also given to you, that all that please the bargain, have warrant to take possession. He is your own already, man, woman, in the former sense, whether you take him or not; as he said to the Jews, *He came to his own, and his own received him not*. But faith's improvement of this gift and grant, among your hands, would make him your own, in a peculiar sense, by actual possession. —Thus we have the manner of his ordination, to be *the covenant of the people;* it is even by a free and gracious donation. The next thing here was,

4*thly*, The gracious *motive*, *ground*, and *reason* of this divine ordination, which is just the *divine will; I* WILL *give*. This verb must necessarily be borrowed from the former clause, I WILL *hold thine hand, and give thee for a covenant of the people*. I WILL GIVE, O sovereign reason! No gift in the world so free as Christ: when men bestow gifts upon one another, there is some impulsive cause that excites them to it, drawn from their relation to, or interest in one another; drawn from services and favours received, or expected from each other: but no such impulsive cause here; we have no relation to God, but as his enemies; we can do him no service, but sin against him; therefore can merit nothing from him, but his curse. His reason of doing, then, must be his own sovereign will. Men may rack their wit, and dispute about the reason of God's actions; but there would be more calm reasoning in the world, about gospel-truths, if all our reasonings did strike sail to the sovereignty of free-grace, and stoop to that: he will, because he will; *I will give thee*. I think this WILL imports, 1. A *consent* and *agreement:* the counsel of peace is concluded, parties are both agreed; *I will*. 2. A *complacency* and *satisfaction;* God is well-pleased with this device of his own infinite wisdom; well-pleased with the ransom and Ransomer; *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased:* I take pleasure in giving him to be a covenant of the people; *I will*. 3. I think it imports *authority:* supreme authority of the eternal Godhead, three in one, is interposed in this matter, for ordaining Christ to this work; *I will*. And 4. I think it imports an *express command, I will give thee;* and of this command Christ speaks, when he says, *This commandment have I received of my Father, to lay down my life for my sheep:* And when he says, *Lo, I come to do thy will;* by *the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all*, Heb. x. 10. In a word, it imports, That the sovereign will of JEHOVAH is the reason of all. And this may lead us to, and shall make me the more brief upon,

V. The *fifth* thing proposed, namely, the *reasons* of the doctrine; why is Christ given for a *covenant of the people?* And here I might shew, 1. Why he is *given*. 2. Why given for a *covenant*. 3. Why given for a covenant of *the people*, of the *Gentiles*.

1. Why is he *given*, or exhibit by way of gift? Why, the grand reason is told already, even his *sovereign will*. Christ, the great ordinance of God for man's recovery, is dispensed freely, by a gratuitous gift, that salvation may be by grace, and that free grace may get the whole glory of it, from the foundation to the cope-stone, with shoutings of *grace, grace unto it*. The giving of Christ to all, in the *gospel-offer*, is from sovereign grace, and must be absolutely free and unconditional; for what in all the world is the condition of the offer? If men be in a sinful condition, in a miserable condition, in a lost condition, that is all the condition and qualification, that I know necessary for making an offer of Christ as a Saviour to them. If any clog the gospel-offer with legal terms and conditions, they encroach upon the warrant ministers have to offer Christ to all, and the warrant that all have to receive him; yea, they encroach upon sovereign grace, which hath made this grant and offer of Christ, not to devils, but to men in the most extensive terms: *To you, O men, do I call, and my voice is to the sons of men.*—Again, the giving of Christ to some, in *actual possession*, is from sovereign grace also; for, though none can be possessed of Christ and his benefits, till by faith they receive him; yet this faith to receive, is given, as well as the gift received by it; Eph. ii. 8. *By grace ye are saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God*. It is given, by virtue of an absolute promise of the covenant; such as that, *Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power;* and so, the hand to take the gift, being itself given out of the covenant, the cove-

nant take hold of the man, before the man take hold of the covenant. But,

2. Why is Chriſt given for a covenant? I offer you only one great reaſon of it: he is given for a covenant, that God might have more glory out of the covenant of works, by the ſecond Adam's fulfilling of it, than he loſt by the firſt Adam's breach and violation of it. The law of eternal life and death was irreverſibly ſtated only by the covenant of works; and though we be changed, yet the covenant of works is unchangeable. And as, by virtue of the ſtability of it, all the Chriſtleſs world are condemned, curſed, and die eternally; ſo, by virtue of its being perfectly fulfilled by Chriſt, in whom only it is eſtabliſhed, all that are in him, are freed from condemnation, and live eternally. What is the covenant of grace? I may ſay, It is Chriſt's fulfilling, for us, the covenant of works. We were debtors to the mandatory and minatory part of the law, arraigned at the inſtance of divine juſtice, to pay the debt; Chriſt ſubſtituted himſelf in our room, came under the law, to pay the whole debt due thereunto; and now, God gets more glory by his doing ſo, than he loſt by our ſins. Herein he glorified his ſovereign Majeſty, whoſe authority was ſo hainouſly violated by ſuch a baſe creature as man is, in that he received him not into his favour, without a becoming reparation, made to his honour, by the intervention of a perfect obedience, and full ſatisfaction. Herein he glorified his infinite *wiſdom*, in finding out a man to reconcile juſtice and mercy; to puniſh the ſin, and yet to pardon the ſinner; to take vengeance on ſin, to the very uttermoſt, and yet to magnify his mercy, while the ſinner is juſtified, accepted, and ſaved, without his own ſuffering. This is that, πολυποίκιλος Σοφία τῦ Θεῦ, THE MANIFOLD WISDOM OF GOD. Herein he glorified his free love, goodneſs, and pity, in ſubjecting his life to ſuch a death, and his glory to ſuch a ſhame, and all to purchaſe ſuch vile and worthleſs creatures as we are, and to redeem us from eternal wo and miſery: as alſo, his almighty power is here glorified, in ſupporting the human nature of Chriſt under the vaſt load of divine wrath, and law curſes.—Herein he glorified his *holineſs* and *faithfulneſs*, in fulfilling not only the promiſe of the law as a covenant of works, even the promiſe of eternal life, made to perfect obedience; which, though we forfeited in our own perſons, yet we recover in Chriſt; the condition of life in the covenant of works being perfect obedience perſonal, and the condition of life here being perfect obedience and imputed; and ſo the promiſe of life, upon the ground of a perfect obedience, fulfilled to us in him: but alſo divine faithfulneſs is glorified, in fulfilling all the threatenings of the law, while we, who come under the ſentence of death in the firſt Adam, undergo that death in the ſecond Adam.—In a word, herein he glorifies his *juſtice* and *righteouſneſs*, in the remiſſion of ſins, through the propitiation of Chriſt; Rom. iii. 25. *Whom God hath ſet forth to be the propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteouſneſs for the remiſſion of ſins that are paſt, through the forbearance of God.* Herein is *vindictive* juſtice diſplayed, in its greateſt ſeverity, in Chriſt's being the ſacrifice and propitiation: and here is *retributive* juſtice illuſtriouſly declared, in the ſinner's being rewarded, juſtified, ſaved, upon the blood and ſacrifice, the obedience and righteouſneſs of Chriſt; yea, all the perfections of the great God ſhine glorioufly in the face of Chriſt, as in a beautiful and bright conſtellation, 2 Cor. iv. 6. And for this reaſon he gave him for a covenant.

3. Why is he given for a covenant of *the people*, of the Gentiles? Why? not only to ſhew his *diſpleaſure* at the unbelief of the Jews, as we ſee, Acts xiii. 46, 47. Rom. xi. 11, 19, 20.; but alſo to ſhew his *ſovereignty*, *That he will have mercy on whom he will have mercy*; and to ſhew his truth, in fulfilling the antient prophecy concerning the calling of the Gentiles. It is long ſince God promiſed to Noah, ſaying, *God ſhall enlarge Japhet, and he ſhall dwell in the tents of Shem*, Gen. ix. 27. Now of Japhet came the Gentiles, Gen. xii. 5.; and of Shem came the Jews. By the poſterity of Japhet were the iſles of the Gentiles divided. The iſles were ſolemnly by lot divided among them, (and probably this iſle of Britain among the reſt;) ſo that as Japhet's dwelling in the tents of Shem, is a clear prediction of the converſion of the Gentiles, and their ſucceeding to the Jews, in their church-privileges; ſo this directs us to underſtand the promiſe in the context, *The iſles ſhall wait for his law.* He is given for *a covenant of the people, a light of the Gentiles.* In a word, he is given for a covenant of the people, to ſhow the *extent* and *all-ſufficiency* of his *grace*, and the *intrinſic value* of his *blood*. Suppoſe a prince were ſetting up a ſanctuary, or city of refuge, the privileges whereof are not reſtricted to any ſort of men, but extended to all, Gentiles as well as Jews; would not this declare, that the privileges of the place are full and ample, ſo as, whoſoever comes to this ſanctuary, might be ſafe? Here alſo, in like manner, the ſufficiency of the merit of Chriſt, and the fulneſs of his righteouſneſs is declared, inſomuch that none can, with any ſhadow of reaſon, exclude themſelves, be what they will, *People, Gentiles, Dark, Blind, Impriſoned*; ſeeing all Gentiles, who are called *Dogs, Aliens, Heathens, Uncircumciſed*, are included; and ſeeing the motto written on the outſide of the door of the ſanctuary, is, *Whoſoever will, let him come*; all comers are welcome, and refuſers left inexcuſable.

VI. The *ſixth* thing propoſed, was the *application* of the whole. This doctrine would admit of a vaſt improvement, which we muſt confine to as narrow bounds as poſſible; and we may improve it,

1*ſt*, For *information*. If it be ſo, that Chriſt by divine ordination, is thus the covenant of the people; in the glaſs of this doctrine, we clearly ſee many precious goſpel truths. And,

1. Hence we may ſee, in what way it is, that the *ruin* we brought upon ourſelves, by the breach and violation of the covenant of works, is reparable. We have brought ourſelves into a moſt lamentable ſtate by ſin; and we are irrecoverably loſt indeed, as to all that we can do for our own help; *O Iſrael, thou haſt deſtroyed thyſelf.* Who can repair that ruin? There is a glorious ME that ſays, *In* ME *is thy help*, Hoſ. xiii. 7. Who that ME is, is explained in our text, even a God in Chriſt, the glorious *I* and THEE; *I will give thee for a covenant*

of

of the people. There is no help, no juſtification for them now by a covenant of works; but *I will give thee for a covenant to them;* which, though it be all works to thee, yet it ſhall be all grace to them. The world is buſy caſting the law of works into this and the other handſome ſhape, and pleaſing themſelves with a fancy, that in this way of works they may have righteouſneſs and life, to the diſparagement of the way of grace, to the deſtruction of their own ſouls, and to the diſhonour of Chriſt, who alone is the covenant of the people.

2. Hence we ſee the greatneſs of the *love* of God towards poor ſinners, in giving ſuch a great and glorious perſon as Chriſt, and that for ſuch a great and glorious end, as to be a covenant of the people; *God ſo loved the world, as to give his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in him might not periſh, but have everlaſting life.* Chriſt came not to be a covenant of the people without a commiſſion, call, and ordination from his Father. He had authority from the Father to do all that he did about the covenant; *I will give thee for a covenant.* Let not our notions of God be ſo groſs, as to think, that God the Father is of an implacable nature, full of ſeverity; and that the Son only is of a pleaſant, meek nature, full of lenity towards ſinners. Nay, God the Father was the firſt, in order of nature, that made the motion concerning man's redemption; Chriſt was appointed, authorized, and given of him: behold, the love of God hath gone to its utmoſt height in giving Chriſt, for he cannot give a greater gift; and the love of Chriſt hath alſo gone to its utmoſt, in conſenting hereto, and giving himſelf, and all this to be no leſs than a complete covenant of the people. Becauſe the people can do nothing, therefore he leaves them nothing to do of themſelves; *I will give thee for a covenant of the people.*

3. Hence we may ſee a *teſt* of the true religion. All ſchemes that centre not in Chriſt, are to be rejected; and all ſchemes of the covenant, that make not Chriſt to be the all of it, are to be renounced: If I can find nothing in the covenant but Chriſt, ſurely I find enough, and I find all that my text makes of it; and if the world make it a new ſcheme, at their peril be it. But this I ſay, that every ſcheme, that leads to *ſelf*, and takes off from Chriſt, is a falſe and ruinous ſcheme; yea, every doctrine that advances any thing to be a rival with him, and mingles our filthy rags with his excellent robes, is of a ſoul-ruining nature, and utterly to be deteſted. The ſecond Adam came not to patch up, and amend old Adam's coat, as ſome expreſs it, but to give us a wholly new garment of his own making, and dyed with his own blood: *I will give thee for a covenant.* Our chief buſineſs, as miniſters of the goſpel, is to trumpet forth the tranſcendent excellency of Chriſt, and *deſire to know nothing but Chriſt, and him crucified*, and as the all of the covenant, for making people both happy and holy.

4. Hence we may ſee the believer's *freedom* from the law as a covenant of works: he *is not under the law, but under grace;* having cloſed with Chriſt, Chriſt is now all the covenant that he is under: he is freed both from the *do* and the *die*, the command and the threatening of the covenant of works: they are made void to him through Chriſt; for he is not under it, either to be juſtified or condemned: he is not under its command, to be juſtified for his obedience; nor under its threatening and ſanction, to be condemned for his diſobedience, as it is a covenant; for, *There is no condemnation to them that are in Chriſt.* It is true, as the law is a *rule* of *obedience*, he remains under it, as much and more than ever, and ſtands obliged thereby to ſtudy perfection; and his diſobedience may bring upon him rods and ſtripes, and all the terrible effects of God's fatherly diſpleaſure upon ſoul and body; but as it is a rule of *acceptance*, a condition of life, or a covenant of works, he hath nothing to do with it, nothing to expect from it, nothing to fear by it: he hath nothing to do with it any more than a wife hath to do with a dead huſband. Rom. vii. 4. *Ye are dead to the law by the body of Chriſt, that ye might be married to another, even to him that is raiſed from the dead, that ye might bring forth fruit unto God.* He is not to bring forth fruit any more to the dead huſband, to the law; but to Chriſt, the living huſband. He hath nothing to *expect* from it; no life, no righteouſneſs, no happineſs, no holineſs by his own legal obedience, but only by Chriſt, a better covenant. And he hath nothing to *fear* by it; no hell, no death, no damnation, no condemnation, no liableneſs thereto. And hence,

5. We ſee what *place* the believer's obedience hath in the covenant of grace: His obedience hath no place here, in point of *cauſality*, or proper federal *conditionality;* for this were to turn it into the ſame place it had in the covenant of works, where, though there was no merit of condignity (I know few will dare to ſay ſo) yet there was a merit by paction; that is to ſay, there was a promiſe of life made to works and obedience, *Do, and live.* But, in the covenant of grace, we aſſert, againſt all popiſh doctrine whatſoever, that there is no ſuch reward of work, obedience, or perſonal holineſs, upon compact and promiſe; becauſe the tenor of this covenant runs upon the condition of Chriſt's obedience and righteouſneſs, apprehended by faith. Goſpel-holineſs is of manifold neceſſity in the new covenant; but the promiſe of life is not here made to the *work*, but to the *worker;* and to the worker, not *for his work;* but *for the merit of Chriſt:* As for inſtance, *Be thou faithful unto the death, and I will give thee the crown of life;* the promiſe is not made to *fidelity*, but to the *faithful perſon*, whoſe fidelity is a ſign that he is in Chriſt, *In whom all the promiſes are yea, and Amen.* If the law had now the promiſe of life to our obedience, we ſhould not have life and ſalvation any other way but by the law, and by the works thereof; Gal. iii. 21. *If there had been a law given, that could have given life, verily righteouſneſs ſhould have been by the law;* therefore our obedience now is not a *cauſe* or *condition*, but a *neceſſary effect* of the covenant, and qualification of all that are within the covenant; yea, all whom this covenant takes hold of, it makes them holy: And therefore, *Without holineſs no man ſhall ſee God;* becauſe without holineſs no man hath this effective evidence of his being within this holy covenant.

6. Hence we may ſee, what are the *motives* that now ſhould influence the believer in his obedience. If Chriſt be the ALL of the covenant, and that he is looſed from all his former relation

relation to the covenant of works, he is not to obey either from a legal hope of heaven, or ſlaviſh fear of hell. Not from a *legal hope of heaven;* for the covenant ſecures the purchaſe of that by Chriſt's perfect obedience; not from a *ſlaviſh fear of hell*; for the covenant hath ſecured freedom from that by Chriſt's complete ſatisfaction. The principal motive is the *love of Chriſt conſtraining;* the love of a God in Chriſt, who is *given for a covenant of the people.* God deals not with believers now according to the covenant of works, neither ought they to deal with him as if they were under it. They ought to mourn for ſin, to repent, to confeſs, to beg pardon, but not in a legal way, as if they had to do with a wrathful judge, but as having to do with a merciful Father in Chriſt: they are to yield obedience to the law, not out of a ſervile fear of hell and wrath, but out of a child-like love and willing mind; ſo far as the believer acts otherwiſe, ſo far he is under a *ſpirit of bondage.* Neither ought the believer to act from a dread and fear of his being diſinherited; ſo far as he does ſo, it is not an act of faith, but of unbelief; for he cannot view this covenant, and yet ſee himſelf left at an uncertainty. There is no liableneſs to a forfeiture of its privileges; *Chriſt is the covenant of the people.*

7. Hence ſee, if Chriſt be the covenant of the people, by God's ordination, why the believer is to take the law only out of the hand of a *Mediator,* and yet is not without law to God, when he is under the law to Chriſt. He is not to view it in the firſt covenant-form, in the hand of an abſolute God, but only in Chriſt, and as it is caſt into a new covenant-form: and the original authority of the law is not here diſſolved, nor obligation to obedience diminiſhed, but rather ſtrengthened and ſweetened; in regard that this authority does now run only in this ſweet and bleſſed channel, by the Father's ordination; yea, the Creator's authority and ſovereignty is in Chriſt, and the whole fulneſs of the Godhead, and by the voice of God the Father from the excellent glory, ſaying, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleaſed; hear ye him.* We are ſo much obliged, by the Father's appointment, to obey him, and take the law only out of his hand, that if we do it not, we condemn the authority of the Father, and run croſs to this divine ordination.

8. Hence ſee, if Chriſt be the *all* of the covenant, then believers have *all things in Chriſt.* Chriſt being the *covenant of the people;* this covenant is *all his ſalvation, and all his deſire.* All his ſalvation is here; and well may the believer ſay, in the exerciſe of faith, in Chriſt I have all things at once; neither need I any more that is neceſſary to ſalvation: this covenant is all my ſalvation.—He may ſay, in the point of juſtification, Chriſt is my righteouſneſs, my treaſure, my work, my covenant, my all; yea, my *all in all; For in him dwelleth all the fulneſs of the Godhead bodily;* and believers *are complete in him, who of God is made to them wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification, and redemption.*

9. Hence we may ſee, if Chriſt be given for a covenant of the people, that the goſpel ſtrictly and properly taken, is a *bundle of good news, glad tidings,* and *gracious promiſes;* our text is a ſum of the goſpel, and it is a free promiſe, *I will give thee for a covenant of the people:* there is no precept nor commandment here. The law is properly a word of precept, but not the goſpel: the law commands all, and the goſpel promiſes all. It were a diſparagement to the divine law, if it were not perfect and exceeding broad, if there were any duty we are called unto not enjoined therein: Why? are there no commands in the goſpel, ſay ſome? We are ready, Sirs, to confound the diſpenſation of the goſpel, with this goſpel itſelf; and this makes much wranglings on this head. The goſpel, largely taken for the *diſpenſation* thereof, hath the whole law in it, ſubſervient thereunto; but ſtrictly taken, it is a quite other thing than *the law of commandments. Faith* and *repentance* may be called goſpel-commands, if you ſpeak of the diſpenſation of the goſpel; but if you ſpeak of the goſpel itſelf, they come in under another conſideration. We are to diſtinguiſh betwixt *duties* and *graces: Faith* and *repentance,* as they are *duties,* are commanded in the law; but as they are *graces,* they are promiſed in the goſpel. We are to diſtinguiſh betwixt a new commanded duty, and a new preſented object: the goſpel preſents a new object of faith, a God in Chriſt; but the ſame law that was from the beginning, obliges us to believe whatever new revelation God makes. If we underſtand it ſafely, then we may ſay, the law obliges us to believe the goſpel, and therefore he that believeth not the goſpel, is condemned already by the law, John iii. 18. And this condemnation ſhall be more aggravated, than if this new object of faith had never been preſented, or if this light had never come into the world, ver. 19.

10. Hence learn, If Chriſt be given as the covenant of the people, then we may ſee the *nature of faith,* and its *appropriating quality.* When God ſays, *I will give thee as a covenant of the people;* faith ſays ſomething by way of anſwer, correſponding with the revelation and teſtimony of God: God ſays, *I give*; faith ſays, *I take;* God ſays, I give *him for a covenant;* faith ſays, I take him *for a covenant;* God ſays, I give him for a covenant of *the people;* faith ſays, I am *one* of the *people;* I take him for my covenant, my own all: it is the people's covenant in the general offer, but my covenant in the particular application of faith: faith breaks the ſhell, and eats the kernel. The general diſpenſation of the goſpel ſays, he is given for a *covenant of the people;* the particular application of faith ſays, he is given for a covenant to me: God ſays, I give him; faith ſays, I take him as a gift, a free gift: God ſays, I give him, it is I that gives him; faith ſays, I take him as thy gift, as God's gift: God ſays, I will give him, it is my will to do it; faith ſays, thy will be done, even ſo I take him according to thy will, *Amen,* ſo be it; and all the people ſhould ſay *Amen;* and every one for himſelf ſhould ſay *Amen* to God's offer, and receive and reſt upon him alone for ſalvation, as he is offered; and in ſo doing, *believe, that through the grace of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, they ſhall be ſaved,* Acts v. 11.

11. Hence ſee, If Chriſt be thus given for a covenant of the people, ſee the GROUND *of faith* that all the hearers of the goſpel have: Why? the offer is univerſal to all that hear the goſpel; I give him for a covenant of the people. Let Arminians maintain, at their peril, their *univerſal redemption;* but we muſt maintain, at our

our peril, the *univerſal offer:* neceſſity is laid upon us, and wo to us, if we preach not this goſpel to every creature. Chriſt is ſo far given to all the people that hear the goſpel, that it is warrantable for them to receive the gift: it is no preſumption for them to take what God gives; they ſhall not be guilty of vitious intromiſſion in ſo doing; nay, they ſhall be guilty, they ſhall be damned, if they believe not, and take not God's gift. It is true, reprobates will exclude themſelves, but this goſpel-offer does not exclude them; they have as fair a revealed warrant to believe, as the elect have. We cannot ſay, you are an elect man, you are an elect woman, therefore believe; we have no ſuch commiſſion: nay, God, by this goſpel, caſts the covenant in among all the people, ſaying, *Whoſoever will, let him take;* whoſoever pleaſes, let him take, and in taking, he ſhall have a proof of his being an elect-veſſel. As it is ſaid of the Jews, *To them belong the covenant and promiſes;* ſo ſay I to you, Gentiles, the covenant belongs to you; *The promiſe is to you, and your children:* you have a right and a warrant to take all; and this right was ſealed to you in baptiſm, and is proclaimed to you in this goſpel; and you ſhall be inexcuſable if you improve it not: you will have none to blame for your damnation but yourſelves, and your own enmity and ill-will; *You will not come to me that ye might have life. I would have gathered you, and you would not.*

12. Hence we ſee the CERTAINTY *of the converſion of the elect*; whoſe converſion in particular, is God's great end and deſign in exhibiting Chriſt as a covenant to the people in general. It is with a deſign to give Chriſt to them in poſſeſſion, that he gives him to a viſible church in the goſpel-offer. It is for the elect's ſake that the reprobate have an offer of Chriſt; and if once all the elect were gathered, the ſound of this ſilver-trumpet of the goſpel ſhall be heard no more. The diſpenſation of the goſpel is the mean which he ſanctifies and bleſſes to that end, for working and begetting faith in all the elect, whoſe names, as I ſaid before, are all recorded in the original draught of the covenant, which is indeed a ſealed writ, that we have nothing to do with, till once we have ſubſcribed the open copy that is here before us all. However, this work is not left arbitrary to the will of men, otherwiſe none would ever be willing; for all are enemies, and the power of enmity is inſuperable by men: therefore our text promiſes, not only the *means*, the general donation of Chriſt in the indefinite offer, but alſo the *power*, the effectual application of the covenant of grace, to the converſion of all whom Chriſt did undertake for. Why? the covenant here exhibited, is propoſed as a covenant of *light; light to the Gentiles*, and to remove ſpiritual darkneſs; a covenant of *ſight;* to *open blind eyes*, and ſo to remove ſpiritual blindneſs: and a covenant of *liberty;* to remove ſpiritual bondage to ſin and Satan; all which denote *effectual vocation*, which is a being *brought from darkneſs to light*, and *from the power of Satan unto God.* And hence we ſee, how effectual vocation and ſaving faith followed upon this very goſpel-diſpenſation, Acts xiii. 47, 48. So that an effectual application of the covenant of grace is here promiſed to Chriſt, in behalf of all that were given to him; it is abſolutely promiſed, that *he ſhall ſee his ſeed, and ſee the travel of his ſoul. The election ſhall obtain;* and *all that the Father hath given him, ſhall come to him:* and yet we ſee that the accompliſhment hereof, is by ways and means of his appointment, in the general invitation and call of the goſpel. God, by his will of precept revealed, commands all, where-ever the goſpel comes, to believe; and he mocks none; for all that do believe ſhall certainly be ſaved: and though none have power to make the means effectual; yet the utmoſt attendance to the general call of the goſpel, is of the utmoſt concernment to your ſouls for eternity; for, who knows that he is not of that number, whom Chriſt covenanted for, and will make it effectual unto?

But ſo vaſtly copious and comprehenſive is this doctrine, that I might begin anew, to give a bundle of more inferences therefrom.

1. Hence we may ſee the *miſerable circumſtances of all unbelievers*, that hear this goſpel, and yet refuſe God's gift of Chriſt as a covenant. They continue under a covenant of works, both in its commanding and condemning power. That they are under its *condemning* power, is evident; for, ſays Chriſt, *He that believeth not, is condemned already:* And that they are under its *commanding* power, is evident alſo; for, ſays the apoſtle, *They are debitors to do the whole law*, Gal. v. 3. In Adam's covenant, they remain under obligation to duties and puniſhment, as long as they are not intereſted in the new covenant. Though by the goſpel they are obliged to ſeek a title to life through Chriſt's obedience, and freedom from wrath, through his ſatisfaction; yet while this covenant is ſlighted, they remain obliged, in their own perſons, to yield perfect obedience, upon pain of damnation; if they be not under the command with the promiſe, *Do, and live*, they are under the command with the threatening, *Do, and be damned.* They are in a miſerable ſtate; for the leaſt failure, in obedience to the command, brings them under the whole curſe of the threatening, and wrath of the eternal God, while they will not have a better covenant.

2. Hence we may ſee the *folly* of all that prefer any *ruining covenant* to *this covenant*, which God gives for our relief. The *covenant of works* is now a ruining covenant; yet many prefer this covenant to Chriſt, the covenant of the people. They prefer their doing to Chriſt's doing, while they cannot believe they ſhall have acceptance with God upon Chriſt's doing and obedience; and yet they will hope, that if they do their beſt, then God will accept of them. O proud devil, that thus makes the dung of thy duties of more account than the perfect obedience of the Son of God! The *covenant with hell* is alſo a ruining covenant; and yet the world prefers this alſo to that glorious covenant, while they are in league with their luſts, and prefer their baſe idols to the Son of God.

3. Hence we may ſee the *difference* betwixt the *law* and the *goſpel*; the *covenant of works* and the *covenant of grace*. The law promiſes nothing but upon *our* doing; the goſpel promiſes nothing but upon *Chriſt's* doing: he is the covenant of the people. The covenant of *works* promiſes life, if we obey in our own *perſons;* the covenant of *grace* promiſes life, if we obey in our *Surety*. The condition of the

covenant of *works*, and the covenant of *grace* both, is *perfect obedience*; but here lies the difference; the condition of the covenant of works is perfect obedience *personal*; the condition of the covenant of grace is perfect obedience *imputed*, and conveyed to us by a faith of God's operation. Yet both law and gospel are sweetly subservient, the one to the other, and work to one another's hand, while the law declares what obedience God requires, and the gospel provides that obedience, and points out Christ as the all of it; so faith doth not make *void the law*, but *establishes it*, and makes it *honourable*, etc. Christ hath fulfilled the condition of the covenant, to the Father's contentment; *The Lord is well-pleased for his righteousness sake, for he hath magnified the law, and made it honourable.*

4. Hence we may see the *difference* betwixt *God's covenant of grace*, and *our covenant of duties*. Our covenant of duties is either private and personal, or public and national. If by personal-covenanting be either meant believing at first, and laying hold on God's covenant, or the believer's engaging, through grace, to serve the Lord, in all the duties of religion; it is indeed the duty and honour of every person, to be thus engaged. Public and national covenanting is also the duty and honour of a land: it was the glory of Scotland, that we were solemnly in covenant; wherein our forefathers, for themselves and their posterity, "engaged and swore against popery, prelacy, "superstition, and every thing contrary to the "word of God; and to the doctrine, discipline, "worship, and government of the reformed "church of Scotland;—and that as we should "answer to Jesus Christ at the great day, and "under the pain of God's everlasting wrath, "and of infamy, and loss of all honour and "respect in this world." And, O may not our hearts bleed to think on our defection from old covenanted principles, and violation of engagements; yea, of the burning and burial of our covenants, and many grave-stones laid upon the sepulchre; also the prevalancy of *abjured popery* in this land, without being duly lamented, and the open introduction of *abjured prelacy*, and *English popish ceremonies* and *services*, in many places of this land, without being duly testified against; but the zeal of many runs in another channel? Is it any wonder then, that the infamy and loss of honour, and respect in this world, mentioned in that covenant, hath come upon us, while our honour as a nation, and glory as a church, is sunk into the horrible pit and filthy mire of infamy, bondage, slavery, and contempt? However, covenant-obligation to duty is what we stand still under; though many be ashamed of, and refuse to own these obligations, yet it is the glory of our land, however it be now defaced. And therefore, let us even, in our approaches to a communion-table, go forward, lamenting our sinful defection from the covenanted reformation, acknowledging our solemn covenant-obligation; and hoping, that the Lord will, in due time, revive a covenanted work, and pour out a spirit of reformation. But let us withal remember, there is a vast difference betwixt God's covenant and our covenant, betwixt his promise, and our promise; we may break and change a thousand times, but the covenant of grace is unchangeable, and stands fast in Christ. Many poor Christians mistake matters sadly, by confounding their covenant and engagement to duty, with God's covenant of grace. They covenant to serve the Lord, and the next day they break it; O! says the man, the covenant of grace is broken. Gross ignorance! the covenant of grace is quite another thing. Therefore,

5. Hence we may infer, If Christ be given for a covenant of the people, the *transcendent excellency* of this, above all other covenants, whether of legal works, or gospel-duties. For here the Father is promising to the Son, that he should be a covenant of the people; and so it imports all the excellent qualities and properties that can be in a covenant.

(1.) If Christ be given of God for a covenant of the people; then it is a *divine* covenant, a covenant of God's making, and not of ours: it was made when we knew nothing about it; it was made when we were nothing; yea, when we were forseen to be a company of lost and undone sinners: God made it with his Son, and established all the articles, promises, and blessings of it, before the foundation of the world was laid; yea, it is God that makes the elect, in a day of power, to take up the extract of it, to read it, to love it, to sign it. Again,

(2.) If Christ be given for a covenant of the people, then it is a *free* covenant, altogether free; absolute, and unconditional to us. It is a covenant given of God; *I will give thee for a covenant.* Our legal hearts are still for giving something to God, and for giving him this and the other service, in hope of pleasing and pacifying him; and doing so and so in order to acceptance with him. Nay, but says God, your giving me, is vain, unless I give you; your giving is not the way of it, but I will give, and you shall take. The legalist is constantly for giving, but the believer is always for taking: you must know that here you have nothing to give, but to take. There is an order indeed observed in the covenant, and in God's giving: there is a condition of connexion betwixt one blessing and another; first the spirit of faith is given, and then by faith, the man takes other blessings; and receives of Christ's fulness, *Grace for grace.* Here God gives all, and faith takes all. All that is required, is given; and all that is given, is given freely. Faith itself doth but receive a right; it does not give one; it acts in a way of taking what God gives; it takes the covenant that God gives; it takes the righteousness of Christ, which is the meritorious condition of the covenant, and so is the means of our being accounted righteous. Not one promise of life, or of the eternal reward, can the believer lay claim to, but in Christ; for *all the promises are in him yea, and in him Amen;* IN HIM, IN HIM; twice over, as I said already: Why? we cannot claim any one promise in our name, upon performing any gospel-condition, though by the aids of grace; for then, though it were never so small, it were of debt to us: but our only claim is in him; that is, in the right of our elder Brother Jesus Christ: and thus it is of debt to him, but only of grace to us. And thus God is not a debtor to us, but to himself; to his own goodness and faithfulness, and to his Son Jesus Christ. 'If either faith or obedience were 'a condition, then there were a suspending the

'acts

'acts of God, upon ſome actings of the crea-
'ture; which, ſays an eminent divine [Dr.
'Owen] cannot be, without ſubjecting eter-
'nity to time, the firſt cauſe to the ſecond, the
'Creator to the creature.' Again,

(3.) If Chriſt be the covenant of the people, then it is a *full* covenant, having all things in it: it hath grace and glory in it; happineſs and holineſs in it; peace and pardon in it; yea, Chriſt, who is *all in all*, is in it; for he is the all of it. Who can tell me of a grace or gracious quality that does not ſpring out of this covenant and the promiſes of it? It takes in all the promiſes made to Chriſt and to us. Some promiſes are *conſtitutive* of the covenant, as theſe betwixt the Father and the Son, concerning a ſeed; and here, Chriſt hath ſome peculiar promiſes appropriate to him, which are not afforded to us in the ſame manner and degree. Others are *executive*, or referring to the execution and application of it, as Heb. x. 11, 12. Some are *principal*, and concern the *end*, eternal life; others leſs principal, and concern the *means*, whether internal, as the Spirit and faith; or external, as ordinances; all is comprized in the covenant. Again,

(4.) If Chriſt be the covenant, then it is a *ſure* covenant, *The ſure mercies of David.* This covenant is ſecured by the oath of God to his eternal Son; *Once have I ſworn by my holineſs, that I will not lie unto David.* He hath ſworn, that the bargain ſhall ſtand, inſomuch, that if all the devils in hell ſhould attack the weakeſt believer in Chriſt, or that ever looked towards a covenanted Chriſt, they cannot ruin him, it is impoſſible; for the covenant, in which he is wrapt up, is eſtabliſhed, drawn up, and concluded betwixt two unchangeable perſons, in preſence of that conſenting, unchangeable witneſs, the Holy Ghoſt, one God, and of one and the ſame will eſſentially with the Father and the Son; *The Lord hath ſworn, and will not repent, Thou art a prieſt for ever.* The parties of the covenant of grace are not God and man, but God and Chriſt; and the believer is no otherwiſe a party, but in Chriſt. And here is a bottom of everlaſting conſolation, that Chriſt and he are within one and the ſame covenant, and it ſtands as ſure to them as it ſtands faſt in him.

In a word, if Chriſt be the covenant, then it is a *glorious* covenant, a *holy* covenant, an *everlaſting* covenant; but I omit a great deal of particulars that I might here mention.

6. Hence we may infer, what is the *marrow of the goſpel-feaſt* in the *ſacrament of the ſupper*; it is even Chriſt, given of God to be the *covenant of the people:* for, in the ſacrament, 'Chriſt,
'and the benefits of the new covenant are re-
'preſented, ſealed, and applied to believers.'
To take the ſacrament, is nothing but a mock, if people do not in it ſacramentally, really, and believingly take Chriſt as the covenant *of the people:* yea, the ſacrament of the ſupper is the ſeal of the covenant, confirming, to the believer, all the promiſes thereof; *This is the New Teſtament in my blood.* The covenant is ſure enough in itſelf; but the believer is never too ſure of it, while he hath unbelief in him: and therefore God hath condeſcended to give us all that we could require of the moſt faithleſs and diſhoneſt man upon the face of the earth, that we may believe him; not only his word, and writ, and oath, but his ſeal too; and all hath enough to do to confirm the believer's faith; yea, nothing will confirm and ſtrengthen his faith, but the ſame almighty power of God which wrought it at firſt, even the *power whereby he raiſed Chriſt from the dead.* Yet, in theſe means, he uſes to convey his power for that end; and therefore the believer is to uſe them: I ſay, the *believer*, becauſe none, who, by unbelief, refuſe the covenant, are to meddle with the ſeal thereof, to profane it; yea, they that uſe the ſeal, and refuſe the covenant, they ſeal their own condemnation; for, being under the covenant of works, they ſeal no other covenant, than that which they are under; and ſo they ſeal themſelves up under the bondage and curſe of the covenant of works, which is the heavy curſe of the great God.—But now, paſſing all other uſes, I come to cloſe with a word

2*dly*, For *exhortation.* If God hath given Chriſt to be the covenant *of the people*, then the native exhortation is, 1. That *all the people* take the covenant that God is here giving them. And, 2. That all who take this covenant take the ſeal thereof in the ſacrament of the ſupper. But, at the time, I confine myſelf to the firſt of theſe.

The *firſt* exhortation is to all the people that hear me, That ſeeing God makes offer of his Chriſt to you, and gives him as a covenant *of the people*, you would take his gift off his hand. I am come to make an offer of Chriſt, as the all of the covenant, to you, in his name, who is the covenant, and in his Father's name, who gives him for a covenant of the people. If you go to a communion-table, and take the ſeal of the covenant, before you take the covenant itſelf, you will but mock God, and ſet a ſeal to a blank; yea, you will ſeal your covenant *with hell*, and *trample under foot the blood of the everlaſting covenant.* And therefore, I call you all, before-hand, to come and take the covenant. I know not how the call will be entertained; many will ſlight it, but yet we muſt make the offer in God's name, who commands us to *preach the goſpel to every creature.* I know that you cannot, and will not embrace the offer, without divine almighty power be extended; but he uſes to make the goſpel-offer the channel of his power to gain ſouls to himſelf. I know, moreover, that as you are unworthy of ſuch an offer; ſo you would mind, it is not me you have to do with, but the great and eternal God, that is offering his Son to you for a covenant this day: and as it well becomes ſuch a glorious God to make ſuch a glorious offer, ſo it becomes no vile ſinner here to refuſe the offer. And chuſe or refuſe you muſt; there is no middle; either you muſt receive or reject Chriſt this day, for he is offered univerſally to all the people here for a covenant. I know further, that it is one of the hardeſt things in the world, for men to perſuade themſelves, that God is in earneſt in offering Chriſt to them, and giving Chriſt to them in particular: and yet becauſe this is the very porch and avenue of faith, O plead that God would deliver you from ſuch blaſphemous thoughts as tend to give the lie to the God of truth, who ſwears by his life, that he *will have no pleaſure in your death.* Men ſhall find to their coſt, that he called them in earneſt to believe, when he damns them in earneſt for their unbelief; for, *he that believeth*

believeth not shall be damned. I know further, that many deceive themselves with a temporary faith, thinking they take Christ when there is no faith of divine operation, but a counterfeit faith of their own forging: however, the covenant must be opened, and Christ offered, though he should be a stumbling-block to many, over which they fall and break their necks; for the covenant will draw some to it powerfully and sweetly, to raise a divine building on a divine testimony. I offer then a *whole* covenant, a *whole* Christ to you, in his Father's name, who gives him for a covenant; will not you take, when God gives? It is true, God is not speaking immediately to you in this text, but to Christ, saying, *I will give thee for a covenant of the people;* but still so much the better for you, seeing it is on your behalf, that God, who cannot lie, the eternal God, is speaking to his eternal Son in your favours. There is the surer ground, and stronger argument for your faith, that you may say, Lord, I take thee at thy word, and it is not thy word to me only; if it were directed immediately to me at the first hand, I am such a black, filthy monster of hell, that I durst not credit it; but it is thy word to the fair, fair IMMANUEL, who is thy heart's darling and delight; *in whom thou art well-pleased;* and I think thy word to him must be a sure word, and it is thy word to him concerning me: whatever I be, I am sure thou wilt not go back of thy word to him; and lo, I take thee at thy word, and upon thy faithful word to him, who is the *true and faithful witness;* I agree to that contract, and put in my name, consenting to have him for a covenant to me. O sure work, if that be the way of it! as sure as God is faithful and true to his eternally beloved Son. Well, man, woman; young and old, do you find in your heart thus to take the covenant in the bulk? Need I say any more for motives? Consider,

1. What for a *state* you are in, while you are out of this covenant: you are under a covenant of works, and so under the wrath and vengeance of God, under the bondage and curse of the law; yea, you are in covenant *with hell and death* by that contract; you have nothing to expect, but a terrible death shortly, and a horrible hell eternally.

2. Consider, that this covenant is the *last bargain* that ever God will make with you, or for you: the covenant of works is broken, and you are damned for ever, if you be not under another, for that bargain is blown up. This new covenant is a plank after shipwreck; though it was contrived and transacted before the first was broken; yea, from eternity; yet it is a new bargain proposed to us after the old is gone: and, if you refuse this, there is not another covenant to save you; *There remains no more sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery wrath, that shall consume the adversaries.*

3. Consider, that this covenant is a bargain *made ready* to your hand: it is not a covenant of your own making; it was made before the world was made, and drawn up in the council of peace: and the all of it presented to you in Christ, who is the great ordinance, institution, and appointment of the Father, for your relief and recovery from sin and misery; for *him hath God the Father sealed;* sealed and authorized him to be the bread of life to perishing souls; sealed and given him for a covenant of the people; God hath sealed and made ready a covenant for you; and all that is required of you, is only, that you will not discredit God, and make him a liar; but through grace, *set to your seal, that God is true;* receiving his testimony concerning his Son.

4. Consider, that you have a *good claim* and *right* to this covenant; or a warrant to accept of it: you have a warrant, by the call and command of God, to believe; *This is his commandment, that ye believe on the name of his Son.* You have a warrant sealed to you already by your baptismal sacrament; it was a sealed right to believe in Christ, and to take him for a covenant; and you are obliged thereby to *take hold of this covenant:* and if you will not set your hand to it this day, you practically renounce your baptism, and the devil hath a firm hold of you. You have a warrant from the general, indefinite promise and publication of this covenant to you: *The promise is to you, and to your children; and to you is the word of this salvation sent. I will give him for a covenant of the people, a light to the Gentiles.* So that it is published and directed to you, man; to you, woman; you have a claim to take it for your own. It is a covenant for you, for every soul of you within the four corners of this house; even you that are thinking, O it is not me that is intended; yes, it is you. Away with unbelief, and let your heart say, This is a covenant for me. That is a believing with application; and wherefore am I sent here, but to tell you that covenant is for you? You are welcome to it, whosoever will.

5. Consider upon what *terms* you may have this covenant. On what terms? The condition of the covenant is already fulfilled; Christ hath *brought in everlasting righteousness*, and God hath accepted it, and is well-pleased with it; and on this account promises all other things freely; not a farthing have you to pay for this covenant, it is God's gift, *I will give thee for a covenant.* There are but two words necessary to make up this whole business; the one is a word from God, saying, *I give him for a covenant;* the other is from you, saying, *I take him for a covenant to me.* The first word is said already, *I give;* and if you want faith to say, *I take*, this the covenant hath in the bosom of it; the Spirit to work faith is promised in it; for he that says, *I give him for a covenant*, says also, *I have put my Spirit upon him, and he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles:* yea, with the same breath that he is given for a covenant, *he is given for a light to open the blind eyes, and for liberty to open prison-doors.* Now, faith to take is covenanted; and this whole covenant, and all salvation in it, is laid to your hand; all is given, when the covenant is given. Why, Sir, I think you leave nothing to do at all. Yea, as much as you can do, and that is just nothing. If you can believe by your own power, then I will take back my word; but that I know you cannot do: and I give you as much to do as my text allows, which offers all, when it offers Christ as a covenant to you. But will you tell me, what the worse are you, that you who can do nothing, get nothing to do; and that he who can do all things, gets all the work and all the praise? Are you not pleased with these terms, to have all *freely, without money, and without price?*

6. Con-

6. Consider, that the most part of the world *rejects* this covenant, and *despises* this free gift of God. The legal, unbelieving heart will not have Christ at that easy rate; the hellish proud spirit of man is not for taking a covenant from God, but for making a covenant with him, for as bad as they are at keeping covenants: they cannot believe that God will give all for nothing; and therefore they will not take, without making some bargain of their own; yea, they think, that this way of taking Christ for all, is an enemy to holiness: and because they thus contemn and reproach this holy covenant of free grace, which only can furnish them with holiness, therefore God hath blasted all their holiness; insomuch that there was never less holiness, nor more wickedness in a Christian world. I say, the most part of the world rejects Christ, the gifted covenant; few in the world will have him; few in Scotland will have him. And, *Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?* Do you think it a small matter, to see the world crucifying the Lord of glory, and interpretatively renewing the bloody tragedy again, that was acted at Jerusalem really? And will ye have a hand in the murder also? The more they be that reject him, the more should ye receive him. He hath long been set before you in a preached gospel, and you have long refused him; and you know not but this may be the last communion-offer that ever you will get of him; *To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.*

7. Consider, that you cannot *please* God, nor *glorify* him so much any way, as by taking this gifted covenant out of his hand. As *Abraham staggered not at the promise through unbelief, but was strong in the faith, giving glory to God*; so to take this covenant of promise is the way to give glory to God. You will please him better than ever your sins displeased him; yea, it is impossible to please him another way; for, *without faith it is impossible to please God:* but in this way you will please him, and content his heart; yea, you will give more satisfaction to his justice for all your sins, than your everlasting damnation would do; for, this is a covenant *with him by sacrifice*; a *sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour*, giving infinite satisfaction; for he that is given for a covenant, is given for a sacrifice; by which God is pleased, and glorified to the highest.

8. To name no more, consider that this covenant can answer *all objections*; and the very proposal in the text is such as may obviate all, on whatever ground you state them. *I will give thee for a covenant of the people, a light of the Gentiles, to open blind eyes, and to bring out prisoners out of their prison-house.* There is no room, no place for any objection here; for the tenor of the covenant answers all difficulties. Whatever be the prison-house you are in, this covenant not only knocks at the prison-door, but breaks open the door, and comes in, saying, There is my hand of power to help you out; will you take my help? *O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thy help.* Will you have it? Let your heart say, Lord, it is welcome. Are you in the prison of the lowest hell that ever any was in upon earth? This covenant comes so low as to lift you up, if you do not reject the counsel of God against yourselves. Would you wish to be free of all that deadness, hardness, blindness, stupidity, and enmity, which you reckon make you unfit, and unprepared for coming to Christ, and taking this covenant? Why, this covenant is adapted for curing these plagues; and when you take this covenant, you take it as a cure for all these diseases, which never can be cured till you take this remedy; for to cure yourselves, and then come to this covenant, is impossible; but to come to this covenant, and get the cure of all maladies that affect you, is God's instituted means of salvation. Would you wish to be free of that temptation, that you are no elect? Accept of this blessed bargain, and your election is sure. Who dare say that you are a reprobate? Poor worm of yesterday's date, will you speak as if you had been upon the privy-council of heaven from all eternity? Will you rather beguile the devil, by saying, Whatever I be, this covenant constitutes my duty, and therefore I will venture upon the covenant at the call of God? But, if I be not an elect, I will not get grace to venture, or grace to believe. What mean you, man, by grace to believe? Is not grace to believe conveyed by such a call as this? And therefore if you slight this call, you slight the grace that would make you believe; and therefore, O let not the devil make a fool of you.—Would you wish to be free of that temptation, that *you have sinned the sin against the Holy Ghost, and that there is no mercy for you?* Why, if you embrace this offer this day, you may be sure you was never guilty, nor ever shall. Tell me the clause of the text that secludes you from meddling with this covenant; and why will you debar yourselves? What is the case that this covenant cannot answer? Are there any here that hath false and unconstant hearts, that break all bonds? O here is a suitable covenant for you. If you cannot keep the covenant, the covenant will keep you. The bastard-covenants of your own making will not keep you, but this covenant will, Jer. xxxii. 40. Are there any here that want through-bearing in the world, and are feared for straits, and even temporal difficulties? Here is a covenant that says, *Bread shall be given thee, and thy water shall be sure; yea, verily thou shalt be fed; and in the day of famine shall be satisfied.* Are there any here that cannot get rest among all the creatures? Here is a covenant that says, *Come to me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* Are there any here, that think themselves poor, abject creatures, saying, O I am but a burden to myself, and a burden to all that are about me; no body cares for me, and, I fear God cares not for me either; I am cast out at all hands? O here is a covenant that says, *He will gather together the outcasts of Israel.* Is there any here afraid of death, and knows not how to get through that dark trance? O here is a covenant fit for you, that says, *O death, I will be thy plague;* and *death shall be swallowed up in victory.* Are there any here labouring under desertion? Here is a covenant that says, *I will lead the blind in a way they know not. I will never leave you, nor forsake you.* Are ye for this covenant? Is there any labouring under temptations? Here is a covenant that says, *The God of peace will bruise Satan under your feet shortly;* and *my grace shall be sufficient for thee.* Is there any here labouring under the power of sin and cor-

corruption? Here is a covenant that ſays, *I will put my Spirit within you, and cauſe you to walk in my ſtatutes; I will ſubdue your iniquity:* yea, he who is the covenant ſays, *For your ſake I ſanctify myſelf, that you alſo might be ſanctified.* And again, *The water that I ſhall give him, ſhall be in him a well of water ſpringing up to eternal life.* Is there any here ſaying, I am a loſt creature? The covenant is ſaying, *I come to ſeek and to ſave that which was loſt.* Is there any here ſaying, O I have ſinned to the uttermoſt? This covenant ſays, *He is able to ſave to the uttermoſt.* If you ſay, you cannot believe; the covenant ſays, Chriſt, who is the all of the covenant, is *the Author of faith;* and the Spirit of faith is given when the covenant is given; all grace is given when it is given. Are you content to take this covenant, and all the grace of it? If you ſay, you cannot repent, the covenant ſays, *Him hath God exalted with his right-hand, to give repentance.* What is the caſe that the covenant cannot anſwer? Why, ſay you, you are calling us all, both wicked and godly, to accept of this covenant: but does not God ſay to the wicked, *What haſt thou to do to take my covenant in thy mouth, ſeeing thou hateſt inſtruction, and caſteſt my law behind thy back.* Very true, he ſays ſo, Pſal. l. 16.; Yea, the voice of God in the law, ſays, *Vengeance upon you;* and there is no eſcaping that vengeance, but by hearing and believing what the voice of God in the goſpel-covenant ſays, and by taking it, not in your mouth to abuſe it, but in your heart to love and improve it for your ſanctification as well as for your juſtification, for making you holy as well as happy. God's covenant is a holy covenant, and it works out ſin, and advances holineſs in all that are under it. What, would you have me believe in Chriſt before my life be reformed? may ſome ſay. Yea, I would have you believe in Chriſt, in order to reformation; and taking him for a covenant, in order to our ſanctification. Why then, ſay you, I will take Chriſt and my luſts both. I defy you, man; if you take him, you muſt let theſe go away; yea, it is impoſſible to take him, and keep your luſts too; for whenever the covenant of grace is embraced, the covenant with ſin and hell is abandoned. And therefore, if any come to this covenant to ſeek ſhelter to any one luſt under it, it is no coming at all; it is no faith, but fancy; yea, it is a mocking of God, and his holy covenant, and will bring a curſe upon you inſtead of a bleſſing. To come to this covenant, is to come to *the Lamb of God, that takes away the ſins of the world;* it is a coming to Jeſus to be ſaved from ſin. But O, ſay you, I cannot think that the covenant of grace ſays a good word to me; I have been making *God to ſerve with my ſins, and weary him with mine iniquities.* Indeed, the law and covenant of works ſays, You are a dead man; *the ſoul that ſinneth ſhall die;* but ſee what the covenant of grace ſays, Iſa. xliii. 24, 25. *I, even I am he that blotteth out thy tranſgreſſion for my name's ſake.* Take this covenant then, and pardon with it, as well as purification. O! but what ſays the covenant to one who hath been neglecting prayer, and forgetting God all my days? Why, there is no word in the law for you but fury; *Pour out thy fury upon the heathen, and the families that call not on thy name. The wicked ſhall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.* But there is a word even for ſuch in the new covenant; *I am found of them that ſought me not.* O come and take the treaſure you was never ſeeking after to this day, and it will ſweetly determine you to ſeek his face all the days of your life. O! but what will the covenant ſay to ſuch whoſe caſe you have not touched, and who think their caſe nameleſs, and that miniſters cannot find out a name for them, becauſe they are juſt hidden among the miſt of the bottomleſs pit, among the ſmoke of hell, ſo as they cannot be found out? Why, the covenant hath a word to you; Iſa. lxii. 12. *Thou ſhalt be called, Sought out, a city not forſaken;* there is a name for you, thou ſhalt be called, *Sought out.* This covenant is ſent this day to ſeek you out from the bottom of the dark priſon that you are in, whatever it be: will you take the benefit of this covenant? Are you for it, man, woman? Will you have a Chriſt to be a covenant to you? Young people, will you have him, that you may not live in the devil's ſervice? Old people, will you have him, that you may not die with the devil in your arms? Drunkard, will you have him, that you may get a drink of the new wine of conſolation? Unclean perſon, will you have him, to waſh you, that you may be fitted to walk with him in white? Swearer, will you have him, that your tongue may be ſhaped for a hallelujah? Man, woman, who haſt ſeven devils in you, will you have him, *who hath the ſeven Spirits that are before the throne* (that is, the eternal Spirit, with his various operations) that he may put the devil out of you, and put his Spirit within you? Whoſoever will may have a covenant this day, that will make you up for ever.

Is there any here who deſpiſes all this love, ſaying, I will keep my luſt and ſins ſay you what you will; it is but a new ſcheme, perhaps out of your own head; I have no fancy for that covenant? Say you ſo, man! then as the Lord lives, you have ſpoken this againſt your own life. I proteſt againſt you, in the name of God, and ſhake the duſt off my feet, in witneſs againſt you, That, on the ninteenth day of Auguſt 1722, at a communion at Dunfermline, Chriſt, and in him all the covenant of grace, was offered to you, and you refuſed him; and if you live and die in that mind, I ſummon you to anſwer for this refuſal, before his awful tribunal at the great day.

But, becauſe I am courting a bride for my glorious maſter, I would gladly ſpeak her fair on her marriage-day; therefore, O refuſer and deſpiſer of Chriſt, will you bethink yourſelf yet, and take your word again; many a ſlight have you put upon this glorious Chriſt, and yet he is content to take you for all that; he is loath to take a denial; and therefore I would aſk, in his name, before you give him a total refuſal, will you tell me, Where will you do better? Will a broken covenant of works be a better bargain for you? or will the black covenant with hell, and with your luſts and idols be a better bargain for you? or is the vain, periſhing world a better bargain? No, no; the devil himſelf does not think ſo whatever he ſuggeſt to you.

But again, before you give him a total denial and abſolute refuſal, will you tell me, how you will do without him? Or, if you make a ſhift while you live, O how will you die without him? and how will you ſtand in judgment

judgment without him? and death and judgment may be at hand. There are many dead, and away to eternity ſince the laſt communion here; and this may be the laſt communion-invitation that ever you will get: if you refuſe Chriſt now, it may be the laſt offer that ever you will get of him; he hath taken many refuſals off your hand already.—And finally, before you refuſe him wholly, think again what you are refuſing: Is Chriſt a deſpicable perſon, of no more worth but to be ſlighted by you, and trampled under your feet? Is he a hateful object, whom yet the tongues of all the glorious ſeraphims are not worthy to adore? Is the everlaſting covenant a matter of moonſhine? Is the love of God, the blood of Chriſt, the eternal intereſts of your immortal ſouls, and the divine glory, all matters of indifferency to you? Is the great JEHOVAH, his giving Chriſt to be a covenant of the people, a contemptible thing? and is this a gift not worth the taking? O no, no, ſay ye; ſurely it is a worthy offer. Why then, by the awful authority of the eternal God, and by the blood and bowels of his eternal Son, I adjure you to take him and his Father's bleſſing; and all the bleſſings of the everlaſting covenant with him. O ſay you, I think I am gained and overcome by this offer and propoſal; but I know not if it be a paſſing thought that will evaniſh, or a real faith that will abide the trial; I fear it be but looſe work, and a temporary-flaſh. Why, man, the covenant can reſolve you in that difficulty; and it ſays, *Fear not, for I am thy God; I will ſtrengthen thee; I am thy ſalvation.* Are you content to take the covenant for this end, to diſcover the defects of your faith, and to work in you the faith of God's elect? Can you ſay, that it is not in your faith, but in Chriſt himſelf, that you are ſeeking ſalvation; that you are not building your faith upon your faith, nor your hope upon your hope, but both your faith and hope upon the covenant? Can you ſay, that whatever be wrong about you and your faith, yet you ſee there is nothing wrong about Chriſt and the covenant, but that it is well-ordered in all things and ſure, and ſuch as can right all that is wrong about you? Can you ſay, however I am in the dark about my faith, yet I have ſometimes found out my unbelief; and, that I could no more believe than I could move the earth from its centre; but yet the joyful ſound of goſpel-grace hath touched my heart, and made me take up ſo much glory and excellency in Chriſt, that I think all the world nothing in compariſon of him; and I think my heart's deſire is, O to have him for my Prophet, to take away the darkneſs of my mind; as a Prieſt, to take away the guilt of my ſins; and as a King, to take away the power of my luſts! Gladly would I have him, that thus my ſoul may be bleſt in him, and his name may be glorified in me. Why then, whatever you think of your faith, and of yourſelf, as the blackeſt monſter of guilt that ever was out of hell, yet it ſeems you have the faith of God's elect. I would gladly hope, that ſome ſouls in this aſſembly are taken hold of by the hand of grace, and content to ſign this covenant with their heart: and woe's me that there ſhould be any here that would let all this love and grace, and this good prize go by them, and they never have a heart to it. But yet ſome that have a heart to ſign, may be ſaying, O I cannot write, I cannot believe, I cannot ſubſcribe, though I think I could do it with a thouſand good-wills. Say you ſo, man? I will tell you good news, Chriſt hath the book of the covenant in the one hand, and the pen in his other hand, ready to ſet down your name, and to ſubſcribe for you; only declare before witneſſes that you cannot write, and do you touch the pen, ſaying, Lord, ſet down my name, conſenting to *every article of the covenant*, and pleaſed with the whole frame of it. Say you ſo? Well, it is done, for he hath the pen of a ready writer; your name is within the bond already. But if grace will help you to a new act of faith, a ſtronger act, read over the covenant again, and hear how the great Jehovah is ſpeaking, and not I; and ſpeaking to his only begotten Son that lies in his boſom, ſaying, *I give thee for a covenant of the people.* Now, let faith ſay, Lord, I take thee at thy word; I hear thee ſpeaking to thy *beloved Son* concerning me a poor, dark, blind, and bound Gentile; wilt thou ever go back of thy word to thy Son? No, in deſpite of the devil, I think that is the ſureſt word that ever was ſpoken; it is to him thou ſpeakeſt, and to me in him; and therefore, behold, I take thee at thy word; black and ugly as I am, the covenant can make me fair and clean: thy grace hath conquered me, thy love hath drawn me, and I am pleaſed with the bargain; and I ſee it is the beſt bargain that ever was made, for advancing thy eternal glory, and my eternal good; I ſee it is *all my ſalvation, and all my deſire;* I ſee it is *well-ordered in all things, and ſure.* Why then, the Lord be thanked that it is a done bargain, and that God's gift is taken off his hand. And therefore, having taken then the covenant, never ſtand to take the ſeal in the ſacrament of his ſupper.

The SUBSTANCE *of ſome* DISCOURSES *after the Sacrament, on the ſame Subject.*

NOW, my friends, it were not fit I ſhould detain you, by ſpeaking to the *ſeveral ſorts* of people here; I ſhall only drop a few words in the general. I think, if my heart deceive me not, the great thing I was helped to ſeek, ſome time before this ſolemnity, was not only aſſiſtance to miniſters, and to myſelf, ſo as to be carried through the work, for I thought that would ſoon come to little account; but I would have had a day of power among you that are the people, that the glory of the Lord might ſhine among you. And now, what ſhall I ſay? O! *To whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?* Hath *the right-hand of the Lord done valiantly*, even *the man of his right-hand, whom he hath made ſtrong for himſelf?* Hath the Lord appeared, as yet, for as much of the work as is over? Or, ſhall we expect that he will appear in the work that is yet to follow? Or, ſhall our prayer juſt only turn to our boſom again? I would aſk you, What welcome entertainment hath Chriſt, the Father's gifted covenant, got among you this day? He hath *given him for a covenant of the people;* and who of all the people have welcomed the Father's gift? I fear there are many fools here, that have a price in their hand, but no heart to the bargain. But to all the deſpiſers of Chriſt, and all the refuſers of Chriſt

Christ, in Dunfermline this day, in case the Lord may seize you with a word yet before you go, I have a word to say to you, whether you have been at the Lord's table or not, although the sacrament table be drawn, yet the covenant table is not drawn, it is covered yet, and Christ is set upon it, and you are all welcome; for all that have eaten, there is bread enough, and to spare, in his Father's house; Christ, as the covenant, is offered to you, man; to you, woman; to you that are before me, and behind me, and round about me, in every corner of this place; though I do not see you, yet God's eye is upon you, and his word is directed to you: yea, this covenant is directed and offered to you, he is the people's covenant; let the people come, be who they will, even the vilest monster of sin out of hell; God's giving him in this gospel, is your warrant for taking him: and if you will not hearken to this gospel-offer of Christ for a covenant to you, I charge you, in God's name, and as you will answer at his tribunal, to declare before him and your own consciences, what ye have to say against him; is it that you are not holy? Nay, you shall not have that to say, for to the unholiest soul here this covenant is offered, for this end to make you holy; and never shall you be holy till you come and accept of it. Is it that you have not grace to come? Why, man, when this covenant is offered, Christ and all the graces in him is offered, and among the rest, grace to draw you: and if you will not put away this grace from you, it will take hold of you. Is your objection this, I fear my unbelief, enmity, and ill-will, put away all that grace? why, that is the thing most to be feared; and yet, if that be indeed your fear, there is the less ground of fear; for this covenant is offered to you, to take away your ill-will and enmity. Are you content to have God's gifted covenant for that end? Really I know not what good thing it is in all the world that you want or need, but what is offered to you in this covenant: for Christ is the all of the covenant; and he who is the all of it, is *all in all:* and therefore, I charge you again, before you bid him farewel, to declare what you have to say against him, whom God is giving for a covenant: Shall I take your silence for a confession, that you have nothing to say against him? Then, by the glory of God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, by the eternal salvation of your immortal souls, by all the joys of the redeemed, and torments of the damned, I charge you all, and every one of you, to welcome the covenant of the people that God is giving, and that by your hearty saying, Even so, I take him, as the Father offers him in the gospel, to be a whole covenant to me, to do all my work in me, and for me. What say you, drunkard, swearer, whoremonger, scarlet-coloured sinner in Dunfermline? What say you, communicant and spectator? It may be, the thing that keeps you back, is; O I am unworthy to have him; true, but unworthy monster of hell as you are, if you think him worthy to be received, I charge you again, by all the blood that he shed at Jerusalem, and by all the bowels of compassion that move within him, that you do not refuse him, but welcome God's gift, welcome God's Send, saying, *Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.* If, after all, you are saying, stay a little, Sir, let me take it to advisement for some days; No, no, man, woman; I have no commission to allow you a day, or an hour's delay; *To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart:* If you refuse to-day, I know not but you may be in hell to-morrow. What if the next hour the breath should go out of your body? and if your soul flit out of your body before it flee in to Christ, you are gone, you are undone for ever: if God's omnipotent grace and almighty power, which only can make you willing to accept of his offer, be not accompanying this call, he needs not our apology; he is the Sovereign, that is obliged as a debtor to none but himself, and his own pleasure, and his Son's righteousness; yet still you are obliged to obey his call, and your wilful rejecting, is inexcusable. And therefore, if, after all, this gift of God for a covenant of the people, be slighted by you, you not being content that God should rent and tear the old contract that was betwixt you and your lusts, but esteeming it above this covenant, betwixt God the giver, and you the refuser, be it; let him and you reckon together, I hope I am free of your blood this day, for there will be blood in the case: if you will not have the blood of the everlasting covenant to wash you, to justify you, to sanctify and save you, nor believe that God gives it to you to be received for that end, then there will be blood for blood; *He that believeth not, shall be damned.* Remember what a free offer of Christ you have got this day; you have nothing to pay for this covenant; *I will give thee for a covenant:* you have nothing to pay for a pardon; the condition of the covenant is fulfilled by Christ, and in it is a full payment of all debt; and therefore, so freely is the pardon, and life offered to you, that you cannot have it till you have nothing to pay for it. See how the creditor deals with the debtor in the parable, Luke vii. 42. *When they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both.* Now, the legal old covenant-heart of many says, with the wicked servant, *Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all;* I will grow a better man, I will fall a repenting and reforming, and then I hope God will pardon me: that man hath something to pay, at least he fancies so, and therefore he hath no forgiveness. But when a poor soul is brought to this, Oh! I have nothing to pay; if I be the payer of my own debt, it will never be paid for me; the debt of satisfaction will never be paid for me; the debt of obedience, the debt of duty; I have nothing to pay my debt, nay, not the least farthing of the debt, were it but a good thought, it can never be paid by me: Why then, that man stands fair for a full remission, according to this free covenant; *When they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both.* Are you for this new covenant-way of it, to come and bring nothing, and get all freely out of the covenant, that belongs to grace and glory, debt and duty, happiness and holiness? Now, what shall I say to God, when I go back to my closet, where I was pleading the last week, that he would shew his glory, and draw some of you to himself? shall I go with a complaint upon you, and say, Lord, they will not come; they prefer their base lusts to the glorious Lord Jesus; the drunkard prefers his cups to thee; the whoremonger prefers his whoredom to thee; the covetous man prefers the world to thee; the

legalist

legaliſt prefers his own righteouſneſs to thee? Shall we complain to this purpoſe? Or, will you give occaſion to Chriſt to complain upon you to his Father, ſaying, Father, thou didſt give me to be a covenant of the people, but there is a people in Dunfermline, that care not for me, and deſpiſe thy gift; *They will not come to me that they might have life?* O! will not the Father frown upon you, when the Son complains upon you? And, O if you continue of that mind, he will frown you to hell. But, O may we hope that ſome at leaſt have ſubſcribed their names to the covenant this day? We would go back to God with a ſong of praiſe in our mouths, and glorify his name for the wonders of his grace; yea, if I may ſo expreſs it, Chriſt would with a glad heart ſhew his Father the copy of the covenant that you have ſigned, and that was offered and directed to you, as to the Gentiles; to theſe that were under darkneſs, blindneſs, and bondage, and in the priſon of ſin, death, and wrath. Will not the Father be pleaſed when the covenant-roll is read over, with the names of all the ſubſcribers and aſſenters to the covenant, and your name among the reſt? There is one that ſubſcribed his name thus, I, *one of the people, one of the Gentiles;* I, one of the *blind and bound priſoners*, aſſenting and conſenting. Well, may God ſay, was not the covenant directed and offered to the people of that name? Yes, Father, it was. Why then, let the name ſtand there regiſtrate to eternity, it ſhall never be blotted out for me; *Him that cometh, I will in no wiſe caſt out.* Since they had no better name to ſign withal, than the name of ſinner, apoſtate, backſlider, criminal, leper, blackamoor, ſlave, and hell's drudges; yet aſſenting and conſenting to this covenant; this covenant that they have ſubſcribed, ſhall make their names *better than that of ſons and daughters.* They ſhall have a name *among the living in Jeruſalem;* even a *new name*, and the *white ſtone, that no man knoweth, but he that receiveth it.*

Now, as we have a commiſſion from the Lord to tell you, that you are welcome to him; ſo, Oh! ſhall we have a commiſſion from you, to tell him that he is welcome to you? Since God the Father declares, that you are welcome to his Son, ſaying, *I will give him for a covenant of the people;* ſhall we go and tell him, O God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the people at the ſacrament in Dunfermline, have taken thee at thy word, and are ſaying in their hearts, thy Son is welcome to them? O if Chriſt and you welcome one another this day, whether it be the firſt welcoming to ſome of you, or a confirming welcoming to others; if he and you, I ſay, be welcoming one another this day, Glory, glory to God that ever this day dawned. Eternity will be duration little enough to praiſe him for this day. Glory, glory to God for the three happy meetings; glory to him for the happy meeting betwixt the divine and human nature in one perſon, and that is the glorious perſon given to be a covenant to you; glory to him for the happy meeting betwixt juſtice and mercy, who have kiſſed one another, and ſaid, We are both pleaſed, and are honoured by him, who is given for the covenant of the people; and glory to him for the happy meeting betwixt the Saviour and the ſinner, betwixt the covenant and the people: Is it a meeting indeed! Hath the Lord God of the Hebrews met with you in Dunfermline? Hath the Covenant taken hold of your hearts? O glory to him, for it is a meeting never to part; the Covenant will never quit its holding again: and therefore, *As you have received Chriſt, ſo walk you in him;* as you have received God's gifted covenant, ſo make uſe of it, and improve it. When you find you have no righteouſneſs, look to the covenant to furniſh you; *For his name ſhall be called,* THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. When you find you have no ſtrength, look to the covenant to furniſh you; for it ſays, *My ſtrength ſhall be perfect in thy weakneſs.* When you find you have no life nor livelineſs, look to the covenant to furniſh you; for it ſays, *I am the reſurrection and the life.* When you feel little of the Spirit's influences, look to the covenant to furniſh you; for it ſays, *I will pour water upon him that is thirſty, and floods on the dry ground.* When you find you have much ſin and guilt in and about you, look to the covenant for pardon; for it ſays, *I, even I am he that blotteth out thy tranſgreſſions for my name's ſake.* When you find your luſts and corruptions to be powerful and prevalent, look to the covenant for mortification; for it ſays, *Sin ſhall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace.* When you find little or no holineſs taking place in your hearts and ways, look to this holy covenant, and it will make you more holy than ever the covenant of works could do; for this covenant of grace does preſent the law with a perfect holineſs, whether you take it as the law of works, or a rule of life in the hand of a Mediator. As the law is a *covenant of works*, the believer hath, by this covenant, a perfect holineſs in his hand, a divine righteouſneſs anſwering to that: and as the law is a *rule of life*, in the hand of Chriſt, the believer hath, by this new covenant, a perfect holineſs alſo, not only by virtue of his union to Chriſt the fountain of holineſs; but in his own perſon; he hath a perfection of parts here, and a perfection of degrees hereafter. But as to this perfection of parts in time, it is indeed many times ſo low, that the believer can hardly diſcern it. Why, may one ſay, The thing that frightens me is, leſt I be a practical Antinomian, and a goſpel-hypocrite; becauſe, though I think my heart goes in to the offer of Chriſt as a covenant, yet I can never find the powerful and ſanctifying virtue of this covenant, to deſtroy my luſts and corruptions, but ſtill iniquity prevails againſt me; and can I take comfort in the covenant in that caſe, without abuſing free grace to licentiouſneſs? For clearing this, I ſhall only ſay to you, that if you can nouriſh and cheriſh ſin, and yet take comfort in the covenant, that comfort is ſuſpicious-like, and flows from a fancy, and not from the faith of God's operation; for, *He that hath this hope, purifieth himſelf, even as God is pure.* Faith purifies the heart, where-ever it is in exerciſe; and to take comfort in or from the covenant, and yet take pleaſure in ſin, at the ſame time, is a dream, and a deluſion that the believer cannot be under, unleſs he be in a fit of temptation. But as to ſin prevailing; ſin may prevail againſt a believer, and yet he may have comfort in the covenant; as David had, when he ſays, *Iniquities prevail againſt me;* they are againſt my will, againſt my heart, againſt my prayers, againſt my inclinations; and he imme-

immediately adds, *As for our tranſgreſſions, thou ſhalt purge them away*, Pſal. lxv. 3. But thou, poor ſoul, that ſays you never found the ſanctifying virtue of the covenant; Why, did you never get grace to wreſtle againſt ſin? that is ſome virtue. Doth prevalency of ſin never humble you to the duſt? that is ſome virtue. Do you ſee and lament your own unholineſs? that is ſome virtue. Doth the ſenſe and feeling of the power of ſin never make you long for complete victory and freedom from ſin? that is ſome virtue. Did the power of a body of death never make you look upon yourſelves as wretched, ſaying, *O wretched perſon that I am! who ſhall deliver me from it?* that is ſome virtue. Did the prevalency of ſin never force you to the blood of Chriſt, the *fountain open for ſin and for uncleanneſs?* that is ſome virtue. Are you glad of any victory you got over your corruption? yea, that is ſome virtue. How do you find it with you, when the light of the covenant is ſhining on your ſoul? Do you not find your heart riſing againſt ſin? then that is ſome virtue. How do you find it with you between hands, when iniquity is prevailing? Do you not find yourſelf uneaſy, and out of your element, ay till the Lord return? that is ſome virtue.—Do not deny the ſanctifying virtue of the covenant: and what can be the reaſon of it, that though you ſign the covenant, and go in to it, yet you find ſo little of its powerful ſanctifying virtue? I will tell you one reaſon of your inſtability and inconſtancy this way: It may be, when you ſigned the covenant, you put not your name at the foot of the bond, but ſet your name too far up, as if you were a party-covenanting; you are to ſign as a party-conſenting, but not as a party-contracting: The covenant was drawn up, and ſigned by two unchangeable parties from eternity, the Father and the Son; and you, forſooth, would have your name in the midſt of the contract, as if you were promiſing and contracting ſomething for your part conjunctly with him, who is the firſt and the laſt, and the all of the covenant. Remember you are but a poor aſſenter at beſt; and therefore put your name lower down; for your work is juſt to do nothing, but to conſent to take him, to do all your work in you, and for you: for, ſays the Lord in my context here, *My glory will I not give to another.* He accounts it the ſtanding of his glory, to perform all that is within the covenant; and he will not let any black ſcullion of hell, like you or me, count our doits ‡ among his gold. The higher place that you take for your name in the covenant, the more unconſtant are you; but the lower place, the more ſtable: Therefore, when you ſign the covenant anew, put your name farther down, below his who is the covenant of the people: let him be the all of the covenant to you; the worker of all your work, and you but an onwaiter; for his *glory he will not give to another.*

Perhaps ſome may be ſaying, O Sir, the thing that fears me at this occaſion, is this, I am put all in confuſion with the *differences* that are among you that are *miniſters* *. What do I know, but the reproach of a *new ſcheme* does juſtly belong to ſome of you, and that I may be in a deluſion? What do I know, but your way of opening the covenant of grace may be ſuch as others will call an enemy to the law, and to holineſs? Why, what ſhall I ſay to you, poor creature? Let God be true, and every man a liar. The Lord forbid that we ſhould ſpeak wickedly for God, and talk deceitfully for him. If there be any perſon here, that never found this doctrine of grace have any other tendency than to lead them to licentiouſneſs, I will pledge my life, that he is not a believer, but a perſon ignorant of the myſtery of the goſpel. But what ſay you, believer? cannot your experience bear witneſs for God, and his gracious covenant, that however vile and unholy you find yourſelf to be, yet when the new-covenant-cord of free grace is wrapt about your heart, does it draw you to the love of ſin, or to the love of holineſs? The more lively faith you have of Chriſt's being your treaſure, your righteouſneſs, your covenant, your all for debt and duty both, do you not find holineſs the more lovely to you, and his love conſtraining you the more to delight in his ſervice? Let the word of God, and the experience of all the ſaints, in an agreeableneſs thereto, decide matters of this ſort. But, O poor believer, do not fall out with Chriſt, though even many of his friends ſhould differ with one another; be not ſtumbled in a day of reproaches and offences; *Bleſſed are they that ſhall not be offended at Chriſt:* Let your hearts go in to the offer of Chriſt as a covenant, to make you both holy and happy.

Now, if you have got little this day, leave the complaint upon yourſelves, for God and his ordinances are not to blame; your *iniquities do ſeparate betwixt you and your God:* and yet, ſay not you have got nothing, if you have got but a crumb; for a crumb is ſomething that indicates that there is yet more coming in the Lord's time and way. Why, what is a crumb? If you be made more humble than you was, that is a crumb. Have you got more inſight into the covenant? that is a crumb. Have you got more deſire after Chriſt? That is a crumb. Are you longing more to be free of ſin, and like unto Chriſt? that is a crumb. Have you got ſo much as gives you a ſtomach for another marriage-ſupper? that is a crumb. If you have not got ſo much as a crumb, believer, it may be waiting for you in a cloſet, or a ſecret corner; and in the mean time, the Lord may be calling you to reflect upon ſome old by-paſt experience, when you got a more ſenſible hold of the covenant than now; and to live by faith, and wait at wiſdom's door. And you that have been fed, and feaſted this day, O reſolve, through grace, henceforth, a ſtated war againſt all Chriſt's enemies within you and without you; and all

‡ An ancient piece of ſmall Scots copper-coin, in value the twelfth part of a penny ſterling; at that time current, but not ſo now.

* At the time when this Sermon was preached [*viz.* Auguſt 19. 1722.] the *conteſt* about the *Marrow doctrine* was upon the field: Firſt occaſioned by a new impreſſion of a book, intitled, *The Marrow of Modern Divinity*, with a recommendatory preface, by the Revd. Mr. James Hog, miniſter of Carnock, as a book deſigned to vindicate the doctrine of Free-Grace; which book the General Aſſembly 1720. by their fifth Act, ſeverely animadverted upon, and condemned ſeveral precious and important truths, through the ſides thereof: And though a *Repreſentation* was given in by ſome miniſters (among whom our Author was one) to the Aſſembly 1721. laying open the *dangerous conſequence* of the ſaid Act, yet the Aſſembly 1722. by their ſeventh Act, farther explained, corroborated, and confirmed the ſaid fifth Act.——As this affair occaſioned a very conſiderable difference, both among miniſters and people; ſo this much may ſerve as a key to this paſſage.

you can, to keep the ground you have gained upon enemies; and ſit not down ſecure, otherwiſe Satan will ſoon trip up your heels: ly not down to ſleep after meat; for God hath fed you, *to run the race that is ſet before you*, and to ſtrive who ſhall run faſteſt in the way to heaven, following Chriſt the Forerunner. You are to follow none, but as they follow Chriſt: the moſt godly miniſters are but limited examples; you are to follow them ſo far as they follow Chriſt, but no farther; *Be ye followers of me*, ſaid Paul, *as I am of Chriſt*. Take the word of God for your rule, and goſpel-truth for your ſtandard, and the rather that there are many in this generation, who would be content that ſome goſpel-truths were ſcratched out of the Bible; but let your prayer be, *Lord, ſend forth thy light and thy truth, that they may guide me.*—In a word, your life muſt be a living by faith upon the covenant, the unchangeable parties, the Father and the Son. Here is a ſure ground of faith; whereas the reaſon of your ſtaggering is, becauſe you put in yourſelf as the one party, who art but a changeable creature, that alters every moment: but it is concluded betwixt two unchangeable parties, whereof none of them ever repents the bargain. O, ſays the poor ſoul, though I have been helped to conſent to this covenant, and ſubſcribe it with all my heart, yet I fear I play the devil, and my heart break looſe again. Yea, it may be ſo, but this covenant ſays, I will draw you to heaven, if you were a devil: I will draw you back again though you were even in the very mouth of hell. And I think, you will find he hath done ſo heretofore, believer, when you thought you was ſo far down in the pit, that the Lord would never return again to lift you up: he hath returned, and ſurprized you; and, it may be, hath done ſo, at this occaſion. O bleſs him, and ſerve him, and improve his covenant; yea, let me tell you, believer, you having embraced the covenant, it lies upon God's honour to keep you, becauſe he ſtands engaged to his Son; his word of honour is paſt.

Some, it may be, are ſtill queſtioning their right to believe, their right to take Chriſt, their right to ſubſcribe to this covenant; they ſtand, as it were, at the back of the door, ſaying, What right have I? Indeed, if you were a party and actor in this covenant, you might ſpeak at that rate; but that you are not: you are only to be aſſenter and conſenter. Your legal heart dreams always, that God will not accept of you, unleſs you do ſo and ſo: but know that God and Chriſt do all here; and they have bound themſelves, by this covenant to do all: and if you do any thing, ſtay till you be able to do more than God hath done, than Chriſt hath done; and that will never be. God engaged, in this covenant, to hold Chriſt's hand, and to uphold him in the work of redemption: the Father bears equal burden in the work; and all the three perſons of the glorious Trinity had an equal will to it; and therefore, ſeeing a Trinity hath done it, the work is completely done. O what fools are they then, that refuſe to join in with this covenant, becauſe of their own ſhort-coming, and becauſe they cannot do ſo and ſo? Why, you can do all that you are bound to do in this covenant, and that is juſt nothing at all; for Chriſt is the covenant, and the all in all of it. If ever you do any thing in God's ſight acceptable, it is the covenant of grace that does it in you. But now, as to your right to come to this covenant; what right would you have, but much miſchief and miſery to be a right on your part; and the offer, call, and command of heaven to be a right on God's part? There is all the right to believe that I know. You would have a right founded upon ſome righteouſneſs of your own; you would have in your clouted cloke with his fair robe; but God will have none of your blackened righteouſneſs. The right is now, welcome a hard heart, to get ſoftening grace out of this covenant: welcome, guilty ſoul, to get pardoning grace out of this covenant: Welcome, filthy ſinner, to get ſanctifying grace out of this covenant: welcome, chief of ſinners, ſinner above all ſinners, welcome to come and get ſalvation out of this covenant. Will you then object, and ſay, O I cannot turn from ſin, and I muſt do that before I come? Why man, will you tell me, who but the devil taught you to take Chriſt's room, and to take his work and employment out of his hand? *His name is Jeſus, becauſe he ſaves from ſin.* O let him in, and he will ſpeak for himſelf; he will ſpeak to the devil, Stand by, for I have broken your head; he will ſay to ſin, Stand by, for I have condemned you by the ſacrifice of myſelf; *He condemned ſin in the fleſh*: yea, he will ſay to juſtice, Let me through to heaven, with all my ranſomed at my back; for I have given you full ſatisfaction. O let him ſpeak for himſelf. Chriſt hath got the guiding of all about the covenant; and when we take him, we take holineſs with him; we take perfect holineſs in him for juſtification; and we get an imparted holineſs from him for ſanctification. What is the reaſon of your want of holineſs? Becauſe you do not take Chriſt: what is the reaſon that ſome who take Chriſt, have little holineſs about them? Even becauſe they take him very aukwardly, if I may ſo call it; they take him backwardly. If we were better at taking what God gives, we would find more holineſs ſpringing up; whole taking of him would make whole holineſs to you; but your broken taking of him makes broken holineſs. O! he is the Performer of the covenant, and the performance itſelf; the Doer of *all our work in us and for us*. And if our taking him, and believing on him were more perfect, our holineſs would be more too; for *faith purifies the heart*: a poor lean faith makes poor lean obedience and ſanctification. O if you could get Chriſt once in your arms, you get all that the Father hath promiſed: but poor ſoul, the beſt way for you, when you find your own weakneſs and wickedneſs, and fear the Father's wrath, is to take Chriſt, as it were, and ſhut him into the Father's arms, and that will pleaſe him: when you get Chriſt in your arms, you want no more, you have all you need; and when God the Father gets Chriſt in his arms, he wants no more, he hath all that he ſeeks; *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleaſed.*

Know this covenant, as it is enlarged upon, in the text and context.

1. It is a covenant for *light*; a *light to the Gentiles*. Chriſt is the wiſdom and light of poor ſouls, and teaches them all the good

leſſons

leſſons that they learn: what leſſons? Why, he tells them what is the way to heaven, ſaying, *I am the way:* he preaches himſelf, and it well becomes him to do ſo.—He ſhews them how a man is made full by emptying himſelf; *When I am weak, then am I ſtrong.* If any ſay, I will do my part of the covenant, he his part; why, that is all wrong: if you make him not the all of the covenant, you make him nothing.—He teaches a man how to diſcern his voice, *My ſheep hear my voice.* He cauſes them to diſcern a ſpiritual preaching, a goſpel preaching; a ſpiritual prayer, a ſpiritual exerciſe. Some will tell us, it is the great and learned men of the world that know preaching beſt: true, ſome learning may make them know how words are ranged together; but he who is the light of the Gentiles, makes all, whom he ſavingly enlightens, to know his voice in a preaching; *The ſpiritual man judges all things.*—He teaches them to read God's will out of a providence; and to ſee more of God in ſome providences, than others ſee in all his ordinances; he teaches them to make uſe of the enemies weapons againſt themſelves. Why, ſays Satan, will ſuch a vile thing, as thou art, come to Chriſt? Yea, ſays the ſoul, becauſe I am vile, I am the more fit.—He teaches them how to dwell beſide the fountain, and how to live near God; and the man that doth this, cannot always live upon two prayers in the day. You that never knew any more about prayer than your morning and evening ſet-times of prayer, it ſeems you was never taught by him that is the light of the Gentiles. O take him, and he will teach you how to cry, ABBA, *Father*; and to rejoice and work righteouſneſs. O when Chriſt comes, and diſcovers himſelf to the ſoul, with his robes royal on him, that ſoul is *filled with joy and peace in believing.*

2. It is a covenant for *ſight*; to *open blind eyes: a man that is called* JESUS, *opened mine eyes*, ſays the blind man. O there are many ſorts of blind people, that need to go to Chriſt for opening their eyes: ſome are blind *Atheiſts*, who ſay in their hearts, *There is no God*; they ſee not the majeſty of God, they ſee not the juſtice of God, they ſee not the grace of God, *etc.* O that they were flocking to him who is the opener of blind eyes.—Some are blind *Civilians*; they are very civil in their walk, but as far from grace as the former: they do not *diſcern the things of God*; know nothing about caſes of conſcience: there are ſome men's prayers and preaching they underſtand not, if they be ſpiritual and evangelical: the man knows not himſelf, but is pure in his own eyes: his neighbours, it may be, will call him a good man, an honeſt man, and he judges himſelf to be what people call him; and yet he is a rebel and traitor to God: he hath not much ill that men can challenge; but O there are many things that God can challenge him for. God can ſee his vice in the thing that he thinks to be virtue and innocence; he may pray, and is content and conceited to hear himſelf pray, and he ſees no fault in his prayers. O have not ſuch need of Chriſt to open their eyes?—Some are blind in the *matter* of *religion*; they think all their ſins are ſins of infirmity: no doubt we are ſinners, ſay they, and great ſinners; who wants their faults more than we? O blind ſouls! know that Chriſt is the opener of blind eyes. There are blind perſons that know their bodily caſe, but not that of their ſouls; they obſerve bodily providences, but not ſoul providences: they know not down-caſtings nor upriſings of ſoul. O! go to Chriſt, and he will let you ſee.—Some are blind with reſpect to any *diſtinct knowledge* of the *goſpel*; they ſee not the ground of faith; they would build their faith on their little piece of holineſs, rather than on God's holy covenant, that only can make them holy; and hence their holineſs is always to ſeek: they ſee not how a man is juſtified in a moment, by an inward righteouſneſs complete and full; they ſee not how juſtification can be complete, without ſomewhat of their own, to make it look fair in God's ſight. O ſeek in to Chriſt, that he may open your eyes!—Again, many are blind with reſpect to *true faith*; they cannot give a reaſon of their faith; they have loſt their text, and cannot give a ground upon which they believe: it may be, they will ſay, they have believed all their days. O ſtranger to faith! The Son of God is given to be the opener of blind eyes, he is a covenanted Eye-ſalve for all blind people. But then,

3. It is a covenant for *liberty*; to *bring the priſoners out of the priſon-houſe.* The Son of God is the looſer of priſoners, by his covenanted indenture with the Father; *The Spirit of the Lord God is upon him; for he hath anointed him:* Why, Chriſt knows all the priſon-houſes, and all the bands; he was made like unto us in all things, ſin only excepted; *Such an High-prieſt became us, who is holy, harmleſs, undefiled, ſeparate from ſinners.* Yea, Chriſt carries all the keys of the priſon-houſe; *The keys of hell and death are in his hand; he opens, and none ſhuts; and ſhuts, and none opens.* The devil, it may be, hath the poor ſoul bound hand and foot in the priſon; but in comes the King of nations, the gingle of whoſe keys makes all the devils tremble, and he orders the jaylor to remove his chains; then, *Dumb and deaf ſpirit, I charge thee to come out of him,* ſaid Chriſt to the poſſeſt man in the goſpel; ſo ſays he, when he comes to looſe a priſoner, Thou wicked, unclean ſpirit, I charge thee to come out: thou covetous and worldly ſpirit, I charge thee to come out; thou atheiſtical, unbelieving ſpirit; thou lying and ſwearing, thou drunken and debauched ſpirit, *etc.* I charge thee to come out, let that ſoul go free; and, if *the Son make you free, then are you free indeed.* It may be the law hath the man in chains; for, *by the law is the knowledge and conviction of ſin.* The law comes and ſeeks his maſter's rent, ſaying, *Pay what thou oweſt*; and the Spirit of God comes along with the law, and convicts the man, and he every day hears himſelf proclaimed over the croſs, as it were, and put to the king's horn, there being many bonds regiſtrate upon him; he is carried to priſon, and there he lies, fearing the wrath of God, and the execution of the curſe, and threatening of the holy law. But behold, the Son of God comes, ſaying, *Open to me the gates of righteouſneſs:* his name is, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. The law is exceeding broad, but there is a righteouſneſs as broad as it can be. Many are long in this priſon, becauſe they take a threatening, and dwell upon that; but believe the goſpel-promiſe, and take hold of the goſpel-righteouſneſs,

and

and you ſhall be looſed. Others dwell long in this priſon, becauſe, if they take a promiſe, they take a conditional promiſe, and make no right uſe of it; ſuch as that, *To you that fear my name, ſhall the Son of righteouſneſs ariſe.* There is a ſweet promiſe, the Son of righteouſneſs his ariſing; but then the condition of *fearing his name*, that cuts off their fingers, and hinders them from applying it, becauſe they think they want the condition: therefore, man, either take an abſolute promiſe, that hath no condition in it at all, promiſing the condition too; or elſe, if you apply the conditional promiſe, take Chriſt for the condition to make up all to you, and then you will find a looſing of priſon-bands. If you will not be content every day and every hour of the day, to be in God's common, in free grace's common, you will ly and rot in your priſon. Many abide long in this priſon, becauſe they would willingly live to two huſbands, both Chriſt and the law. We cannot live to Chriſt, unleſs we be dead to the law, Gal. ii. 19.; but the man would embrace Chriſt for a huſband, and yet ſtand ſeeking to anſwer the demands of the law: but whenever the law demands any thing of you, you muſt ſend the law to Chriſt, that he may anſwer it; and then you will be looſed. Some abide long in priſon, becauſe they build the faith of God's love on the work of God, and not on the truth of God; and hence it is, that when God's work within them languiſhes, their faith languiſhes alſo; but faith will never be firm and ſtable, till it build more upon the truth of the covenant. The ſtable Chriſtian lives by bills of exchange; but the weak, unſtable ſoul counts all by what he hath in his pocket; by what he hath in hand, and not by what he hath upon bond. But how does Chriſt, the covenant of the people, open the priſon-doors? Why, he even teaches the ſoul to ſay, Let Satan, ſin, juſtice, and the law come along with me to Chriſt; and what I cannot anſwer, he can; what I want, he hath enough to ſupply. Come, and lay all my ſins on my back, that I may away to Chriſt with them, and get more mercy and grace; for Chriſt is the all in all of this new covenant: and in this way the priſoner is looſed, to the devil's ſhame, and to Chriſt's honour. Stand to your liberty, poor ſoul, and let your ſins and wants haſten, and bring you forward to venture upon Chriſt, that he may looſe you. O that the day of the Son of man were come, when Zion will get a thouſand atheiſts at a draught, when Chriſt will get a multitude of priſoners liberate!

4. It is a *glorious* covenant, contrived wholly for glorifying God, and debaſing ſelf; therefore it follows, *I am the Lord, that is my name; my glory will I not give to another, nor my praiſe to graven images.* God accounts it the ſtanding of his glory, to perform all that is in this covenant, and not to give any creature a ſhare of it: he will not break his credit, having once engaged himſelf in covenant; and he will not ſuffer any to gather up the rent and revenue of it but himſelf; *My glory will I not give to another.* It ſtands on his glory; his word of honour, his word royal; he himſelf will do all, and no inſtrument ſhall have the glory of it. If you give inſtruments any of the glory, it is the way to blaſt the inſtruments; and blaſted may they be, rather than that Chriſt ſhould want any of the glory due unto his name. Therefore, for the Lord's ſake, if ye get any thing this day, do not give the glory to any inſtrument; for, ſays God, *I am the Lord, that is my name, and my glory will I not give to another.* And, for his glory's ſake, do not think of doing any part of the work yourſelves; there ſhall none get any of his glory but himſelf. Means belong to you; and, in God's name, I charge you to make uſe of them; and the obligations to duty lies upon you; but, if you have any regard for the glory of God, let God have the glory of the whole performance: not I, but grace; either the Lord will bring you to this, or he will bring you to nothing. Let it be your maxim in religion, to make always much room for the free grace of God in Chriſt.

What ſhall I make of this you have been telling me? Why, have your hearts gone into the covenant of free grace? Then I call you to a duty, ſuch as you have, ver. 19. *Sing unto the Lord a new ſong, and his praiſes from the ends of the earth.* Whence you may notice, that when God is giving a full and free covenant, then it is a fit time to injoin a duty; for then the man is at this, *O! what ſhall I render to the Lord?* Nothing advances holineſs ſo much as the getting a full and free covenant: why? becauſe Chriſt walks in the midſt of the covenant; and he is the covenant, and the whole of the covenant: and when the covenant comes, he comes; and his very preſence warms the heart, and that warmneſs enlarges it, and then the man is at that with it, *I will run the way of thy commandments, becauſe thou enlargeſt my heart.* Yea, when the free covenant comes to a man, and gets the throne, then holineſs will run of courſe. The narrowneſs of your thoughts of free grace hinders all your holineſs; for Chriſt will not ſit down where the covenant gets not the throne. When the free covenant comes, it makes Self go to the door, and bids pride be gone; for holineſs hath a charge never to lodge in the ſame room with pride. When the covenant comes in, pride goes out; and when pride goes out; holineſs comes in; for, *he gives grace to the humble;* and the moſt ſweetly humbling thing in all the world, is a view of the free covenant, where God gets all the glory, and Self nothing of it: nay, when the covenant comes, it makes Self think ſhame of itſelf, and hide its face with bluſhes. In a word, when the covenant comes, it contains in its boſom all the furniture that is neceſſary for making a man holy; and alſo, this covenant ſhews to a man that much is forgiven him; and when much is forgiven him, he loves much. And where there is much love, there is true holineſs, for the love of Chriſt conſtrains him. therefore, where this covenant never comes holineſs never grows; but when the covenan of grace in its freedom and fulneſs takes place with a ſoul, there holineſs flouriſhes. Would you know wherefore there is ſo much wickedneſs, and ſo little holineſs in Scotland, for all the talking of holineſs, as if the free diſpenſation of goſpel-grace would marr it? The very reaſon is, Little of this covenant is known; men keep faſt hold of their ſins, becauſe they will not take hold of this covenant. Where there is nothing of this covenant, there is no holineſs; where little of this covenant, there

there is little holineſs; and where much of this covenant takes place, there is much holineſs.

The new covenant brings in the new ſong, ver. 10. *Sing unto the* LORD *a new ſong;* and the new ſong is the new obedience; and the new obedience is the obedience of faith and love; and that obedience of faith and love is goſpel-holineſs. O then, let the goſpel-covenant have room, or holineſs will never thrive and increaſe: take in the covenant, and it will make you ſing; *Sing to the* LORD *a new ſong, and his praiſes to the ends of the earth; for he that offereth praiſe glorifieth God:* and the more you glorify God, the more will your holineſs be like that of the redeemed above, who are ſinging the new ſong in the new Jeruſalem.

SERMON V.*

PREVENTING LOVE; or, GOD's Love to us the *Cauſe* of our Love to him.

1 JOHN iv. 19.

We love him, becauſe he firſt loved us.

THE great deſign of the goſpel, goſpel-ordinances, and ſacraments, is to commend the love of God in Chriſt. The ſacrament of the ſupper is a love-feaſt; and they that have their ſenſes ſpiritually exerciſed therein, will find readily all their ſenſes filled with *love.* What do they *hear*, but *love!* What do they *ſee*, but *love!* What do they *taſte*, but *love!* What do they *feel*, but *love!* What do they *ſmell*, but *love!*—It is a ſweet account we have of God, ver. 16. *Hereby perceive we the love of God, becauſe he laid down his life for us.* O happy they that have ſo learned the goſpel-catechiſm, from their experience, as to be able to anſwer to that queſtion, *What is God?* And to ſay, *God is love!* He is eſſential, boundleſs, bottomleſs, infinite *love.* It is true, if we look to him in the glaſs of the *law*, we will ſee him to be all *wrath; a conſuming fire out of Chriſt;* but look to him in the glaſs of the *goſpel*, and you will ſee him *all love; a God in Chriſt reconciling the world to himſelf:* and the ſight thereof produces love: for *we love him, becauſe he firſt loved us.*

The text gives us a ſhort account of the whole buſineſs betwixt God and a believer: they love one another. Here is love deſcending, God in Chriſt loving his ſaints; and here is love aſcending, the ſaints in Chriſt loving God; and the former begetting the latter. When love hath deſcended from heaven to earth, it hath finiſhed the half of its courſe; but when it aſcends from earth to heaven again, then the circle is completed.

Here is, 1. A deſcription of *God's love; he loved us firſt.* 2. A deſcription of *our love* to God; we love him for *this cauſe.* And,

1. We have *God's* love *deſcribed; He* FIRST *loved us.* If we were to make a critical diviſion, we might notice how it is deſcribed. 1. In the *act*, loved. O wonder that ever the heart of God ſhould have acted that way towards any ſinner of Adam's race. 2. The *ſubject* loving; *He loved:* O! a glorious *He*, the infinitely holy and juſt God. 3. The *object* loved; *He loved Us;* poor wretched apoſtate *us.* 4. The *quality* of this love, he loved *us*, and *firſt* loved *us*; intimating, both that it is an *ancient* love, for it is in the preterite time, he *loved*; yea, loved from eternity; and alſo that it is *antecedent* love; *he* FIRST *loved us*, before we had a being, before we were capable to love him; yea, while we were yet enemies.

2. We have the *ſaints* love deſcribed; *we loved him, becauſe he loved us;* which is alſo deſcribed in theſe four: 1. The *act*, *love;* and indeed this love of ours is but a drop of the ocean of his love. 2. The *ſubject* loving, *we;* we believers, we that got a taſte of his love. 4. The *object* beloved, *him;* we love *him*, who deſerves our love above all things in heaven and earth. 4. The *riſe* and *ſource* of this love of ours, *We love him, becauſe he* FIRST *loved us;* his love is the incentive and productive cauſe of your love. But I refer the further explication of the text to the proſecution of a doctrine. Many things might here be obſerved: As,

1*ſt*, *None can truly love God, but ſuch as are beloved of him.* Many ſpeak of the love of God, as if it were natural to them: but as true love is a ſpark of heavenly fire; ſo there is no love natural to man but the love of ſin.

2*dly*, *That God hath a people in the world that love him, becauſe they are loved of him.* There is in God a common love, whereby he loved the whole world; and a ſpecial love, whereby he loves the ſaints: and ſo there is in the ſaints a common love, by which they love all God's creatures; and a peculiar love that belongs to God only, whom they prize above all other things.

3*dly*, *That divine love works freely.* God does not trade with us upon any terms, conditions, or valuable conſiderations in and about us. We can neither buy heaven nor beg it; it muſt be given. Let not the greateſt civilian preſume; let not the greateſt prodigal deſpair: God's love is firſt on the field.

4*thly*, *That as God and his ſaints love one another, ſo the reaſon of ſaints loving God, is God's loving them:* there is no reaſon of *God's* love, but becauſe he loves. But there is reaſon enough for *our* love, becauſe *he* loved us. The believer loves God upon God's account, and for good

* This ſermon was preached after the adminiſtration of the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper at Portmoak, June 3d. 1723. and hath undergone three impreſſions.

reaſon;

reaſon; God loves us without any reaſon, or any cauſe from without himſelf; but we have all the reaſon in the world, why we ſhould love God. Many ſay, they love Chriſt, but they have not any reaſon for it; they that love him know why they do ſo. There are three things create love, *viz. Beauty, intereſt, love.* 1. *Beauty*; and O, but Chriſt is *white and ruddy, and altogether lovely.* 2. *Intereſt;* the more a man ſees Chriſt to be his own, the more he loves him. 3. *Love;* the love of God is the great parent of love; it begets love; *We love him, becauſe he firſt loved us.*——But having taken this ſhort view of the text, the doctrine I fix upon is this.

OBSERV. *God's love to his people is the ſource of their love to him.* Their love is influenced by the faith of his love; his love is the cauſe of theirs; *We love him, becauſe he firſt loved us.*

Now the general method that ſeems moſt native is,

I. To ſpeak of *God's love* to his people.
II. Of the *ſaints love* to God.
III. The *influence* his love hath upon theirs as the cauſe of it.
IV. Apply the whole in ſundry *uſes.*

I. To ſpeak of *God's love to his people*: and indeed to ſpeak of it is to ſpeak of that which is unſpeakable and inconceivable, for *it paſſeth knowledge;* only we may notice a few things that the ſcripture ſays of this love. I would offer ſome *remarks* concerning this love of God; and then ſhew more particularly, the *import* of this expreſſion, *He firſt loved us.*

1ſt. I would offer ſome *remarks* concerning the love of God.

Remark 1. *That the* fountain *of this love is* GOD *the Father.* Love begins in order of nature with the Father; hence, ſays Chriſt, *I will not ſay, that I will pray the Father for you, for the Father himſelf loveth you,* John xvi. 26. Chriſt prays for all the fruits and emanations of the Father's love to his people; but not for the Father's love itſelf. You miſtake greatly, Sirs, if you think that Chriſt doth purchaſe and pray for the Father's love to his people; nay, it was the Father's love that ſent Chriſt to purchaſe all the fruits and communications of his love. *God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son.* The love of God cannot be purchaſed; there is no need of any mediation here; *I will not ſay that I will pray the Father,* in this reſpect, *for the Father loves you.* Here is the fountain of the love. But,

Remark 2. *That the* channel *through which this love of God does run, from this fountain, is the* LORD JESUS CHRIST. God's love does not vent itſelf towards any ſinner, to the diſparagement of his infinite holineſs and juſtice; and therefore it vents and flows in and through Chriſt, *Whom God hath ſet forth to be the propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteouſneſs, for the remiſſion of ſins that are paſt,* Rom. iii. 25. God hath taken a marvellous way to manifeſt his love: when he would ſhew his *power*, he makes a world; when he would ſhew his *wiſdom*, he puts it in a frame and form that diſcovered vaſt wiſdom; when he would manifeſt the *grandeur* and *glory* of his *name* more, he makes a heaven, and puts angels, archangels, principalities, and powers therein; and when he will manifeſt *love*, what will he not do? It is a pity [illegible]d deny this love; becauſe God hath ta[illegible] a great and myſterious way of manifeſti[illegible]t in Chriſt; his *death*, his *blood*, his *righteouſneſs*: here is the channel.

3. *The* ſtreams *of divine love, that flow from this fountain, in this channel, are* vaſtly great; *viz.* Pardon, peace, ſafety, adoption, juſtification, ſanctification, audience of prayer, a bleſſing on all providences, and everlaſting triumph in heaven. I cannot enlarge upon theſe, or any other of the ſtreams that flow from this love of God; the ſtreams are ſo many, ſo great, that we ſhould loſe ourſelves there, as well as in the fountain, if we were to dive thereinto; only we are *bleſſed in Chriſt with all ſpiritual bleſſings;* and this love of God, and all the fruits of it, is to be enjoyed in the *fellowſhip of the Spirit*, 2 Cor. xiii. 13.; where we read of *the grace of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the love of God*, and *the communion of the Spirit;* where Chriſt is firſt mentioned, becauſe he is next to us, as being the channel through which the love of God is vented; and this love of God, and grace of Chriſt, is enjoyed in the communion and fellowſhip of the Holy Ghoſt; and that this love is from the Father, as the fountain; in the Son, as the channel; by the Holy Ghoſt, as the immediate conveyance.

4. *The veſſels into which theſe ſtreams are vented, or this love is poured, are* ſinners; even to them it is declared that he is the Lord, *The Lord God merciful, and gracious, pardoning iniquity, tranſgreſſion, and ſin;* and that *God is love.* This *motto*, that *God is love*, is inſcribed on the gates of *heaven*; and none will think ſtrange of that, becauſe the love of God, in bringing any ſinner of Adam's race there, is manifeſted to the higheſt. But we would think ſtrange, if one ſhould ſay, that this is even the inſcription written upon the gates of *hell*, that *God is love*; why? his love to himſelf, and his own juſtice, is manifeſted there; yea, not only ſo, but millions are damned, becauſe they ſlight redeeming-love; and their conſcience galls them, for contemning all the offers of love. But that which concerns us eſpecially, is, that we may read this inſcription daily upon the beautiful gate of the *temple;* I mean, in goſpel-ordinances, that *God is love;* for therein he manifeſts his love to ſinners, even to ſinners of Adam's family, in the general diſpenſation of the goſpel; and particularly to the veſſels of mercy, in the ſpecial operation of the Spirit upon them in the fulneſs of time; wherein he hath deſigned to pour out his Spirit, and ſo to pour in his love. But to omit many things here, I come,

2dly, To ſhew the particular *import* of this expreſſion, *He firſt loved us.* And,

1. It ſays, That his love is *eternal* love, and from everlaſting: *He firſt loved us. I have loved thee with an everlaſting love*, Jer. xiii. 3.; as it is to everlaſting, ſo it is from everlaſting; as it will never have an end, ſo it never had a beginning, but is as antient as the eternal God is. O! what an amazing thought is this, that God ſhould have had thoughts of love towards any poor ſinners, like you and me, from the beginning of his *being*, which is without a beginning!—But, to prevent miſtakes, you would know that the love of God is twofold; his love of *deſtination*, and his love of *approbation*: his love of deſtination and purpoſe, whereby he

he is said *to have chosen us in Christ, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy; having predestinate us to the adoption of children*, Eph. i. 4, 5.; and this love he is said to manifest even before a man's conversion, 1 John iv. 19. *In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved him, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sin.*——Again, there is his love of *approbation* and friendship; such as that spoken of, John xiv. 23. *If a man love me, and keep my words, my Father will love him; and we will come to him, and make our abode with him.* Now, the object of the former love, *to wit*, the love of *destination*, is every *elect soul*, and that from all eternity, as well as in time, even before their conversion and union to Christ; the object of the latter, *to wit*, his love of *approbation* and friendship, is every believer united to Christ, to whom he begins to manifest his everlasting love personally; for, though he loved and approved of them from eternity in Christ, yet they cannot be said to be actually loved and approved in their own persons, till once their persons are unite to Christ. Though God's love be everlasting and immutable as himself is, yet there is a time wherein he begins to manifest his love: there is no *variation or shaddow of turning in God's love*; all the change is in the person beloved, not in God. It is mere blasphemy to say, that God begins to love them whom before he hated, in a proper and strict sense. It is true, the elect are *children of wrath, even as others*, by nature, whatever they are by divine destination, being ever the object of God's love in this sense; yet in some sense, he begins to love them, in respect of the *manifesting* of his love to them, and the outletting of his love upon them; when his love is taken, not so much for his immanent act, as for his transient act, not for any thing in himself, but for what flows from him to them; the love that is in himself is still the same, but the acts of love that flow forth to them, these begin to appear, when he *manifests himself to them, as he does not to the world*; when he comes to them for their salvation, and *reveals his Son in them*: and here also he is still before hand with them; *He first loved us.*

2. *He first loved us*; it says, that his love is *antecedent* love; as it is first in point of time, yea, from all eternity, so it is first in point of order of time. We cannot manifest our love to him, till first he manifest his love to us. Men may feign love to God and Christ, before they know any thing of God's love in Christ towards them, but they truly have no love to him; even the elect themselves have no love to him by nature, they are *enemies*, and *without God, and without Christ in the world*; buried in the grave of sin and corruption even as others; *dead in trespasses and sins*, and slaves to *divers lusts*; the devil dwelling in them, working in them, reigning in them, as a man dwells in his house, or works in his shop, or reigns upon his throne: they have no more acquaintance with him, or love to him, than others, till by grace they be regenerate, and made to come to God in Christ, and be raised up to a new and lively hope. Common favours indeed, they may have, and God is always sure to notice his elect, and to have a care of them; and many remarkable deliverances will they meet with, even while unconverted. You will find few gracious persons but they will have even good things to tell of the Lord's kindness to them in their youth; but yet love and hatred cannot be known by these things that are seen; for bad men have had the like deliverances, and manifold common mercies, and common grace perhaps also; but all this while they are strangers to true love to God, till once some rays of his everlasting love go before them, and make way for the breaking of their enmity, and engaging them to love him.

3. *He first loved us*; it says, that his love is absolutely *free* love. If *he first loved us*, before we have any love to him, or loveliness in us, O how free is it! His love is free in several respects. It is free love in that it is without *force* or *constraint*; we must even put ourselves in his reverence, and not think to compel God, as if he could be obliged to it; nay, if we get any thing, we must be in grace's debt, and ly at grace's door, as poor beggars, for an alms for Christ's sake.—It is free love in that it is *without reluctancy*; it is with all his heart. There are some objects come to our door, and though we give them an alms, yet it is with some reluctancy; we are not so free-hearted towards them as to others whom we have a kindness for; these we will give to, with all our heart; we give them with as much pleasure as if we were getting to ourselves: so God's special gifts are given with all his heart; he takes pleasure in giving; he *delights in shewing mercy*.—It is free love, in that it is without *merit* and *motive*; his love is neither desired nor deserved, and yet he loves; *I will love them freely*: I will do it undeservedly, even while they deserve to be thrust down to the lowest hell; *Not for your sakes do I this, be it known unto you.*—It is free love, in that it is without *price*; he seeks nothing for what he gives, he takes nothing for it; nay, he deals with us as poor beggars that have nothing to offer for what he gives, and nothing wherewith to recompense his kindness, after he hath given.—It is free in opposition to all proper *terms* and *conditions*. Papists tell us of the merit of *congruity*, and the merit of *condignity*; and many ignorant protestants think they do enough when they exclude the word *merit*, but in the room of merit they bring in a world of *conditions*; and tell us, upon *condition* you do so and so, then God will do this and that to you; telling us, God hath made a covenant with us, not like the covenant of works, but upon easier terms, requiring only some little things accommodated to our weakness: "It cannot be called *merit*, "say they, for there is no proportion betwixt "what we do, and what we get; it is, say "they, but as if one should hold out a penny, "and get a kingdom for it." Many such subtile reasonings of men there are, that tend to exalt self, and self-righteousness, which would all evanish before the light of this very text, if viewed in a spiritual and evangelical manner. *He first loved us.*

4. *He first loved us*; it says, that his love is a *preventing* love; it prevents our love, and all the good that can be about us; for he prevents with the blessings of his goodness. I might here illustrate this by shewing, 1. The *object* of his love, whom he prevents. 2. The *time* of his love, when he prevents them. 3. The

dawning

dawning of his love upon them, whereby he prevents them. 4. The *fruits* and *effects* of his love in them, wherein he prevents them.

(1.) The *object* of his love, whom he prevents. If we view whom he loves, we cannot but see it to be preventing love. The love of God lighted upon fallen men, not fallen angels, though much more noble and spiritual beings; and why? even *because he hath mercy on whom he will have mercy:* his love falleth upon the poor, foolish, weak nothings of this world for ordinary; not upon the wise, noble, and mighty; *not many such are called;* he reveals these things to *babes*, not to the *wise* and *prudent* of the world. We must not think, that outward things, such as wisdom, and learning, and worldly advantages, move God to set his love upon any; *Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight:* yea, his love vents ordinarily upon the most stubborn and rebellious sinners in the world, more than upon the most civil and moral persons, that have led a better life than the generality of their neighbours; who have had more of the *righteousness of the law* than other people; who have been better-natured, in respect of their pleasant natural disposition, than others; and who have had a liberal education, so as to be trained up, not only in manifold arts and sciences, but in manifold religious duties from their childhood. Grace many times passes by such persons as these, and falls upon more knobby, rugged persons. The young man in the gospel may be put to say, *All these things have I done from my youth up*, and yet go away from Christ, when a bloody Manasses, and persecuting Paul are received into favour and mercy. In a word, whomsoever he makes the object of his manifested love in time, they are persons unworthy of his love; they are full of enmity against him, and bent to backsliding from him, and wofully averse from returning to him. That God should love sinners, and great sinners, O what preventing love is it!

(2.) The *time* of his love, when he prevents them, does also illustrate this. Many a time he make his grace to reach them, not when they are in their best frame or mood; but behold a Paul going to Damascus, with the knife in his hand, ready to cut the throats of the saints; grace out-runs him, seizes him, lays hold upon him, and the love of a God in Christ overcomes him; he is made Christ's prisoner, vanquished and brought to subjection. I do not say, that it always holds, that a person gets the revelation of grace, when going on in sin; but the first efflux of grace towards them is many times, when in a very bad case: the Lord arrests them, many times, when they have been about some wicked act of sin; the Lord will fall in at such a time upon their conscience, fill them with terror, and humble them under his mighty hand; and never leave them till he hath quickened them, and made them live; *When thou wast in thy blood, I said unto thee, Live.* But what need we say more concerning the time of his love, to show the preventing nature of it, than what God himself says, Rom. ix. 11. *Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated; the children being not yet born, neither having done good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth?* Before the man was born, or had done either good or evil, behold he is an object of divine love; *Jacob have I loved.*

(3.) The *dawning* of his love upon them, whereby he prevents them, may further illustrate this, *That he first loved us.* By this *dawning* of his love, I understand, not only the love and grace that is *objectively* displayed in the glorious gospel; but especially the first glimmering of the *subjective* light, or the dawning of the day of power, wherein the person is made willing when the gospel comes, *Not in word only, but in power;* when *he girds his sword upon his thigh*, even his *glory* and his *majesty*, as that word may be read, Psal. xlv. 3.; for the display of the glory of his grace and love, is the sword whereby he subdues and conquers his enemies: and till this *will-conquering day of power* take place, what is in the will but impotence and insufficiency, *to think any thing as of ourselves?* and not only impotency, but aversion from every thing that is good; and not only aversion, but opposition and contrariety to the holy nature and will of God; *The carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.* This *dawning* then of the day of power, to make them willing, must take place before there can be any gracious motion in the soul towards God; for all the legal conviction and humiliation that goes before this, works only from a principle of *self-love*, and *self-preservation*, till this great master-faculty of the soul, the *will* being conquered, carry the rest of the faculties of the soul towards God.

(4.) The *fruits* and *effects* of his love in them, wherein he prevents them. And here I will tell you some of these things that his love prevents, in regard that they are *fruits* of his love. And,

1. His love prevents our *holiness;* for that is a fruit of his love. I hope you know that sanctification and holiness is a work of God's free grace, and so an effect of his free love; and yet, I fear, you bewray your ignorance of the gospel in thinking, O must I not be holy before ever God love me? Must not a man be somewhat holy, and therefore God will love him, and give him more? O great ignorance to think so; *What hast thou but what thou hast received?* Is not the very first beginning of holiness from God? Is it not he that infuses the habit of grace, and *takes away the heart of stone, and gives the heart of flesh;* and so his love prevents our habitual holiness, and also our actual holiness, and all our good works? Surely you may know this; for you have learned to say, that as it is by his free grace, that *we are renewed in the whole man, after the image of God*, so it is by the same free grace that we are enabled *more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness.* If any good work, truly good, be wrought by you, is it not the fruit of God's creating power? *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus, unto good works.*

2. His love prevents our *faith;* for that is a fruit of his love. You will say, it is true, he must make us holy, but must we not come to him for it? Is it not upon condition that we believe, that he loves us, and saves us? My dear friends, whence is it that we get faith? If ever we have any true faith, is it upon the account of foreseen faith that God loves any man? that is rank Arminianism. Is it because we had faith before? O! does faith come out of our own shop? Or, is it spun out of our own bowels, and forged upon our own anvil?

Can we bring faith out of our own head or heart? Can *dry bones live*, or raise themselves out of the grave? Nay, it is as impossible for us to believe, and raise ourselves up to the life of faith, as it is for a carcase of clay to put life in itself; nay, is not faith the *gift of God?* Is not Christ the *author and finisher of faith?* Who says, *When I am lifted up, I will draw all men to me?* It requires the same power that raised Christ from the dead. O then! Let not your imagination in this matter cross the very first principles of religion, so as to think that your faith, if you have any, is the cause of *God's love*, while his love is the cause of your faith; *He first loved us.*

3. His love prevents our *repentance;* for that is a *fruit of his love:* Why, say you, must we not repent, and reform, before God set his love upon us? And ought we not, by the exercise of our common gifts and abilities that God hath given us, work up ourselves to something of this, in order to our obtaining the favour of God? Alas, for such ignorance, and such a gospel-darkening religion, as is like to come in fashion in this generation! O! is not repentance as much a *gift of God*, and fruit of his love, as any other graces and fruits of the Spirit? Acts v. 31. *Christ is exalted a Prince and a Saviour, by the right-hand of God, to give repentance to Israel, as well as remission of sin.* We have a great deal of noise made about the necessity of gospel-repentance before, and in order to justification, and that even as a condition and qualification; here is indeed a *new scheme* of divinity, of which there is no foundation in our *standards* of doctrine. It is true, *repentance* is so necessary, that none can expect pardon without it; and so say I, holiness and sanctification are so necessary, that none can expect pardon without them: but is therefore holiness and sanctification necessary in order to justification? I think it is hard to maintain this without running to Rome, and making sanctification before justification, and in order to it: for if actual gospel-repentance be not a part of sanctification, I know not what it is; yea, as described in our Catechism, it comprehends the whole of sanctification.——But to return; why, may one say, may we not repent of our sins, in some measure, and reform our lives, and humble ourselves, and mourn? At least, can we not shed a tear? Can we not leave off our tippling, and quit our lusts, and think upon death, judgment, and eternity, so as by the meditation of these we shall get ourselves wrought up to a strong and strange mortification to all things in the world; yea, become as eminent in this as any saint in all the country, for all their boasting? Well, much good may your repentance do you; and would to God that you were doing more than you do. But I would have you suspect your repentance; yea, I tell you assuredly, that even by the utmost use of the highest common gifts and graces, you cannot repent; and when you have brought yourself by these means to the greatest measure of legal repentance, yet there is no promise in all the Bible to that repentance; *For all the promises are yea, and amen, in Christ Jesus;* and till you get in to Christ, by a *faith of his operation*, your common legal repentance is a sinful repentance; *For whatsoever is not of faith, is sin;* and so it is a God-displeasing repentance; *For without faith, it is impossible to please God.* In a word, your repentance, which you so much magnify in your heart, for I suppose you are not so destitute of sense, as to speak thus before the world; this repentance, I say, is so far from disposing you for Christ, that it tends effectually to make you oppose Christ; why? you find heart-melting and mourning, tears and sorrows, great flashes and love-floods of affection, and then you think all is right; you see no more need of Christ, and come short of him, instead of being drawn into him. "A man in this case, as one fitly expresses it, is like one that comes to court a "lady; but having got a sight of the hand-"maid, he falls in love with her, courts her, "and marries her, who yet was but the person "that should have led him to the lady he was "proposing to match with: so here, Christ is "the match, the law and the duties thereof "are the hand-maid; well, thou falls to du-"ties, sorrowing for sin, and the like; you "have fallen in love with that, and seek no "further." Why, you will say, by this means you would have no preparatory work at all. It seems by this doctrine, say you, a man must come to Christ at the first leap, reeking out of his sins, before his life be reformed; nay, Sirs, I must tell you, in the Lord's name, that the design of a right preparatory work, is to force you out of your feigned repentance and reformation, and out of your false hopes and confidence, and to sweep away your refuge of lies: and if ever God prepare you for Christ, he will bring you to say, "O, I cannot repent, I can-"not reform, I cannot mourn; and give me a "world I cannot command a hearty sigh, or a "sob for sin: I can do nothing; I am hard like "a stone, and black like a devil; and unless "Christ help, I am utterly and eternally un-"done." And this tends to give the soul a great demonstration of the freedom of his love, that it prevents our repentance: *He first loved us.*

4. His love prevents our *prayers;* for that is also a fruit of his love. You will say, though we cannot attain to be holy, and cannot believe and repent, yet we must pray, and seek, or else we cannot get his favour and love. Wo is me that people should have such dark and dangerous notions of the method of salvation! Pray, whence comes your prayers, if they be worth the name of prayers? Do they not come from heaven, and from the *Spirit of grace and supplication?* If you have any desires that are worth the naming, they come from above: and if they come wholly out of your heart or head, they are not worth; yea, whatever desire you have out of Christ, and whatever prayer is not put up on this altar, *the name of Christ Jesus*, and by the help of the Spirit of Christ, there is no promise made to it: for, however several promises are made to God's ordinances and institutions, which oblige you to be about his hand in the use of the means; yet no promise is made to your performance out of Christ. Expect then no favour for, or upon the account of your duties; for if that be your way of doing, you need to pray that God may force you out of your prayers. Let none think now that I am discouraging any from the use of means, and the performance of duties; nay, I take witness, that, in God's name, I call you to the use thereof; and declare you are obliged thereto by the command and authority of Father,

Son,

Son, and Holy Ghoſt. But, in the ſame name, I call you to the right uſe of the means, the goſpel-uſe of the means; for that legal notion of praying and ſeeking, that I find for ordinary among people, as if their ſeeking would prevent God's love, and procure his favour, is derogatory to the goodneſs of God; and hath a tendency to make a Chriſt of their prayers, yea, more than a Chriſt; in regard it would be aſcribing a cauſality to our prayers, which is not even done to the merits of Chriſt in this matter: for, as I ſaid before, the love of God in itſelf, cannot be procured; Chriſt himſelf did not procure it; for God's love prevented Chriſt's miſſion, and ſent him to procure all that he did procure and purchaſe: and therefore, if you think your prayers will purchaſe God's love, you make more than a Chriſt of your prayers; and they are offenſive to God, diſhonouring to Chriſt, and prejudicial to your own ſouls. The ſaints themſelves know that it is not by their duties that they obtain his love; but in duty ſometimes they get a ſenſe of his love. Why, may ſome ſay, we need pray none at all, if we get no good by our prayers. Really, man, theſe prayers of yours, which you make your righteouſneſs, and for which you expect to be loved, and juſtified, and ſaved, they are the moſt abominable to God, and unprofitable to you, in the world. *To what purpoſe is the multitude of your ſacrifices? Therefore bring no more vain oblation: your incenſe is abomination to him; he cannot away with it, it is iniquity, even your ſolemn meeting*, Iſa. i. 11, 13. See Iſa. lxvi. 3. Therefore you have need to pray, that God would learn you the myſtery of prayer; for you will never find it a pleaſant, comfortable, and profitable exerciſe, while you ſet it before his love, as a cauſe of it; whereas it follows after his love as a fruit of it. Hence all that ever prayed to purpoſe, or wreſtled with him for the bleſſing, have found that they could not pray, more than they could move the earth from its centre, until his grace prevented their prayers; and they can all ſet their ſeal to that word, Iſa. lxv. 1. *I am found of them that ſought me not.* None ever ſought him aright, till free grace ſought them out, and found them in ſome reſpect.

Queſt. But is it not ſaid, Ezek. xxxvi. 37. *For theſe things will I be enquired of by the houſe of Iſrael?* True, betwixt gracious ſeeking, and finding, there is a certain connexion; for gracious and ſpiritual ſeeking preſuppoſes grace to ſeek, and that his love hath already prevented our prayers; and when he gives grace to ſeek, to be ſure he will give more and more, not for our ſeeking, but for the ſake of his promiſe in Chriſt Jeſus, and upon his account. But if we underſtand that word as an encouragement to all, whether gracious or graceleſs perſons, *For this will I be enquired of by the houſe of Iſrael*, then the meaning is not, *I will give you none of theſe things*, to wit, *the new heart, the new ſpirit*, there promiſed, and *the Spirit to be put within you;* I ſay, the meaning is not, I will give you none of theſe things, but for the ſake of your prayers, and till your prayers produce them; nay, that expoſition would be croſs to the very context, which ſays, *Not for your ſake do I this, O houſe of Iſrael; be it known to you, and be aſhamed, and confounded for your own ways:* you may be aſhamed of your prayers and duties, as well as your ſins and iniquities; and therefore it is not for the ſake of your perſons or prayers either, *be it known unto you;* and therefore the meaning of the word is, that as all Iſrael hath a right of acceſs to theſe promiſes; and all poor ſinners that hear tell of them, may come to a throne of grace, and plead for the accompliſhment of them to themſelves, in a way of free grace; ſo in the diligent uſe of all theſe means and ordinances of my appointment, they ſhall find, that I will yield myſelf exorable and eaſy to be entreated; and ſo it is an encouragement to prayer, in expectation that God will confer the promiſed bleſſings, and not that our prayers will obtain them; and therefore the more that a man turns ſuch a ſcripture to a covenant of works, as if he were upon terms with God, that upon condition that he pray and ſeek, God will give him the promiſed bleſſings; the more he does ſo, I ſay, the further is he from all theſe bleſſings; whereas the leſs hope and expectation that a poor ſoul hath from his prayers, he will always find, that he will come the more ſpeed.

In a word, the prayer you ſpeak of, man, is either a natural or a ſpiritual prayer; if it be a natural prayer, then, as the natural man is bound to pray, and yet hath nothing to expect, but of ſovereign free grace; ſo there is no connexion betwixt his prayer and the promiſe, unleſs we turn rank Arminians: If it be a ſpiritual prayer, then to be ſure, the promiſe hath prevented his prayer; for to ſay that none of theſe promiſes are given, till a man *pray in the Spirit* for them, is croſs to the whole current of ſcripture, and ſpiritual reaſon; for, how can a man pray in the Spirit till that promiſe be accompliſhed in ſome meaſure upon him, *I will put my Spirit within you?* Thus his love prevents our prayers, it prevents our deſires and endeavours: *He firſt loved us.*—And ſo much ſhall ſuffice for the firſt general head.

II. The *ſecond* thing propoſed was, to ſpeak of *believers love* to God and Chriſt; *We love him:* This is but a ſmall ſtream that flows from, and runs again to the ocean of his love. We may take up this love of the ſaints towards God in the following conſiderations.

1. We may conſider this love in its *nature.* It is not a ſpark of natural kindling; it is not from natural reaſon or common grace, no; it is from the ſaving operation of the Holy Ghoſt, circumciſing the heart to love God; *the fruits of the Spirit are faith, love,* and the reſt of the graces: it is altogether ſuper-natural; for the *natural mind is enmity againſt God:* we naturally hate God. Sirs, though the worſt perſon in the world will ſay they do not hate God, yet they really do it; and their hatred appears in their averſion from him and his ways, their oppoſition to his commands and counſels, their contempt of his promiſes, and neglect of his ſalvation, and his Chriſt; for *they will not come to him, that they might have life.* It is God's prerogative to turn the heart *from enmity to love, from darkneſs to light, and from the power of Satan unto God:* no man can turn himſelf more than the *Ethiopian can change his ſkin, or the leopard his ſpots*, Jer. xiii. 23. Men, by their improvement of their natural faculties, and by common grace, which moſt part of men have ſomething of, come to a ſermon, and go to their knees, carry with ſomewhat of morality and modeſty, but they are not able to command

command themſelves to love God; nay, duty is a burden; the word is a wearineſs to them; they are mad upon idols; they make *the Lord to ſerve with their ſin;* and their duties to ſerve as a covering to their luſts; and make uſe of duty for this, that they may be looked upon as good men, and not Atheiſts: but let them do their beſt, they cannot expel that curſed habit of enmity, nor introduce the contrary habit of love, till the power of God come along diſcovering the bounty and glory of Chriſt, and transforming the ſoul after the ſame image; for this love imports a ſaving knowledge of this glorious object beloved, a high eſteem of the object thus known, a hearty choice of him whom we thus eſteem, and a ſweet recumbency in this choice. The underſtanding is made to ſee, the judgment to eſteem, the will to chuſe, and the ſoul to acquieſce in him.—But theſe things I cannot enlarge upon.

2. We may conſider this love in the *kinds* of it. And here I would ſpeak only of two kinds in general, *namely*, a more *common*, and a more *ſpecial* love.

(1.) There is a more *common love*, which even hypocrites may have, and may have it as a fruit of God's Spirit in this common operation, while yet they are not renewed in the whole man. As they may have a temporary faith, ſo they may have a love proportioned to this. The ſeed of the word falls into the heart, as into ſtony ground, and it quickly ſprings up in ſome flaſhes of affection, and fair flouriſhes of a profeſſion, ſo as they may ſeem, to themſelves and others, to be among the beſt of Chriſtians, while yet it is not any ſpecial work of God's Spirit, but a common gift and grace. The Lord deſigns to tame and civilize ſome, as well as to ſave and convert others. Now, this love, however great and vehement it may be in appearance, yet it is but a land-flood: at the beſt it hath not a ſpring; it is nouriſhed as a pool of water, not as a well of water; the water which the Lord, gives to his people, it is *in them as a well of water, ſpinging up to everlaſting life*, John iv. 14. But the hypocrite's love is a *returning to the Lord*, but not with the *whole heart*. It is a love as is deſcribed in the Jews, *They ſerved the Lord, and they ſerved Aſhtaroth:* to pacify their conſciences, they will ſerve the Lord; but to ſatisfy their affections, they will ſerve their luſts: they never ſell their *all* for the *pearl of great price;* they never reſt upon him as their preſent, only, and greateſt good, nor find full ſatisfaction in him. They never come to that with it, *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none in all the earth that I deſire beſides thee.* There is ſomething beſide Chriſt that they deſire; they have ſome eſteem of him, when he ſmiles on them in his providences, when they get eaſe to their conſciences; and, by their falſe hopes of heaven, apprehend matters to be well-enough with them. But when the Lord begins to frown, and the courſe of his providence is turned, then their love is turned into hatred; and *the hatred wherewith they hate him, is greater than the love wherewith they loved him.* As John's hearers rejoice *in his light for a ſeaſon*, and but for a *ſeaſon;* and Chriſt's hearers cry this day, *Hoſanna*, and the next day, *Crucify him;* and, as *many people followed Chriſt for the loaves*, becauſe he fed them; ſo many ſtill follow Chriſt, ſome for outward things, and becauſe of his general merciful diſpenſations; yea, ſome for inward things: O, ſay they, ordinances are pleaſant; it is a ſweet thing to get a tear at a ſermon, and to be raviſhed with ſomething of the glory of heaven, and privileges of the ſaints: no doubt the joy with which the ſtony-ground hearers received the word, had its ſweetneſs and pleaſure, and thereupon their hearts are aloft, and they think they love Chriſt above all things; but yet their root is rottenneſs; they never truly come to Chriſt, to get reſt to their hearts and conſciences from the filth and guilt of ſin. But,

(2.) There is a *ſpecial love*, whereby the whole ſoul is carried out towards the Lord, as its chief, preſent, and only good, and whereby the ſoul ſees nothing in heaven or earth deſirable in compariſon of him; and that acts towards a preſent Chriſt, in rejoicing in him; and towards an abſent Chriſt, by lamenting after him: it acts by cleaving to him, when they have the greateſt temptations to go away, and it appears moſt when Chriſt threatens to depart; and it cleaves moſt to him, when many are departing from him; *To whom ſhall we go, thou haſt the words of eternal life.* It counts *all but loſs and dung for him:* Chriſt gets the throne of their hearts, the cream of their affections, the very ſoul of their ſouls, their moſt vehement love; whatever other things they love, it is but in a ſubordination to him; whatever other things they rejoice in, he is their chief joy; *I will go to the altar of God, to God my exceeding joy;* Pſal. xliii. 4. Their joy in him exceeds the joy that they have in any thing elſe in a world.

3. We may conſider this love in the *degrees* of it. I would not be for the breaking *a bruiſed reed, or quenching a ſmoaking flax;* my heart's deſire is, that all that love Chriſt, even in the weakeſt degree, if it be a ſpecial love, may go away rejoicing in him; therefore I tell you of theſe four degrees of this love.

(1.) There is a love of *deſire* after Chriſt, that is not yet arrived at a full complacency in him; *The deſire of our ſoul is to thy name*, ſays the Church. A poor creature may have a rooted deſire after Chriſt, that is not yet come the length of a rooted delight in him; becauſe through unbelief they queſtion their ſpecial intereſt in him: but *bleſſed are they that hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs; for they ſhall be filled.* If a gracious deſire after Chriſt be rooted in the ſoul, there is true love. Yea, further, this deſire hath ſeveral degrees alſo: ſometimes the deſire is like a *ſmoaking flax*, hardly can one diſcern the ſpark of red fire, only they ſee ſmoke as a ſign of fire; a *ſmoaking flax.*—This deſire may be ſtrangely *chocked*, ſometimes through the prevalence of unbelief: even the children of God, that have ſound and ſaving deſires, may become ſo heartleſs, as that they have no boldneſs to come to the Lord, and expreſs their deſires; all they can ſay is, that there is ſomething about the bottom of their heart of an earneſt wiſh, that the Lord would come to them, when they cannot come to him: all they can ſay is, *O, when will he come to me!* Or, *when will he give me a viſit! O, there is none in the world needs a viſit ſo much as I!*—Sometimes their deſires are more *vivid* and *lively*, more bright and ſhining, and break forth in ardent pray-

thee

ers and pantings of ſoul after him; *As the hart pants after the water brooks, ſo pants my ſoul after thee, O God: my ſoul thirſts for God, for the living God. With my ſoul have I deſired thee in the night, and with my ſpirit within me, will I ſeek thee early.*—Sometimes again their deſires become ſo *ſtrong*, as that the perſon is made to put on a reſolution, as David did, *I will neither give ſleep to mine eyes, nor ſlumber to mine eye-lids, till I find out a place for the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob. Lo, we heard of it at Ephrata, we found it in the fields of the wood*, Pſal. cxxxii. 4, 5, 6.—Their deſires may be ſuch as to make them *reſtleſs*, till they get their hearts made a fit habitation for him; they may be ſuch as to carry their ſouls aloft above all temporary enjoyments, and make them *mount up on wings as eagles;* and to look down upon all the enjoyments of time, and ſublunary comforts, as altogether contemptible. But then,

(2.) As there is a love of deſire, ſo of *delight* and *complacency*, whereby they take up their reſt and ſatisfaction in him, ſaying, *Though the fig-tree ſhould not bloſſom, nor fruit ſhould be found in the vine*, etc.; *yet will I rejoice in the Lord; I will joy in the God of my ſalvation.* Indeed, they that have found ſaving deſires after the Lord, are unſatisfied till their deſire be turned to delight, and till they attain this, *Whom having not ſeen we love; in whom, though now we ſee him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unſpeakable and full of glory.* When the Lord manifeſts himſelf to them, as reconciled in Chriſt, when he manifeſts his love to their ſouls, and opens the flood-gates of his Spirit's influences, O then they cannot but delight in him, and *be ſatisfied as with marrow and fatneſs;* for then they have a *feaſt of fat things, and of wines on the lees, well refined.* O ſenſualiſts, that never had a more pleaſant hour all your days, than when you ſat down to a hearty meal of meat or drink, you are but a miſerable creature; *There is meat to eat that you know not of, and joy that you intermeddle not with.* O the joy and triumph that there is in the enjoyment of a God in Chriſt; *Thanks be to God, which always cauſes us to triumph in Chriſt;* ALWAYS CAUSES TO TRIUMPH! It is true, the ſouls of believers may ſometimes wander from the Lord, even after they have experienced this enjoyment; and never more readily than on the back of a ſweet communion: their deſires may wander after other things; they may fall aſleep; they are not yet perfect, nor delivered from a body of death; and therefore after that, they may come under doubts, and great fears; and theſe may bring them very low, and may much alienate their hearts from the Lord; yea, but they are as the needle in the compaſs, that can never reſt or ſettle till it comes to the right point. They can never reſt till they get into his boſom again: they find their caſe a wilderneſs caſe, wherein they are wandering from mountain to hill, and therefore they ſay, *Return unto thy reſt, O my ſoul:* they are made again to return to him, and take more delight in him than ever; and, by delighting in him, get an earneſt-penny of heaven.

(3.) There is a love of *benevolence* and *good-will* towards Chriſt, and his intereſt in the world, that all his concerns in the world may go right, and *that no weapon formed againſt Zion may proſper.* By this love, all theſe things, whereby God makes himſelf known, his word, his ordinances, his people, his precepts, his truths, are precious. And to this we may join,

(4.) The love of *beneficence*, whereby they do all they can for the honour of Chriſt, the good of his church, the credit of his truths, and for bearing down every intereſt oppoſite to his. —But theſe things may perhaps fall under another head.

4. We may conſider this love in the *dimenſions* of it: as God's love towards his people hath *height, and depth, and length, and breadth*, ſo there is ſomething like dimenſions of that ſort in their love to him.

(1.) Their love is a *high* love, it hath a height; it is a tranſcendent love; they love him *above all things;* they love him *more than father or mother, ſiſter or brother, profit or pleaſure, credit or preferment; yea, doubtleſs, they count all things but loſs and dung in compariſon of him.* The language of their ſoul is, *None but Chriſt:* in all things he hath the pre-eminence.

(2.) Their love hath a *depth;* for it is rooted in the heart, and does not float in the fancy. The love of many is but like a thaw, that will ſometimes be on the face of the ground, by the heat of the ſun, while there is a hard froſt below in the earth; ſo their love is but ſuperficial, upon the ſurface of the ſoul; there is ſome thaw, but the heart is hard: true love hath a deep root.

(3.) Their love hath a *breadth:* they not only love his mercy and grace, but his faithfulneſs, juſtice, and holineſs: they love not only his covenant promiſes, but his kindly threatenings; not only his favourable providences, but alſo his fatherly chaſtiſements: they love every thing that hath any thing of God in it; his people, becauſe they are his image; his ordinances, becauſe they are his galleries: they love *the place where his honour dwells;* and every thing that hath a divine ſtamp and ſuperſcription.

(4.) Their love hath a *length* in it, as well as a height, and depth, and breadth. It is not like the hope of the hypocrite *that periſheth.* Their hope and love, who are hypocrites, is built upon an airy fancy and empty imagination; it is built upon ſand, and ſo it falls to the ground; but the believer's love is built upon the faith of the promiſe, and the faith of the love of God; it is built upon the rock of ages, and ſo the building ſtands. Some will have a love to a thing to-day, and quit it to-morrow; but love to Chriſt will never go quite out. It is true, their love is not always exerciſed, or always equal in its exerciſe; for ſometimes it is like a coal below the aſhes, yet all the power of hell cannot quench it; *for many waters cannot quench love:* it may be overtoped with the weeds of corruption, and out of view; *for the fleſh luſteth againſt the Spirit;* and the fleſh may be ſtrong, and the Spirit or grace weak, but ſtill the root remains, and ſhall grow up to perfection.

5. We may conſider this love in the *properties* of it. Some of them have been touched in the preceding heads, therefore, in ſhort,

(1.) True love to God in Chriſt is a *free* and *voluntary* love. Some people force themſelves up, as it were, to an eſteem for Chriſt, by uſing manifold arguments; and after all, it is but imaginary and mercenary love: they are not under

under the conſtraint of goſpel-grace, but the conſtraint of legal hope; expecting ſome reward for their love and ſervice: but here the perſon loves the Lord for himſelf, and ſerves him without legal compulſion or coaction; or by legal fears of hell, or legal hope of heaven. As he loves them freely, in oppoſition to merit, ſo they love him freely in oppoſition to legal compulſion.

(2.) True love is a *ſincere* love; *Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jeſus Chriſt in ſincerity.* It is a loving the Lord *with all the heart, ſoul, mind, and ſtrength*; it is hearty, and hath its abode in the inner chambers of the heart. It does not ly in the tongue or lip, or the outward profeſſion only, but in the heart, and affection, and ſoul of man.

(3.) True love is an *ardent* love: it is compared to *fire* that hath a moſt vehement flame: it is like fire for light; it is the diſcovery of Chriſt that makes the ſoul to love him, and it makes the man's *light to ſhine before men*, ſo as his heavenly Father is glorified. It is like fire for heat; it heats the breaſt, and warms the affections, and flames towards Chriſt when he is ſeen. It is like the fire for its conſuming quality; it conſumes luſts and corruptions; *Many waters cannot quench it*; no water of ſin, of affliction, of deſertion, or temptation.

(4.) True love is *active* love; it makes the ſoul to act for God, and for Chriſt, ſaying, O what ſhall I do for him? *What ſhall I render to the Lord for all his benefits?* It conſtrains to ſervices and ſufferings for Chriſt.

(5.) True love is an *uniting* love: it carries out the ſoul towards union and communion with God in Chriſt; he affects communion with him in his thoughts and meditations; *My meditation of him ſhall be ſweet.* Communion with him in his ordinances, communion with him in his grace, and communion with him in glory.

(6.) True love is a *ſolicitous* and *careful* love: it is careful to avoid whatever is offending to God, careful to provide whatever is pleaſing to him; careful and ſolicitous leſt it ſhould loſe his company; careful and ſolicitous to recover a ſight of him when he abſents himſelf.

(7.) True love is a *bold* and *venturing* love; it will adventure upon reproaches, perſecution, dangers, difficulties, yea, and death itſelf, for the ſake of the Lord Jeſus. When there are greateſt difficulties, true love will cleave moſt to Chriſt; when there is a general apoſtacy, true love will appear moſt for Chriſt, as the two witneſſes, Rev. xi. 3. When men make breaches upon the truth of God, the true lover of Chriſt will caſt himſelf into the breach, as Pergamus did, Rev. ii. 13. In a word, when love cannot ſtand in the breach, it will mourn for the diſhonour done to Chriſt, and weep in ſecret places for it. All theſe proceed from the invincible valour of love.

(8.) True love is a *perſevering* love: when faith and hope, in ſome reſpect, will carry us no further than the grave, love will go over the border of time, and remain in heaven for ever.

(9.) True love is a *conjugal* love, a marriage love: and as conjugal love is a *loyal* love; ſo is true love to Chriſt; it calls Jeſus LORD and KING: *He is thy Lord, and worſhip thou him*, Pſal. xlv. 11. As conjugal love is a *chaſte* love; ſo true love to Chriſt cannot endure a rival; it allows no mate, no luſt, no Delilah, to come in Chriſt's room, without the utmoſt abhorrence. As conjugal love is a *reverential* love; ſo true love to Chriſt carries towards him with holy fear and reverence, and filial regard. And as a congugal love is a *fruitful* and *fruit-bearing* love; ſo true love to Chriſt is a love that bears fruit to him; *Ye are dead to the law by the body of Chriſt, and married to another, even to Chriſt, that ye might bring forth fruit unto God.* Again,

(10.) True love is an *aſſimilating* love; it changes the perſon in whom it is, into the image of the glorious and beloved object, and makes him deſire, above all things, to be like unto Chriſt; ſaying, O, to be holy! O, to be free of ſin! O, to be full of God! O, to be conform to the image of Chriſt! yea, the more love, the more likeneſs.

(11.) In a word, ſometimes it is an *extatical* love, as if the man were beſide himſelf, and out of himſelf: hence that proverb, *Amantes, Amentes*; like that of the apoſtle, *If we be beſide ourſelves, it is to God*, 2 Cor. v. 13. It carries the ſoul out of itſelf, ſaying with the church, *The voice of my beloved, behold he comes*: it is an abrupt kind of ſpeech, like that of a perſon tranſported, raviſhed, and in a rapture; *The voice of my beloved, behold he cometh*: ſometimes there is a ray of glory, a bright glance of the ſun of righteouſneſs.

6. We may conſider this love in the *effects* of it.

(1.) This love vents itſelf in *prayer* and *ſupplication*; *O God, thou art my God, early will I ſeek thee*, Pſalm lxiii. 1.

(2.) It vents itſelf in *praiſe* and *commendation*; *My beloved is white and ruddy, the chief among ten thouſand*, Cant. v. 10.

(3.) It vents itſelf in *wonder* and *admiration*; *Behold what manner of love the Father hath beſtowed upon us, that we ſhould be called the ſons of God.*

(4.) It vents itſelf in *obedience* and *obſervation* of his law; *If you love me, keep my commandments.*

(5.) It vents itſelf in *hatred* of ſin, and *every* falſe way; *Ye that love the Lord, hate evil.*

(6.) It vents itſelf in loving *every thing* that belongs to God. And this might lead me to ſhew how,

7. We may conſider this love in the *object* of it, and in the *extent* of its object: why, the true lover of Chriſt, he loves a whole Chriſt.

(1.) He loves him in his *perſon*, as he is the *brightneſs of the Father's glory, and the expreſs image of his perſon*, Heb. i. 3.

(2.) He loves him in his *natures*, as he is God-man; IMMANUEL, *God with us.*

(3.) He loves him in his *offices*; as he is a Prophet, to take away his darkneſs; a Prieſt, to take away his guilt; and a King, to take away his ſin; and to ſubdue his luſts.

(4.) He loves him in his *relations*; as he ſtands related to God, being his eternal Son; as he ſtands related to the covenant, being the Mediator, Witneſs, Surety, and Teſtator, and all of it; and as he ſtands related to his church, being their Head and Huſband, and all relations to them. You ſee what a large field I might here go through.

(5.) He loves him in his *righteouſneſs*, both active and paſſive, as having fulfilled the law, and ſatisfied the juſtice of God in our room.

(6.) He loves him in his *merit* and *purchaſe*; he

he loves him in his Spirit and grace; he loves him in his commands, promiſes, and comforts; he loves him in his work and wages; he loves him in his miniſters and people; he loves him in his goſpel and ordinances; he loves him in his crown, honour, and glory; he loves him in his croſs, his reproach, and ſuffering; he loves him in every thing about him, and eſpecially in himſelf, as being *altogether lovely*. And this leads to another conſideration.

8. We may conſider this love in the *grounds* of it. Indeed it is a God in Chriſt they love: more particularly, if you aſk, what are the grounds of the ſaints love to Chriſt? Why,

(1.) Their love to him is grounded upon his *worth*, *beauty*, and *excellency*; the ſoul loves him, becauſe of his own amiable excellency. When the ſoul gets a view of Chriſt's own beauty, and of the glory of God in him, his power, wiſdom, holineſs, grace, mercy, and other properties, his heart is raviſhed with love within him. O the thoughts of his worth, and his fulneſs of grace and good-will is overcoming! *Becauſe of the ſavour of thy good ointments, thy name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love thee*, Song i. 3.

(2.) Their love to him is grounded upon his *undertaking* for them, and accompliſhing that undertaking: they love him becauſe of what he did undertake from eternity, and perform in time; *Who loved me, and gave himſelf for me!* They love him, becauſe he put himſelf in their nature, for their good: they love him, becauſe he put his name in their debt-bonds and bills: they love him, becauſe he put their names in his laſt-will, and in the book of life: they love him, becauſe he put his Spirit, his nature, and his Father's image into them.

(3.) Their love to him is grounded upon his *Father's love* to him, and ſatisfaction in him; *The Lord is well-pleaſed for his righteouſneſs ſake*, ſaying, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleaſed*. And, O but Chriſt be deſervedly the object of the ſaints love, becauſe he is the object of the Father's love, who loves him, both as he is his Son, and as he is our Surety; and therefore as the ſum of all,

(4.) Their love to him is grounded upon his love to them; *We love him, becauſe he firſt loved us*. This leads me to

III. The *third* general head, *viz.* The *influence* that his love hath upon theirs as the cauſe of it. And here I would, 1. Clear and demonſtrate it, that his loving us is the *cauſe* of our loving him. 2. Enquire what *influence* his love hath upon ours.

1. As to the firſt of theſe, to clear this point, we would offer the following conſiderations.

(1.) Conſideration is, That a natural man, that looks upon God, can never have a heart-love to him, whatever he pretends. It is true, many fancy God loves them, and pretend they have a love to him, like ſome in the church of Epheſus, who ſaid, they *were apoſtles, and were not, but were found liars*; ſo many pretend they know God, and love him, who yet *in works deny him*; and by their practice are found liars; and the viſion of their heads is like to end in utter darkneſs. It is true alſo, that all that have a love to God, have not the full aſſurance of God's love to them: ſome may live under his frowns, who yet are in a ſtate of favour; there may be ſome true love, where yet there is but little joyful aſſurance; yet, I ſay, theſe who have no faith at all of God's love in Chriſt, but look upon God as an implacable enemy, they can have no hearty love to him; nay, conſcience of guilt, and fear of wrath make them run away from God as an enemy; the ſpirit of ſlaviſh fear, which all awakened ſinners are naturally poſſeſt of, till God ſhew them his love and favour in Chriſt, will rather harden men in their enmity, than melt them into love. If there were nothing but the terror of the Lord to be known, converſion would be impoſſible.

(2.) Conſideration is, That the greater the ſenſe of God's love in Chriſt is, the ſtronger will our love to him be. Hence there are ſuch different degrees of love to God among the ſaints, and even in the ſame ſaints, or believers, at ſeveral ſeaſons, according as they have more or leſs of the comfortable apprehenſion of the love of God in Chriſt: for, although the love of God be not variable, yet our views and apprehenſions of it are. Every believer hath his dark and gloomy days, as well as his bright and pleaſant days; and the leſs ſenſible views he hath of God's love and favour, the more ſenſible deadneſs in duty, and decay of love to God takes place. When the believer wants the faith of God's love, his wings are clipt; but when his heart is fraughted with a large meaſure of the faith of God's love, then he *mounts up on wings as an eagle*; then the love of Chriſt *conſtrains him*; and his heart *is enlarged to run the way of God's commandments*.

(3.) Conſideration, That the love of God diſcovered, breaks the power of all theſe things that hinder our love to him. Is ſelf-love a ſnare to keep us from the love of God? Well, a diſplay of God's love breaks the power of ſelf-love. When Job got a diſcovery of the glory of God's grace, then *he abhors himſelf*. When we know that God is *pacified towards us*, it makes us *loath and abhor ourſelves*, Ezek. xvi. 63. A ſinner is never ſo odious in his own ſight, as when he is perſuaded of his being precious in God's ſight. Does the flattery of the world allure men from the love of God? Well, but the diſplays of God's love make *the world to be crucified to us, and us to the world*. Chriſt's love diſcovered obſcures all the ſeeming glory of the world, as the ſun darkens the leſſer lights, and as the works of nature ſpoil the reputation of the works of art. Do the frowns of the world ſcar us from the love of God and his way? Well, but the diſplay of God's love to us is a noble ſecurity againſt this temptation; for little matter, who be againſt us, if God be for us; *His loving-kindneſs is better than life*: therefore, though the rage of men ſhould reach our lives, yet what compariſon is betwixt the breath of our noſtrils, and the favour of an eternal God? We do not love God in Chriſt, becauſe we do not know him; but when his love is diſplayed, then he is known in the light of the Spirit, *As a Spirit of wiſdom and revelation in the knowledge of Chriſt*: the Spirit comes as a Spirit of light; and thus the love of God is *ſhed abroad upon the heart by the Holy Ghoſt*.

(4.) Conſideration, When God diſplays his love, he at the ſame time transforms the ſoul to whom he diſcovers himſelf, and makes it a new creature. Now, the new nature is a grateful and loving nature: depraved nature may reward evil for good, and hatred for love; but

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it is not ſo with the new nature, it natively renders love for love; it is native to the ſoul upon the diſcovery of God's love, his everlaſting love, to be conſtrained to his ſervice and obedience; *If you love me, keep my commandments.* Now, this love, that is the product of God's love, is virtually all obedience; and therefore love is ſaid to be the *fulfilling of the law*: and when loves takes place, *his commandments are not grievous*, but pleaſant; yea, when the love of God is in the heart, then the *law of God is in the heart.* But then,

2. To enquire more particularly what *influence* God's love hath upon ours: *We love him, becauſe he firſt loved us:* our love is juſt the reflex of his, as the ſun ſhining upon a glaſs. Why, how does his love to us influence our love to him? (1.) It hath a *moral* influence, in point of *motive.* (2.) A *phyſical* influence, in point of *power.*

(1.) It hath a *moral influence*, in point of *motive;* and ſo it is the moral cauſe of our love; the incentive, the argument. What will move us to love, if the diſplay of this infinite love does it not? We cannot but love ſuch a good God, who was firſt in the act and work of love; that loved us when we were both unloving and unlovely; that loved us at ſuch a rate, as to ſeek and ſollicite our love at the expence of his Son's blood. O amazing love! Is there any motive can be ſtronger to engage us to love him again? Shall not the love of Chriſt conſtrain us to love him again? What in all the world will endear a ſoul to God, if the love of God do it not?—So much as we ſee of the love of God, ſo much we love him, and delight in him, and no more. Every other diſcovery of God without this, will but make the ſoul to flee from him. If the faith and apprehenſion of his free love, of his antient love, his antecedent love, his preventing love, ſuch as I have ſpoken of, be no motive or argument to influence us to love him, there is no argument in the world will prevail.

(2.) It hath a *phyſical influence*, in point of power; and ſo it is not only the moral, but the productive cauſe. There is a power in his love that conquers, captivates, and overpowers the man, ſo that he cannot but love: God's love hath a generative power; our love is brought forth by his love, James i. 18. *Of his his own will begat he us;* that is, of his own free *love* and *good-will.* Divine love makes ſuch an impreſſion, that it inſtamps love upon the ſoul. As his love hath a generating power, ſo it hath a creating power; his love infuſes and creates love in the perſon. Beloved, it works good in the man, that is the object of it: his power and will are commenſurate; what he wills, he works; and when the time of love or of manifeſting love comes, the time of power comes; *Thy people ſhall be willing in the day of thy power.* His love hath a conſtraining power; *The love of Chriſt conſtrains us*; and his love hath a drawing power; *I have loved thee with an everlaſting love; therefore with loving-kindneſs will I draw thee.* He draws with *the cords of love*, and thereby draws the heart towards him *in love:* and hence never a ſoul taſted the ſweetneſs of his everlaſting love, but at the ſame time he felt the power of it warming the heart, and kindling a fire of love there. O how does his mighty love break the power of their mighty enmity! Was ever pardoning mercy and love intimated, but the pardoned ſoul behoved to read the pardon with tears of joy; and *to love much when much was forgiven?* Can they chuſe but love him, *Who are the called according to his purpoſe of love?* Rom. viii. 28.—*We love him, becauſe he firſt loved us.*

IV. The *fourth* general head, was the *application.* Is it ſo, that God's love to his people is the ſource and cauſe of their love to him? Then we may apply it for *information;* and,

1. Hence ſee the difference betwixt *God's love* to the *ſaints*, and the *ſaints love* to *God.* It is true, their loves agree in ſeveral things: his love to them is a love of complacency, he delights in them; and their love to him is a love of complacency, they delight in him: he loves them in Chriſt, and they love him in Chriſt; but yet vaſtly great is the difference betwixt his love and theirs. 1. His love is *eternal*, their love is but of *yeſterday's date.* 2. His love is the *original cauſe*, their love is the *native effect* of his. 3. His love is an *antecedent love*, it goes before theirs, as the father loves the child when the child knows not the father, much leſs loves him; yea, they are by nature haters of God. And ſurely all muſt begin on his ſide; *Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that God loved us:* yea, his love not only goes before our love, but before every thing that is lovely in us; *God commends his love towards us, in that while we were yet ſinners, Chriſt died for us.* Sin imports all unlovelineſs and undeſireableneſs that can be in a creature; yet he loves: but then our love is a *conſequential* love. 4. His love being free and eternal is always *equal* and *unchangeable*; for, *The Strength of Iſrael is not a man that he ſhould repent;* but our love to him is *unequal* and *changeable*, up and down: his love is like the ſun, always the ſame in its light, though a cloud may ſometimes interpoſe; our love is like the moon, hath its waxings and weanings: his love, I ſay, is like the ſun, always the ſame in its light. It is true, as the ſun is ſometimes under a cloud; ſo the fruits and manifeſtations of God's love may change; now he ſhines, now he hides his face, as it may be moſt for our profit; but ſtill his love in itſelf is the ſame. Whatever changes affect the ſaints, whether as to ſin or ſuffering, yet God's love to them is unchangeable. Why, were it not blaſphemy to ſay, that God loves his people in their ſinning, as well as in their ſtricteſt obedience? If ſo, who will care to ſerve him more? To which it might be replied, The love of God in itſelf is no more changeable than God himſelf; and what then? Loves he his people in their ſinning? by no means; he loves his *people*, not their *ſinning.* Alters he his love to them? No; not his love, but the diſcoveries of his love: he ſmites them, rebukes them, and fills them with a ſenſe of indignation. But wo would be to us if he changed in his love: nay, *He is God, and changes not; therefore the ſons of Jacob are not conſumed.* Theſe very things which ſeem to be demonſtrations of the change of his affection, do as clearly proceed from love to them, even his chaſtiſements, as any other diſpenſations. Well, but will not this encourage to ſin? "O ſure he never taſted, as one "ſays, of the love of God, that can ſeriouſly "make this objection." The *doctrine* of grace may be turned into *wantonneſs*, but the *principle* of grace cannot. His love, I ſay, being free, eternal,

eternal, and preventing love, is in itself always equal and unchangeable; but our love to God is an ebbing and flowing love. We are scarce a day at a stand. This hour we may be at this, *Though all men forsake thee, yet will not I!* and yet the next hour at this, *I know not the man.* When was ever the time that our love was equal one day to an end?

2. Hence see the difference betwixt *justification* and *sanctification;* and the *priority* of justification to sanctification: We may here notice the difference betwixt the one and the other. Many are the differences betwixt them, but I confine myself to what the text imports. 1. In justification, *God loves us*, and shews his love in Christ; in sanctification, *we love God*, and shew our love to him: for the comprehensive sum of active holiness is love, *Which is the fulfilling of the law.* 2. In justification, we have the *favour of God;* in sanctification, we have the *image of God;* and the special part of his image is love. 3. In justification, we are *passive*, as when God set his love upon us; but in sanctification, we are *active*, while his love causes us to act in loving him. 4. Justification is God's *act* of love *without us*, in and through the merit and righteousness of Christ *imputed* to us; sanctification is God's *work* of grace *within us*, by the Spirit of Christ *imparted* to us as a Spirit of love, as well as of other graces. 5. Justification is *perfect*, *equal*, and *always* the same, like the love of God, the original cause, and the righteousness of Christ the meritorious cause of it; but sanctification is *imperfect*, *unequal*, and *changeable;* for the love of the saints, as I said, is up and down. 6. Justification is the *cause;* sanctification the *effect;* even as God's love is the cause of our love. 7. *Faith* in justification is an *instrument* receiving Christ, *as the Lord our righteousness*, and apprehending the love and mercy of God in him; but faith in sanctification is an *agent*, employing Christ *as the Lord our strength*, to enable us to manifest our love to him. Thus we see the priority of divine love and favour, and acceptation and justification before any work of ours; and so, how any can maintain, that actual gospel-repentance (which must be a work of ours, and a piece of sanctification at least) doth go before, and is necessary in order to justification, let the judicious consider, without receding from our standards, and binding their faith to the belt of any fallible creatures, councils, or acts. That *legal repentance*, or humiliation and conviction, and sense of sin, does go before justification, in order of *divine operation*, is plain; and that habitual sanctification, or regeneration, and the infusing of all grace into the soul, is also previous, is not denied: But that *gospel-repentance*, or any part of actual sanctification, is necessary in order to justification and pardon, I do not see how it is possible to maintain that, without running into the Roman camp, and fighting with popish weapons, and inverting the order of our text, making any part of our love to God necessary *first* in order to God's *loving us*. But sure God's method of doing will stand in spite of hell and earth: *We love him, because he first loved us.*

3. Hence we may see, that as the persuasion that is in the nature of faith lies in the apprehension of the love and mercy of God in Christ to a man's self in particular; so this doctrine of faith does not *make void the law*, but *establish and fulfil it*, if we consider love as *the fulfilling of the law;* for the language of this text, when read in the singular number is, *I love him, because he first loved me; He first loved me*, there is faith's apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ. It is true, a believer may say, I know not whether he loved me or not; but sure I am it is not his faith that says so, but unbelief; but the stronger that his faith is, to be sure the more will he be able to say, *He loved me;* and the more he can say this, the more can he say the other also, *I love him:* and there is obedience, gospel-obedience, the obedience of faith, which is a loving obedience; for the law of Christ is a law of love: it is blasphemy against the love of God to reproach it, as a mother of licentiousness, and a nurse of carnal security. They that have the love of God in their eye, can take no encouragement from thence to sin; for sin tends to cloud that light wherein they rejoice. If it were possible for a believer to think that God loves him, and thereupon should take encouragement to sin, then I am bold to say, it is not the faith of God's operation takes place at that time with him, but only a fancy, and a strong temptation of Satan, working upon that fancy: for a true faith of God's love, brings holiness, love, and obedience along with it, as natively as the rising-sun brings light. God's love of bounty displayed, does as natively bring in our love of duty, as it is natural for the fire to bring heat. Is it possible that God's communicating his thoughts of peace to a child will embolden him to new acts of treason? No; if the sense of God's love did not wear off, and security and unwatchfulness wear on, the believer's love would always be flaming in the fire of God's love. They have no experience of the love of God, who think that the discovery thereof would give them a licence to transgress.

4. Hence we see, that as the believer is perfectly free from vindictive wrath, from the curse and penal sanction of the law, so his *gospel-obedience* is not influenced by *slavish fear of hell*, but by the *love of God.* How can the man that is actually justified, and *accepted in the Beloved*, and so the actual object of God's everlasting, unchangeable love, ever fall under his vindictive wrath, which is the threatening and sentence of the law as a covenant of works? And, how can the believer that is obliged to believe this love, be ever obliged to serve from a fear of hell and vindictive wrath? That he may, through unbelief, apprehend God's vindictive wrath, and fear to be thrown into hell, is plain from common experience; but that the *fear of hell* should be either a *gospel-grace*, or a *believer's duty*, is some of the *new divinity* of our day. Filial child-like fear, which is the believer's duty at all times, is every way consistent with love, yea, supposes and imports the faith of God's fatherly love; but slavish fear of hell, and vindictive wrath, excludes and opposes it. See the context, ver. 18. *There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out* (slavish and tormenting) *fear.*

5. Hence we may see, the difference betwixt the *covenant of works* and the *covenant of grace.* The order of the covenant of works is, in some respect, quite cross to the order here set down in our text; for, in the covenant of works, our love of duty was first to take place; and after that God's love of bounty, as the reward of our

our perfect love and obedience, according to the old covenant paction; whereas, in the covenant of grace, God firſt ſhews his love of bounty, and then follows our love of duty. Never does the ſoul turn his affections towards God, if the heart of God be not firſt ſet upon him. Herein differ works in the new covenant, (for love, as I ſaid before, is the ſum of all work and obedience) from works in the old covenant. In the legal covenant, our love and work is firſt, and then God's favour and juſtification; but in the goſpel-covenant, God's love and favour in juſtification is firſt, and then our love and obedience follows. As the ſame day that the waters went off from the earth, and were gathered into the ſea, the earth was adorned with graſs and flowers, and was fruitful; ſo when the deluge of wrath goes off from the conſcience, and the favour of God appears in juſtification, then it is preſently adorned with the graces of the Spirit, and love among the chief of them, ſpringing up: whatever other motive engages to obedience here, yet love is the moſt prevalent motive; and here gratitude influences to obedience. In a word, the covenant of works was properly conditional to us, but the covenant of grace, however conditional to Chriſt, who hath performed the whole condition in his obedience to the death, yet to us it is abſolutely free and unconditional. Upon what condition have we God's love and favour? Does not his love prevent all conditions? *He firſt loved us:* his love prevents the true proper condition itſelf, namely, Chriſt's obedience; for his love ſent him to perform the ſame, much more does it prevent all that men call conditions. O! how far is our obedience, even the obedience of faith, from having any cauſality, or proper federal conditionality in obtaining ſalvation, ſeeing our imperfect love and obedience here is not the cauſe, but the effect of God's love and favour partly diſplayed, and our perfect love and obedience in heaven will be the effect of the full viſion of his glorious grace in heaven, *Where we ſhall be like him, becauſe we ſhall ſee him as he is?*

6. Hence we may ſee the blaſphemy of theſe who ſay, they are *believers in Chriſt*, and yet are not *lovers of God;* and who pretend to believe the grace of God, and yet *turn his grace to laſciviouſneſs*, by continuing in enmity againſt him, and diſcover their enmity by their ungodly practices; *The grace of God, that brings ſalvation, teaches us* quite the contrary; what the law teaches preceptively, the goſpel teaches effectively, *viz. To deny ungodlineſs, and worldly luſts, and, to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly*, Tit. ii. 11, 12. She is not the ſpouſe of Chriſt, but an adultereſs, that impudently abuſes his love. They can have no true evidence of God's love to them, who have no love to him; for our love to him is the native reſult of his love to us; *We love him, becauſe he firſt loved us.* The love of God diſcovered, knocks down the natural enmity, which is the root of all diſobedience; and influences to love, which is the ſum of all obedience.

7. See hence the *eminent privilege* of the *ſaints*, whatever low thoughts the world may have of them. It is an honour to ſtand in the preſence of princes, though but as ſervants; what honour then have all the ſaints to ſtand with boldneſs in the preſence of God, and enjoy his boſom-love? The queen of Sheba pronounced a bleſſing on the ſervants of Solomon, who ſtood before him and heard his wiſdom; how much more bleſſed are they who ſtand continually before the God of Solomon, hearing his wiſdom and enjoying his love? As they are happy, ſo they are ſafe. Here is a ſafe and ſweet retreat to the ſaints in all the trials, reproaches, and miſrepreſentations they undergo in the world. When a child is abuſed in the ſtreet by ſtrangers, he runs with ſpeed to the boſom of his father; there he makes his complaint, and is comforted. In all the hard *cenſures* and *tongue-perſecutions* which the ſaints meet withal in the ſtreets of the world, they may run to their Father, and be comforted; his love can counterbalance all the world's frowns. O! how are they privileged beyond all the hypocritical world! Hypocrites, for the moſt part, cannot be known or differenced from ſaints, in regard of their external duty and enjoyment; but while they are living in the love of their luſts, the ſaints are ſweetly wrapt up in the boſom of God's love; they have this meat to eat, and refreſhment in the banqueting-houſe, wherein others have no ſhare.

8. Hence ſee where it is we may get our *enmity killed*, and our *love quickened;* it is even in the love of God. What is the reaſon that the world have no love to God? Why, they cannot believe his love and good-will through Chriſt; and ſo they live in enmity. What is the reaſon that believers have ſo little love to God? Even becauſe their faith of his love is ſo weak. It is by faith we know *that God is in Chriſt reconciling the world to himſelf;* it is by faith *we ſee the King in his beauty*, and ſo cannot but love him; it is by faith that *we hear his voice*, and underſtand his words of grace, and ſay; *It is the voice of my Beloved:* it is by faith we embrace the *promiſes*, which are ſo many meſſages of love: it is by faith we *receive out of Chriſt's fulneſs, grace for grace;* or, as the word may be rendered, *Love for love.* Faith breaks the ſhell of the promiſe, and then eats the kernel of God's love and grace that is there. Faith is the bucket wherewith we draw, Chriſt is the well, God is the fountain, and love is the water that we draw: O! what get you in Chriſt, poor ſoul, whenever you go to him? Can you not ſay, O, I get more love to God than I had! I never approached near him but I got a large draught and ample fill of love to God; *Out of his fulneſs, we receive grace for grace*, and love for love. In a word, by faith we *behold the glory of the Lord as in a glaſs, and are changed into the ſame image;* and the image of God is love. O then, the little faith that takes place in our day, makes little love to God and his people; faith and love are like twins that are born together, and live and die together. Go to the root of all our backſlidings, and you will find it unbelief; *An evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.*

Uſe of *examination.* Try your ſtate by this doctrine, whether or not you be in a ſtate of favour with God, and the objects of his love in a ſpecial manner. How ſhall I know, if he hath loved me? You may know it by that fruit and evidence of it in the text: if he hath manifeſted his love ſavingly to you, then you will love him, becauſe he hath loved you.

QUEST. *How ſhall I know, if I have that love to him, that is the fruit and effect of his firſt loving me?*

Anſw.

Answ. 1*st*, If your love to him be such as is the fruit of his love to you, then you have been convinced of your *natural enmity*, and that you never had any love, nor could have it, unless the Lord in love had, in some measure, manifested himself in his grace. Many speak of their loving God all their days, as if it were natural for them to love God; poor creatures, they never saw or considered, that they were born with a dagger of enmity in their hearts against God. These that truly love him have seen their want of love, and something of the power and strength of their enmity; and got it, in some measure, broken in a day of power.

2*dly*, If you have such love to him, as is the fruit of his love to you, then you have seen his *glory*, and particularly the glory of his grace, and love to draw out your love towards him: *Shew me thy glory*, says Moses to God; *yea*, says God, *I will make all my goodness pass before thee.* His goodness and his love is his glory. If you have seen his glory, surely you *count all things but loss and dung, in comparison of him.*

3*dly*, If you have such love, as is the fruit of his love, then his *loveliness* and *excellency* hath engaged you to *chuse* him; to chuse himself, for your God; his Christ, for your husband; his covenant, for your charter; his precepts, for your rule; his people, for your companions; his purchase, for your jointure; his Spirit, for your guide; his promise, for your cordial; his glory, for your aim. If you have chosen him thus, and resolve to abide by your choice, it is a fruit of his chusing you from eternity: *You have not chosen me* first, *but I have chosen you.*

4*thly*, If you have such love to him, as is the fruit of his loving you, then it is the *faith* of his love, that, in a special manner, will influence you to obedience, in all the duties of religion; *If you love me, keep my commandments:* yea, the faith of his love will influence you to such a love to him, as will bring forth all the fruits of true love. And here I will tell you some of the fruits of true love to God, by which you may try your love to him.

1. One fruit of true love is this; true love will make you *love* to be with him on *earth*, and *long* to be with him in *heaven.*

(1.) On the one hand, true love will make you love to be with him on *earth*; and this love will make you rejoice when he is present, saying, *O! my soul shall rejoice in God my Saviour:* and it will make you lament when he is absent, saying, *O that I knew where I might find him!* You will love to be with him in your *desire*, saying, *He is the desire of all nations*, and the desire of my *soul.* You will love to be with him in your *delight*, saying, *A bundle of myrrh is my beloved to me, he shall ly all night betwixt my breasts.* You will love to be with him in your *walk* and *conversation*, desiring *to have your conversation in heaven*, and to walk with him. You will love to be with him in your *esteem*, saying, *Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none in earth that I desire beside thee.* You will love to be with him in your *thoughts* and *meditations*, saying, *My meditation of him shall be sweet.* You will love to be with him in your *duties* and *performances*, in reading and hearing, and singing, in communicating, in praying. You will love to be with him, and to have him with you: particularly to be with him in prayer, is the most frequent thing with the believer: how does he love to embosom himself to his God! The Legalist may do the duty, but to be with Christ in it, is what he is not much taken up with; the believer is taken up with prayer, as a mean of communion with God. O! I cannot stay away from him, though he shut the door upon me, *and cover himself with a cloud, that my prayer cannot pass through*; I cannot be absent from him. It is one of the main things that makes earth tolerable to the believer, that he hath sometimes access to God, in Christ, by the Spirit in prayer. If it were not for some sweet meetings that he hath with the Lord this way, he would even be crying, O what a weary place is this earth! O let me out of it! I say, the true lover loves to be with God, and to have God with him. How does he love to have God with him, by his sanctifying grace, by his enlightening, enlarging, enlivening, and comforting grace? True lovers love one anothers company. And,

(2.) As the true lover of Christ loves to be with him here, so on the other hand, he *longs* to be with him *hereafter.* O to be in the place of perfect love, where there will be an eternal emanation of the love of God! O to be in the place of perfect likeness to Christ! *For when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.* Though they are reconciled to his will, and made content to abide here, while he pleases, yet they are even longing for that day, when they shall have the immediate fruition of him, and be delivered from all sin: they *desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, which is best of all.* A carnal man may say, O to be out of an evil world! but the heart of the true lover says, *O to be with Christ!* It is true, when the believer's love is in fresh exercise, he will even sometimes be willing to abide in this world, notwithstanding of all the troubles and trials that are in it, if so be he may glorify God in it; whether by suffering for him, or giving a testimony against sin, and for the truth and honour of the Lord Jesus. O! if I may be of any use to any of thine; if I may be of any service to thy Majesty, and glorify thee by doing or suffering; if thou wilt help me to serve and honour thee in my life, let me even beg from door to door in the wilderness; through grace I will chearfully endure any trouble, and *glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.* This submission is not inconsistent with his longing to be with the Lord.—Thus, I say, true lovers of God, they love to be with him on earth, and long to be with him in heaven.

2. True love will make you long to be *like him*, saying, *O to be holy, as God is holy! O to be conform to the image of his Son! O to be like unto Christ!* Indeed, the man that hath most of the image of God, will readily see himself the most unlike to him; and look upon himself as the most unholy person on earth. O! my understanding is like a dark dungeon, my will is like a devil, and my heart like a hell; and yet something of the light of God it is that thus discovers him to himself, so unlike to God; and something of the love of God it is that makes him love to be like him, and desire above all things to be quit of sin, which is the devil's image, and to be endued with holiness, which is God's image.

3. True love will make you love to *live upon him:*

him: you will love to live upon God the *fountain of living water;* and love to live upon Chriſt, *for wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification, and redemption.* The lover of God is one that loves to *live by faith on the Son of God; To him to live is Chriſt:* Chriſt is the *Alpha* and *Omega* of his life; the food and medicine of his life; the Author and Reſtorer of his life; and the whole buſineſs of his life. Many have little buſineſs with Chriſt; but the true believer, the true lover, Chriſt is the whole buſineſs of his life: like the woman that, they ſay, took the body of her dead huſband and grind it to powder, and drank the powder in her daily drink, and ſo made her body a living tomb for her dead huſband. The believer is to live ſtill upon a dead and crucified huſband.

4. True love to God will make you love to *reverence* him: godly fear is a true mark of love; you will have a holy fear of diſpleaſing him; you will have a jealous fear, leſt your deceitful heart lead you aſide from him: *We receiving a kingdom that cannot be moved, let us have grace,* [or, *let us hold faſt grace,*] *whereby we may ſerve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear: for our God is a conſuming fire,* Heb. xii. 28, 29. All this is inconſiſtent with the ſlaviſh fear of hell: for the faith of *receiving the kingdom that cannot be moved,* and the fear of hell, which is a being excluded from that kingdom, are contradictory; but let us fear our God in Chriſt, who hath diſcovered himſelf in Chriſt to be even *a conſuming fire;* for this fire of infinite juſtice took hold of the man Chriſt Jeſus. When God dwelled in the buſh of our nature, the buſh burned in the flame of divine wrath, and juſtice was ſatisfied this way: herein God gave a more awful inſtance of his being *a conſuming fire,* in taking vengeance upon ſin in the Surety, than can be given by all the flames of hell, in which the wicked burn for eternity. But here God being in the buſh, the buſh burnt, but was not conſumed; *He that was dead, is alive; and behold he liveth for evermore.* But we may *turn aſide and ſee this great ſight, the buſh burning,* Chriſt ſatisfying divine juſtice: and what in the world ſhould more influence to a holy fear than this?

5. True love will make you to *think well* of him, and think *no evil* of him: *Love thinketh no evil,* ſays the apoſtle. You will entertain good thoughts of God; and conſtruct all he does in the beſt ſenſe: though in affliction a ſaint may have harſh thoughts of God, and under a fit of temptation, yet habitually he entertains good thoughts of all God's dealings towards him. This or that diſpenſation or affliction, however ſevere, is either to mortify ſome luſt, or to exerciſe ſome grace, or to diſcover ſome corruption, and remove it. "O! "how good is he that will not let me alone "in my ſins, nor let me go with my faults, "nor *ceaſe to be a Reprover!* Love thinks no "evil."

6. True love will make you *love* what *he loves,* and *hate* what *he hates;* and alſo love *as* he loves, and hate as he hates.

[1.] True love will make you love what *he loves,* and hate what *he hates;* and particularly to love his friends, and hate his enemies.

1*ſt,* To love his *friends;* his friends in *office,* and his friends in *heart.*

(1.) His friends in *office;* his miniſters, whoſe office it is to commend Chriſt: ſurely they that love God, will love his friends; they that love Chriſt the Bridegroom, will love the friends of the Bridegroom, whoſe work it is to ſet him forth: *How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of them that preach the goſpel of peace, that bring glad tidings of good things, that publiſh ſalvation!* Iſa. lii. 15. Rom. x. 15. The reaſon why they love ſuch, is, becauſe it is their work to open Chriſt's love-letter that is ſent to his bride, and to read it, and explain it to the bride; and becauſe they love the ſweet doctrine of the goſpel. Some pretend a great love to the precepts of the law, but for the doctrine of the goſpel, and free juſtification without the works of the law, they ſuſpect that as Antinomian ſtuff, oppoſite to the law; they will mock at Chriſt's meſſengers when they preach the doctrine of grace. But I ſeek no further evidence of an enemy to Chriſt than that. Some love all preachers, and all preaching alike; they cannot diſcern betwixt the one and the other: if you preach the doctrine of the goſpel to them, they love that; if you preach the covenant of works to them, and deſire them to do ſo and ſo, and thereupon they ſhall be juſtified before God, they love that too; all is fiſh that comes in the net with them: but the ſheep of Chriſt *know his voice;* and the voice of the ſhepherds, that convey his voice and mind to them, is ſweet, and beautiful, and lovely to them.

(2.) They love his friends in *heart,* as well as his friends in office; *the ſaints, the excellent ones of the earth, are theſe in whom is all their delight. He that loves him that begat, loves him that is begotten.* They love the *brethren,* as in the verſe following the text; *How can you ſay that he loves God, whom he hath not ſeen, when he loveth not his brother, whom he hath ſeen?* He that loves the parent, will love the child: they that love God, will love his children, that have his image, as a man will love the very picture of the perſon whom he loves: they love the ſaints, though poor, as a man will love gold, though in a rag; and alſo will love them, though afflicted, even as mettal in a furnace may be loved.

2*dly,* As the true lovers of God will love his friends, ſo they will *hate* his *foes* and *enemies,* whether it be his open enemies without, or his ſecret enemies within.

(1.) His *open enemies without,* even all the wicked and ungodly world; *Do not I hate them that hate thee, and am grieved with them that riſe up againſt thee?* They that can delight in fellowſhip with theſe that are drunkards, ſwearers, and blaſphemers of the name of God, ſurely they cannot have the love of God at leaſt in exerciſe: the true lover of God hates the wicked as ſuch. It is true, as they are the children of Adam, *Bone of their bone, and fleſh of their fleſh;* as they are poor miſerable creatures like themſelves, they love them with a love of pity; but as enemies to God, and in rebellion againſt him, they can have no delight in them; their company is a burden to them.

(2.) As they hate his open enemies without, ſo they hate his *ſecret enemies within;* and theſe are their own luſts and corruptions. They *hate ſin, who love God;* and are engaged in a warfare againſt ſin, and hate their own luſts. He that loves God hates ſin, whether in *himſelf* or *others:* he hates ſin as God's enemy, and as that which is diſpleaſing and diſhonouring to him;

him; and as that which mars communion with God, that provokes him to anger, and unfits them for his ſervice. O that loathſome, ugly thing ſin! that evil of evils, and devil of devils! The man purſues it to death, and cannot reſt till he gets his hands embrued, as it were, in its heart's blood: they have taken up arms againſt it, in the name of the Lord, and reſolved never to lay them down, till it be mortified and killed. They find indeed ſometimes ſin very lively and ſtrong in them, and themſelves *led captive by the law of ſin;* but this animates them ſo much the more to purſue it to death. And as they hate ſin in themſelves, ſo alſo in others; *I beheld tranſgreſſors, and was grieved.* I would not give much for your pretenſions to love, if you have no zeal againſt ſin; love is the fire, zeal is the flame: they that love the Lord will ſhew forth indignation againſt ſin.—Thus, I ſay, true lovers of God will love what he loves, and hate what he hates.

[2.] True love will not only hate what he hates, and love what he loves, but hate *as* he hates, and love *as* he loves.

1*ſt*, They will *hate* AS *he hates;* they will hate ſin, as God hates it; I ſpeak not of degrees, but of ſimilitude.

(1.) God hates ſin with a *natural* hatred, as oppoſite to his nature, will, and law, and diſhonouring to him; ſo the true lovers of God will hate ſin with a *natural* hatred; I mean, by virtue of his new nature, he will hate it as oppoſite to God's nature and will, and diſhonouring to his God.

(2.) God hates ſin with a *perfect* hatred, and ſo does the true lover of God; they ſay of God's enemies within them, as David, Pſal. cxxxix. 21. *I hate them with a perfect hatred;* their hatred is going on to perfection.

(3.) God hates ſin with an *everlaſting* hatred; he will never be reconciled with it: ſo the true lover of God hates ſin with an *everlaſting* hatred; a durable hatred: they will never be friends with it.

(4.) God hates ſin with a *grievous* hatred; ſin *grieves his Spirit*; and is, as it were, a burden to him: he is *preſſed under it as a cart under ſheaves*: ſo the true lover is *grieved with the body of ſin and death*, and preſſed under it.

(5.) God hates ſin with a *parting*, *ſeparating* hatred; he caſts it away with loathing and abhorrence, *being of purer eyes than that he can behold iniquity:* ſo the true lover hates ſin ſo as to *part with it*, and *ſeparate from it:* and while he cannot get himſelf rid of it, he loaths himſelf for it.

(6.) God hates ſin with an *avenging* hatred; he takes vengeance upon it where-ever it is; even when it was found but *imputatively* in Chriſt, he took vengeance upon it in the Surety: ſo the true lover of God hates ſin with an *avenging* hatred; yea, what *revenge* does he meditate againſt it! 2 Cor. vii. 11. He would ſometimes be at Sampſon's work, to pull down the houſe of that tabernacle upon the Philiſtines to be avenged upon it, and cannot reſt till it be deſtroyed: he looks upon himſelf as wretched, ſo long as it remains with him: *O wretched man that I am! who ſhall deliver me from the body of this ſin and death?*—Thus he hates as God hates.

2*dly*, They *love* AS *God loves*. It is true, God's love to them is infinite, their love is but finite; his love to them is the love of a God, their love to him is but the love of creatures; yet their love bears ſome reſemblance of his love.

(1.) God's love to his creatures is a *remembering* love: he never forgets them; *Can a woman forget her ſucking child, that ſhe ſhould not have compaſſion on the ſon of her womb? Yea, ſhe may; yet will I not forget thee, ſaith the Lord.* So, true love to God is a *remembering* love: they cannot forget God; *they remember his love more than wine. I will never forget thy precepts, for by them thou haſt quickened me.* I can never forget ſuch a word, ſuch a glance, ſuch a viſit, ſuch a day, ſuch a ſermon, ſuch a bank, ſuch a valley, ſuch a chamber, where God manifeſted himſelf.

(2.) God's love to his people is a *hearty* and *cordial* love; *he loves them with all his heart:* ſo, where true love is, it will *be with all the heart, ſoul, mind, and ſtrength: as with the heart man believes*, ſo with the *heart* the believer loves.

(3.) God's love to his people is a *manifeſted* love; he does not conceal his love, but diſcovers it: ſo true love to God will be a *manifeſted* love; it will manifeſt itſelf, and vent itſelf in prayer, in praiſes, in zeal, in obedience; *If you love me keep my commandments.* The true lover will vent his love by deſiring to keep Chriſt's words, keeping them in the heart; *Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I may not offend thee;* keeping them in the practice, *by ordering the converſation aright.*

(4.) God's love to his people is an *uniting* love; it brings them to union with himſelf: ſo true love to God is uniting; deſires union, and cleaves to the Lord; it affects nearneſs; more and more nearneſs; and ſtill more and more nearneſs.

(5.) God's love to his people is a *prevailing* love; it had many hinderances in its way; mountains of guilt, mountains of ſin, mountains of provocation, yet he did not call back his love again: even ſo, true love to God, notwithſtanding of hinderances and oppoſition from earth and hell, and corruption within, yet is not drawn back, but labours to *prevail;* and will, through grace, fight its way through all difficulties; *for love is ſtrong as death.*

(6.) God's love to his people is a *rejoicing* love; he rejoiceth in his love; ſo where true love to God is, the man will *rejoice* in his love; delight in God and Chriſt, and *be joyful in the God of his ſalvation.*

(7.) God love to his people is a *reſting* love; Zeph. v. 17. *He reſts in his love;* when it comes, it never thinks of removing any more; *This is my reſt, here will I ſtay:* ſo where true love to God is, it is a *reſting* love; it ſays, *Return to thy reſt, O my ſoul.* The true lover of God hath no other reſting place but a God in Chriſt.

(8.) God's love to his people is a *communicative* love; his love inclines him and engages him to make over himſelf, and all that he hath, for the good of his people: ſo, where true love to God is, it is ſuch a *communicative* love, that it makes the ſoul to give himſelf, and all that he is, and hath, to the Lord; he commits his ſoul, body, and all the concerns of his ſalvation to him.

(9.) God's love to his people is a *diſtinguiſhing* love; he loves them above all others; *Since thou waſt precious in my ſight, thou haſt been honour-*

honourable; and I have loved thee, Isa. xliii. 3, 4. So their love to him is *superlative* love; they love him above all things; and in all things he hath the pre-eminence.

(10.) God's love to his people is *in Christ*; they are *accepted in the Beloved*: so, true love to God is a love to God *in Christ*; out of Christ they cannot love him, but fear and flee from him; but in Christ he is amiable and lovely to them.—Now, by these things you may try whether you love God, so as your love is a fruit of his first loving you.

Use of *exhortation*. Is God's love to his people the cause of their love to him? then be exhorted, 1. To seek the *view* of God's love to you. 2. To render him *love* for *love*.

1. Seek a *view* of God's love to you; say not in your heart, Alas! all are not loved of God, and it may be not you; but rather say, Many are the objects of his love, and why not me? Why, say you, the first object of faith cannot be to believe that God hath loved me. Indeed you cannot know God's love to you till he manifest the same; and he does not manifest his love but in Christ, in whom is proclaimed *peace on earth, and good-will towards men*, because Christ hath brought in *glory to God in the highest*; and therefore the way to know the love of God to you, is to believe his love and good-will in him; and in coming to him, the love of God is known and believed. How do the saints get to know the love of God to them? It is even by believing his love in Christ; 1 John iv. 16. *We have known, and believed the love that God hath to us.* If you look to God out of Christ, you never see his love to you, or any sinner like you, but wrath and vengeance issued out against you: but if you look to God in Christ, then you may see good-will towards men; for, *God is in Christ reconciling the world to himself.*—Why, say you, I cannot find any love in my heart towards God; and therefore, how can I believe his love, or heart to be towards me? Indeed, man, you will never love God till you take up something of his love and good-will towards you; your way of doing is a preposterous course, and a way to rob God of his glory, to think you must love him first, and then expect that he will love you: lay down your carnal reasoning, and seek grace to apprehend the mercy of God in Christ, and that will open your soul to let out your love towards him.—Why, say you, I see no ground why he should love me! there is no cause, no reason in the world, but all the reason in the world, why he should not love me; and therefore, how can I be persuaded of his thoughts of love towards me? To this we might reply, That God speaks love, mercy, and good-will towards you man, you woman, by this gospel, as particularly as ever he did to any elect soul, the day before he met with the day of power; for the general tenders of grace in the gospel are to all: and as for a cause of love, he hath as much cause to fix his love on you as ever he had upon any of the children of men; that is, he had no cause at all *without himself*: and if you can attain to believe his grace and good-will towards you, and that by a faith of his own operation, you shall not be deceived. When I call you to believe thus, I am not calling you to fancy that God loves you, or to persuade yourselves in a natural way; nay, I call you to a *saving faith*, which I know you can never attain unto without a pull of omnipotency; and if that power accompany the call, then the duty called to will be put in practice, and not otherwise: therefore, O seek the power of God to persuade you of the good-will of God in Christ. All that hear me are obliged to receive Christ, as a token of God's love; *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him, and receiveth him, might not perish, but have everlasting life. He that believeth, shall be saved; he that believeth not, shall be damned.* If there be insuperable difficulties and objections in your way, I cannot help it; the God who calls you, can remove them; but it is at your peril, if you reject his call: you shall never have it to say in hell, that the good-will and favour of God was never proclaimed to you; for I take the mountains and hills that are in your view, to witness, that I proclaim, through Christ, *Peace on earth, and good-will towards men*; and that *God is in Christ reconciling the world to himself.* Why, would we have the greatest sinner, and vilest debauchee among us all, to believe the love and good-will of God towards them? To this we reply, Whilst you are in a sinful state, you are indeed under the wrath and curse of God; and if you continue therein, you will be damned for ever, as sure as God lives; and you will continue there for ever, unless you come to get the apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ; but whenever you get this apprehension of God's love, then I defy you to continue in a state of sin, or in a course of sin and enmity. Will a man receive Christ, and believe the love of God in him, and yet keep fast hold of his lusts? No, I defy him, it is not possible; and therefore it is to kill your enmity, and destroy your sin that God would have you to believe his good-will in Christ. I remember that story of a godly man, that said to a witch, when nothing else could soften her heart, "I do, *says he*, in the name of the "Lord Jesus, charge you to come to Christ "for salvation; to come to him for faith, re- "pentance, and remission of sin, and you shall "have acceptance, and be received into the "favour of God in him." The poor witch was made to say, "O, Sir, shall I believe your "word? My life for you, *says he*, if you rely "upon Christ." Immediately her bands were loosed; and the Lord brought her to a deep humiliation for sin, and sense of the favour of God, so as she gave evidence, by the testimony of discerning persons, that the Lord had shewn mercy to her. O if you knew how the Lord is saying to his servants, O fy upon you! will you not compel those people to come in and close with Christ, as the great pledge of God's love? O! go to God, when you can get an opportunity to be alone, and say, Lord, I have been called to believe, but my heart is hard, and thou only can break it: O! come and save the chiefest of sinners, whereby thou wilt get more glory than ever thou had by any of Adam's posterity: cry to him, *Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief.*

2. I would exhort you to render him *love* for *love*; and this exhortation concerns believers particularly. O, love him, because *he first loved you.* What a shame is it for you, believer, if you do not love him who first loved you! And to engage you, consider,

(1.) Whose

(1.) Whose love it is; it is the love of him, who in himself is *all-sufficient*, who hath no need to go forth with his love to others; the love *of a God*, O what a vast consideration is it!

(2.) Consider who *you are* that are the objects of his love; so wicked, so wretched, so unworthy of his love. That God should love the *glorious angels* is no wonder; for they are *messengers* and *ministers executing his pleasure:* that he should love *inanimate creatures* is not strange; for *hail, snow, vapour, and stormy wind fulfil his word:* but to love *you* is a wonder; and to love you *while enemies.*

(3.) Consider what *sort* of love it is. It is *eternal* love; *before the foundation of the world, his delights were with the sons of men,* from eternity: the very thoughts of this is enough to make all that is within you, like the babe in the womb of Elisabeth, to leap for joy, that you lay in the bosom of his love from eternity: and will you not love him!—His love is *a free love:* if you deserved his love, his love would be of less value; but that which is eternally antecedent, must be absolutely free.—His love is *unchangeable* love; though you change every day, his love is unchangeable. Could any provocation turn away his love, it had ceased long since; but as he set his love upon you, notwithstanding all the faults you were, and he knew you would be, guilty of, so it continues notwithstanding all.—His love is a *distinguishing* love; why should he have fixed on you, and past by millions from whom you differ not by nature? Why hath he past by your father, mother, brother, sister, and set his love upon you? And, O! will you not love him?—His love is a *bountiful* love; with his love he gives himself, his Christ, his Spirit, his grace, his glory, and all. See how the psalmist extols this love, Psal. ciii. 1. *Bless the Lord, O my soul, who pardons all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases,* etc. *Who pardons all thine iniquities!* O, it is no small thing to forgive or to pardon three or four sins, but it is yet more to pardon three or four thousand sins: Who can conceive of that love! but to forgive many millions of millions of faults; O what love is here! And so he deals with these whom he loves; *He multiplies to pardon*; yea, more, *he heals all your diseases.* O poor sinner, have you not many plagues, many diseases, yea, more than you are aware of? If you knew the plagues of your own heart, you will be crying out, O the plague of my mind, the plague of my will, the plague of my affections! O my atheism, unbelief, hardness, blindness! *etc.* O what innumerable evils compass me about, say you! O what horrible evils! yea, why do I call them evils, they are so many devils within me; yea, but for as many as they are, *He heals all thy diseases;* and for as grievous as they are, *He supplies all your wants:* such also is his bountiful love, *My God shall supply all your wants.* Are you not made up of wants! Do you not want light, life, love, faith, repentance, joy, assurance, peace, communion with God? Yea, but sometimes even on earth he supplies all wants, so as to make you say, *I have enough.* O does not this bountiful love, call for love?

(4.) Consider the *channel* in which this love runs: Christ is the means of the communication of the love of God; you have the love of God the Father, in the Son, by the Holy Ghost: Christ is the *channel.* Love in the Father is like honey in the flower; it must be in the comb, before it be for our use: Christ must extract and prepare this honey for us. And, O how sweet is that love, that runs through such a glorious channel!

In a word, consider the *excellency* of the grace of love. Love to God is the *fulfilling of the law;* all that it requires is *love:* love is the great qualification of the saints above; the more love you have, the more like heaven you will be: and the more love, the more meetness for heaven; heaven would be a burden, and a weariness to you without love; if you had not love, you would throw yourself out of heaven into hell. If you have love, you will find it make every duty pleasant; the obedience of love is sweet obedience. Yea, love will make all your crosses to be comforts; where there is little or no love, the cross is insupportable; the man crys, O a bitter cross! *O the gall and wormwood!* yea, but love would be like the tree cast into the waters of Marah, to make them become sweet. If you have much love, it will make you say of affliction, O this is the cup that my kind Father hath put in my hand! *And shall I not drink it?* Welcome whatever he sends.

O love the Lord, ye his saints, and manifest your love by your obedience: will you render him hatred for love? O let his love to you warm your heart with love to him; and in order thereto,

1. O do not *doubt* of or *question* his love to you; beware of renouncing that which engages you to love him: it is the devil's great aim to have you mistrusting God's love, that so you may not love God again.

2. Attend all his *love-visits*, and thankfully receive them; think not little of his ordinary visits, when in any measure he manifests his love through the lattices of ordinances; *Despise not the day of small things:* and especially, O make much of his extraordinary love-visits, when he mounts you up at any time into the *chariot paved with love!*

3. Take heed of *abusing* his love; beware of *spotting your garments with the flesh, after God has spread his skirt over you.* To sin against love is a dreadfully aggravated sin. It was a sad blot upon Solomon, that his heart was turned from the Lord, *After that the Lord God of Israel had appeared to him twice,* 1 Kings xi. 9.

4. Beware of *confidence in the flesh,* and expecting that your love should influence God to do you good; *the love of Christ must constrain you:* think not that your duties and obedience should constrain him: O beware of inverting the gospel at this rate, and turning it upside down! If his love excite you to love and obedience, then your love and obedience does not excite him to love you. We might fear every day, that the heart of God would be turned to hate us, if our hopes of abiding in his favour were built upon our best love and obedience.

I would send away the *haters* of God with a word of *terror.* Know that if you cannot be persuaded to the love of God, if his love does not break you in time, his vengeance will break you to eternity: *The enemies of the Lord shall be like the fat of rams, they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away.* If you love not Christ, know what the apostle says, *If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema.*

I will

I will tell you what is ſad, the day is coming, wherein you ſhall ſay *to the rocks and mountains, fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that ſitteth on the throne, and from the Lamb: for the great day of his wrath is come; and who ſhall be able to ſtand?* You will ly for ever under the fiery mountain of divine vengeance. I will tell you what is yet ſadder, and you will think ſtrange what that can be; it ſhort it is ſad, that before this day eight days, all that I am ſaying will be forgotten; yea, before the morrow at this time, the impreſſion of all will be gone.

I would ſend away the lovers of Chriſt, the lovers of God with a word of *comfort*. You love God, and God loves you, and God's love to you is ground of comfort.—Comfort in what you *have;* what you have in poſſeſſion, you have it with a *bleſſing*; what you have in expectation in the promiſe, is in love: and therefore the promiſe is free, becauſe of God's love in it; the promiſe is firm, becauſe of his love in it.—Comfort in what you *want;* ſince you have God's love, *you ſhall not want.*—Comfort in what you *fear; You need fear no evil.*—Comfort in what you *do; All your ſervices will be accepted;* all your ſins pardoned, though he ſhould *take vengeance on your inventions.*—Comfort in what you *ſuffer;* you ſhall be ſuſtained and ſupported; and though you may ſuffer the loſs of gifts, goods, liberty, life, yet you cannot loſe God, Chriſt, the Spirit, grace, heaven, or God's everlaſting love.——O go away with the comfortable ſenſe of his diſtinguiſhing love!

In a word, Are you lovers of God? O go away *rejoicing* in it, *that he firſt loved you;* he is not behind hand with you; *He loved you before you loved him.* You were elected by the grace of God from eternity; you were redeemed by the blood of Chriſt, you are certainly effectually called; *For they that love him, are the called according to his purpoſe;* and the day comes, when you ſhall enjoy the object of your love in a full manner. If you be true lovers of Chriſt, I certify you, the time is coming, when you ſhall ſee *Chriſt as he is, and be for ever with the Lord*, and enjoy him for evermore; and love without decay, and love without wearying ſhall be your everlaſting exerciſe: you ſhall rejoice in an immediate enjoyment of him. You were upon his heart from eternity; you are upon his heart this day in heaven, for you his eternal Son came to the world; for you he lived, for you he died; your love to Chriſt is a reflex of his and his Father's love to you; and there is not a true lover of Chriſt here, but hath as good ground to ſay as ever Paul had, *He loved me, and gave himſelf for me.* Your love to him is an infallible pledge of his antient love to you, a pledge of his preſent love to you, and a pledge of the future enjoyment of him. O let your heart, and life, and tongue, and all that is within you, and about you, vent love to him, and ſay, *We love him, becauſe he firſt loved us!*

SERMON VI.*

The MILITANT'S SONG; or, the BELIEVER'S EXERCISE while here below.

PSAL. ci. 1.

I will ſing of mercy and judgment: unto thee, O Lord, will I ſing.

I HOPE, the ſubject I am here in providence directed to, will natively lead us, if the Lord bleſs it, to a ſuitable exerciſe upon a thankſgiving-day after a communion; even with gratitude of ſoul to ſing the praiſes of a God in Chriſt, and that whether we have met with a ſmile or a frown from heaven, or both, at this occaſion. If any here have got a ſmile, or found him to be a ſmiling and a preſent God, they may ſing of *mercy;* if any here have got a frown, or found him to be a hiding God, they may ſing of *judgment;* or, if any here have got both a ſmile and a frown, they may ſing of both, and ſay, *I will ſing of mercy and judgment: unto thee, O Lord, will I ſing.*

The words contain the pſalmiſt's *holy reſolution* to praiſe and glorify God for all his diſpenſations towards him, now that he was advanced to the kingdom of Iſrael: and in them you may ſhortly notice, 1. The *ſweet work* that is reſolved upon, namely, to *ſing*. 2. The ſweet *ſinger* that thus reſolves, namely, DAVID; *I will ſing*. 3. The ſweet *ſubject* of the ſong, namely, *mercy* and *judgment*. 4. The ſweet *object* of this praiſe, and the manner in which he would ſing it; *Unto* THEE, O LORD, *will I ſing*.

1. The ſweet *work* that is reſolved upon, namely, to *ſing*. It is the work of heaven, and a very fit work after a communion, to ſing a ſong of praiſe to God, in the manner which we may afterwards explain.

2. The ſweet *ſinger; I will ſing*. The title of the pſalm ſhews it was David's, the man after God's own heart; the man anointed by the God of Jacob, and the ſweet pſalmiſt of Iſrael; for ſo he is called, 2 Sam. xxiii. 1.

3. The ſweet *ſubject* of the ſong, or the matter of it, namely, *mercy* and *judgment*. God's work towards his people is chequered work; a mixture of mercy and judgment: and when he exerciſes us with both, it is our duty to ſing of both, and to be ſuitably affected with both; whether our circumſtances be joyful or ſorrowful, ſtill we muſt *give glory to God;* and, *in every thing give thanks:* neither the laughter of a proſperous condition, nor the tears of an afflicted condition muſt put us out of tune for the ſacred ſongs of praiſe.

* This ſermon was preached at Carnock, on Monday, July —, 1723, being a thankſgiving day immediately after the celebration of the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper there; and hath already borne four impreſſions.

4. The

4. The ſweet *object* of this praiſe, and the manner in which he reſolves to ſing it, *Unto* THEE, *O* LORD, *will I ſing*. It is in the moſt ſolemn manner that he addreſſes the Lord JEHOVAH, Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, and dedicates his ſong to the praiſe of a God in Chriſt; *Unto* THEE, *O* LORD, *will I ſing*. But I refer the further explication to the proſecution of a doctrine from the words.

OBSERV. *That, as the people of God have both mercy and judgment in their lot in this world; ſo, from both they may have matter of a ſong of praiſe unto God.*

They have occaſion in this world to ſing both of mercy and judgment. We find the pſalmiſt frequently ſinging both of mercy and judgment; as Pſal. xxx. 6,—9. Pſal. xlii. 7,—11. You have an elegant deſcription of the lot of God's people, while here, as conſiſting both of mercy and judgment, and ſo affording occaſion to ſing of both, 2 Cor. vi. 8, 9, 10.; where you will ſee the blink and the ſhower; the mercies and judgments that are in their lot; how *God hath ſet the one over againſt the other: By honour and diſhonour, by evil report and good report*, etc. Thus they have occaſion to ſing both of mercies and croſſes, while they find the Lord ſupporting them under trials, and remembring mercy in the midſt of wrath, and making *all things work together for good to them: I will ſing of mercy and judgment; unto thee, O Lord, will I ſing*. The Chaldee paraphraſe of this text is remarkable, and ſuitable to the doctrine I have raiſed from it, namely, it is as if the pſalmiſt had ſaid, 'If thou beſtoweſt mercies upon me; or 'if thou bringeſt any judgment upon me; be-'fore thee, O Lord, will I ſing my hymn for 'all.'

The method I propoſe, for proſecuting this doctrine, through divine aid, is the following,

I. I would ſpeak a little of the *mercies* that the people of God meet with; and what it is *in* theſe that affords them matter for a ſong of praiſe.

II. I would ſpeak a little of the *judgments* they are triſted with; and what it is *in* judgment that may be matter of a ſong of praiſe to God.

III. What this ſinging *imports*; and *how* we are to ſing of *mercy* and *judgment*: where we may notice what is imported in the pſalmiſt's *reſolution*, and the *manner* of expreſſing it; *I will ſing of mercy and judgment; unto thee, O Lord, will I ſing*.

IV. *Why* it is ſo ordered of the Lord, that his people are made to ſing, both of mercy and of judgment.

V. Draw ſome *inferences* for the application.

I. I am *firſt* to ſpeak a little of *mercy*, of which they ought to ſing; and here I would ſhew, 1. What this mercy *is*; and, 2. What it is *in* mercy that may be matter of a ſong, or afford ground of ſinging.

1*ſt*, What this mercy *is*. Mercy, in God, ſignifies a propenſity or readineſs of mind to help and ſuccour ſuch as are in miſery: and it carries in it an inward commotion and moving of bowels, as God ſays of Ephraim, *My bowels are troubled for him; I will ſurely have mercy upon him*, Jer. xxxi. 20. God, to accommodate himſelf to our capacity, ſpeaks after the manner of man, aſcribing human affections to himſelf. I might here ſpeak of the *general* mercy of God towards all, both juſt and unjuſt: for, *He is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works*, Pſal. cxlv. 9. He makes his *ſun to ſhine; and his rain to fall upon good and bad:* and all ſhould ſing of his mercy, if it were no more but for life, and health, and ſtrength from him. There are ſome common gifts that all men have from him, and ſome common graces that ſome have more than others; but I ſpeak eſpecially of ſpecial mercies; and indeed there are of theſe, that the viſible church hath, beſides the reſt of the world, even the wicked among them; and, if they could, they ſhould ſing of theſe mercies; ſuch as, their hearing the goſpel, and the joyful ſound; their getting the offer of Chriſt, and ſalvation through him: but I ſpeak mainly of the ſpecial mercies, that bear the ſtamp of his everlaſting love towards his choſen and hidden ones: mercy bred in God's breaſt from all eternity, whereby he made choice of ſome of the fallen maſs of mankind in Chriſt, who is the channel wherein this mercy does flow in various ſtreams: and I ſhall mention a few of theſe, for there would be no end of ſpeaking, to mention all that might be ſaid, or yet to enlarge upon all that may be mentioned.

1. There is the mercy of God, in *ſending Chriſt to be the Saviour*. We find the angels ſinging of this mercy, Luke ii. 11, 14. ſaying, *To you is born in the city of David, a Saviour: Glory to God in the higheſt, on earth peace, and good-will towards men. Good-will* and *mercy* towards *man*, becauſe there is *peace on earth*, and reconciliation through Chriſt, who brings in *glory to God in the higheſt: God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in him, ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life*, John iii. 16. It is indeed a *ſo* without a *ſuch*; a love without a parallel: here mercy ſhines.

2. There is mercy in the *death of Chriſt:* ſee how the four and twenty elders ſing of this mercy; *Thou waſt ſlain, and haſt redeemed us to God, by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation: and haſt made us to our God kings and prieſts:* and the angels join iſſue with them, to the number of *ten thouſand times ten thouſand, and thouſands of thouſands, ſaying, with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was ſlain, to receive power, and riches, and wiſdom, and ſtrength, and honour, and glory, and bleſſing*, Rev. v. 9,—12.

3. There is mercy that he ſhews, in *raiſing of Chriſt from death*, and in *raiſing and quickening us together with him.* We find the apoſtle ſinging of this mercy; *But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he hath loved us, even when we were dead in ſins, hath quickened us together with Chriſt, and hath raiſed us up together, and made us ſit together in heavenly places in Chriſt Jeſus*, Eph. ii. 4, 5. If Chriſt muſt die, he muſt conquer death, that his people may be *more than conquerors* in him over death; both *ſpiritual* death, whereby we were under the *power* of ſin; and *legal* death, whereby we were under the *guilt* of ſin, and ſentence of the law. In oppoſition to both theſe, the life of regeneration, and the life of juſtification is connected with this merciful quickening together with Chriſt; as you ſee, Col. ii. 13. *You, being dead in your ſins and the uncircumciſion of your fleſh, hath he quickened together with him; having forgiven you all treſpaſſes.* O how does the pſalmiſt ſing of this mercy! *Bleſs the Lord, O my ſoul,—*

who forgiveth all thy ſins, and healeth all thy diſeaſes, Pſal. ciii. 2, 3.

4. There is mercy that he ſhews, in *cleanſing the ſoul* from the *filth* of ſin, as well as the *guilt* thereof, till it be waſhed and made quite clean at laſt. See how the ſaints do ſweetly ſing of this mercy, Rev. i. 7. where I think they ſing both of pardoning and purifying mercy; *To him that loved us, and waſhed us from our ſins in his own blood, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever, Amen.*

5. There is mercy that he ſhews, in *adopting ſuch heirs of hell* by nature, to be the *children of God* by grace: and you may ſee how believers ſing of this mercy; *Behold, what manner of love the Father hath beſtowed upon us, that we ſhould be called the ſons of God!* 1 John iii. 1. He makes them his children, and gives them the Spirit of adoption; *Becauſe ye are ſons, he hath ſent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying*, ABBA, *Father.* He gives them the mark and ſeal of his children, even the Spirit as a Spirit of prayer, and as a Spirit of faith, and a Spirit of love, working the love of God in our hearts, who are by nature enemies: and, O what mercy is here!

6. There is mercy that he ſhews, in conferring the high dignity of *prieſthood* and *royalty* upon them; ſee how they ſing of this mercy; *To him that loved us,—and hath made us kings and prieſts unto God, and his Father* [or, *to God, even his Father:*] *to him be glory*, Rev. i. 5, 6. *Kings unto God*, how? Even to fight for him againſt ſin, Satan, and the world, and conquer all our enemies in his name. *Prieſts unto God*, how? Even to offer ſpiritual ſacrifices, acceptable to God by Jeſus Chriſt; to offer our prayers and praiſes, ſouls and bodies to him, on our altar, Jeſus Chriſt. Thus they are made *kings and prieſts*; and therefore called a *royal prieſthood*; a prieſthood of kings, or a kingdom of prieſts.

7. There is mercy that he ſhews his people, in *abiding* and *ſtanding by them in all difficulties*, ſo as nothing ſhall ever be able to *ſeparate them from the favour of their God.* See how ſweetly the apoſtle Paul ſings of this mercy; *Who ſhall ſeparate us from the love of Chriſt? Shall tribulation, or diſtreſſes, or perſecution, or famine, or nakedneſs, or peril, or ſword?—Nay, I am perſuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things preſent, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, ſhall be able to ſeparate us from the love of God which is in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord*, Rom. viii. 35,—39. But though neither *death*, nor *life*, nor *angels* do it, yet may not *ſin* ſeparate me from the mercy and love of God? Indeed it may ſeparate, ſo as to make a fearful deſertion, but never ſo as to make a final ſeparation; for, *His mercy endures for ever:* and he hath ſaid, *I will never leave thee, nor forſake thee.* He *will viſit their iniquity with the rod,—but his loving-kindneſs will he not take away. My mercy will I keep with him for evermore, and my covenant ſhall ſtand faſt with him*, Pſal. lxxxix. 28, 32, 33.

8. There is mercy that he ſhews, in giving many *merciful experiences* of his *goodneſs and mercy following them all the days of their life*; ſuch as the pſalmiſt ſings of, Pſal. xxiii. 6. It is true, the leading mercy of all, is God himſelf, Chriſt himſelf, the Spirit himſelf; one God in three Perſons, is their God; made over to them in that word, *I will be your God.* Here is the fountain-mercy of all mercies, of which they may ſing, ſaying, *This God is our God for ever and ever, and will be our guide, even unto death.* And indeed to ſing of mercy, is to ſing of a merciful God: but as we know the nature of the fountain by the ſweetneſs of the ſtreams, ſo we may take a view of ſome more of theſe ſtreams, under the notion of merciful experiences; and I name theſe following, by which a ſong of mercy may be excited.

(1.) There are merciful *intimations* and *communications*, that they ſometimes get, to make them ſing of mercy. Sometimes he intimates his *love*, ſaying, *I have loved thee with an everlaſting love:* Sometimes he intimates *pardon*, ſaying, *I, even I am he, that blotteth out thy tranſgreſſions, and will remember thy ſins no more:* Sometimes he intimates *acceptance*, ſaying, *O man, greatly beloved;* and the intimation ſets them a wondering and praiſing: Sometimes he communicates his *mind* and his *ſecrets* to them, *The ſecret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will ſhew unto them his covenant:* Sometimes the ſecrets of his *providence*; he will tell them what he hath a-mind to do with themſelves, and what he hath a-mind to do with ſuch a friend, and ſuch a child, and ſuch a land or church; *Shall I hide from Abraham that which I do?* Sometimes he communicates himſelf to them, ſaying, *I am thy God, I am thy ſhield; Fear not, for I am with thee:* Sometimes ſuch intimations and communications are given, as make all their bones to ſay, *Who is like unto thee?*

(2.) There merciful *viſits*, after deſertion, and after backſliding, that they ſometimes get, to make them ſing of mercy, when they have been heaping up mountains of ſin and provocation betwixt him and them; yet, after all, he hath come and given them occaſion to ſay, *The voice of my Beloved, behold he cometh ſkipping upon the mountains, and leaping upon the hills*, Cant. ii. 8. *The voice of my Beloved!* O an exceeding ſweet and powerful voice! It had a ſound of heaven; I thought the mountains would have kept him away, but I heard the ſound of his feet upon the mountains, that made my heart warm toward him again; I had departed from him by an evil heart of unbelief, and I thought he would never return; but, O he reſtored my ſoul, and helped me anew to wreſtle with him: *We found him in Bethel, and there he ſpake with us.*

(3.) There are merciful *accompliſhments of promiſes*, that they ſometimes get, to make them ſing of mercy. The Lord ſometimes lets in a promiſe with life and power, and gives them a word on which he *cauſes them to hope.* It may be he will give them a promiſe for *themſelves*, and it may be a promiſe for their *children*; ſuch as that, *I will be thy God, and the God of thy ſeed:* and ſometimes a promiſe for the *church*; ſuch as that, *Upon all the glory there ſhall be a defence:* and ſometimes he gives a wonderful *accompliſhment of promiſes*, like that of Hezekiah; *What ſhall I ſay? he hath both ſpoken, and himſelf hath done it:* He hath come to my ſoul, and made me ſee that he is as good as his word; and that *faithfulneſs is the girdle of his loins.*

(4.) There is a merciful *grant of all their deſires*, that they ſometimes get, to make them ſing of mercy. As the *deſire of their ſoul is towards him, and the remembrance of his name*; ſo, *he ſatisfies the longing ſoul, and fills the hungry with good things*; and gives them ſometimes a Chriſt in their arms, who is *all their ſalvation, and all*

their desire: Delight thyself in the Lord, and he will give thee the desire of thy heart. Some have got their desires satisfied abundantly, now and then; they have got all that they could desire with respect to temporal mercies; all that they could desire with respect to spiritual mercies; yea, all that they could desire within time, till they get an armful of him before the throne.

(5.) There is merciful *instruction* and *illumination*, that they sometimes get, to make them sing of mercy; *The path of the just is as the shining light, shining more and more unto the perfect day.* And therefore he gives them to learn some lesson more and more; some gospel-lesson, and gospel-mystery, that they were in the dark about: and one great lesson that he teaches them is, even the difference betwixt the *law* and the *gospel:* he teaches them, that the *law is holy, just, and good;* and how the gospel crowns the law in all these respects: he teaches, that the law is *holy* in its *commands*, commanding perfect holiness, perfect obedience; and how the gospel shews where this perfect obedience is to be had, even in Christ, in whom they have not only strength to answer it as a rule of duty in part, but perfect righteousness to answer it as a covenant of works completely: he teaches them, that the law is *just* in its *threatening*, the threatening of eternal death; and how the gospel shews where this threatening hath vented itself, even in demanding and getting complete satisfaction from Christ the Surety; and therefore may the soul say, Well is me, for the shower of wrath is over my head, and hath lighted upon the head of my Cautioner! He teaches them, that the law is *good* in its *promises*, namely, its promise of eternal life to perfect personal obedience: but withal he he teaches them by the gospel, how they hold their title to life, only in Christ, to whose perfect obedience now all the promises are made, and *in whom all the promises are Yea and Amen.* O what a mercy is it to learn these lessons in a saving way; *To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: he hath hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them to babes; even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.*

(6.) There are merciful *sensible enjoyments*, which they sometimes get, to make them sing of mercy: sometimes they get sensible sights of his glory, and that in a way of believing; *Said I not unto thee, If thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?* O says the man, I found faith to be the hardest thing in the world, and yet he made me find it to be the easiest thing in the world, when he carried me on the wings of the Spirit of faith; and by faith I saw his glory, and the glory of God in the face of Jesus. When I speak of *sensible sight*, do not mistake me; for I know that faith and sight, or faith and sense, differ in several respects, which I am not now to open; and yet faith brings in a kind of sense, it being *the evidence of things not seen, and the substance of things hoped for;* and therefore, by a *sensible sight*, I mean, the *spiritual sense of seeing by faith*, and *seeing clearly:* for sometimes the man gets a sight of Christ, as clearly as if he saw him with his bodily eyes: O, says the man, I have seen his fulness and sufficiency; I see his fitness and suitableness for me; I see his worthiness and excellency in himself. O none but Christ, none but Christ; as once a martyr, standing at a post, and having matches kindled upon him, and the flames about his finger-ends, he claped his hands together, and cried, *None but Christ, none but Christ.*

Some men they get sensible *tastes* of his *goodness; I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.* O how sweetly did I feed upon the apple-tree, and plucked off the apples that grew upon this tree, the apple of imputed righteousness, the apple of imparted grace, the apple of peace, the apple of pardon, the apple of assurance, the apple of joy, the apple of contentment, the apple of love, the apple of liberty! O the sweet fruit, the sweet apples that grow upon this tree of life! *I sat down under his shadow, with great delight*, etc.

Sometimes they get a sensible *hearing* of his *voice:* like that in the Song, *It is the voice of my Beloved that knocketh*, Song v. 2. He knocked by his voice, saying, *Open to me, my sister, my spouse.* O sweet was his voice, when he said to me, *I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee!* How sweet was his voice, when he said, *Be of good chear, thy sins are forgiven thee!* when he said a word like that of the angel, *Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favour with God! Did not my heart burn within me, when he talked with me by the way?* In such a word, and at such a sacrament, and such an ordinance, and such a duty? *Never man spake like this Man:* It was the voice of a God that I heard; for it was with such a glance of glory, as set my heart all in a flame of fire.

Sometimes they get a sensible *smell* of his *ointments:* O! his *name* had a smell of heaven; for, *because of the savour of his good ointment, his name was as ointment poured forth.* O! his *garments* had a smell of heaven; *all his garments smell of aloes, myrrh, and Cassia, out of the ivory palaces.* The garment of his *righteousness* had a smell; it is a *sacrifice of a sweet smelling savour;* and the perfume thereof puts away the stinking smell of sin: the garment of his *graces* had a smell, when the Spirit breathed upon them, and the north and south-wind awakened, the spices sent forth a pleasant smell; when the Spirit warmed my cold heart in duties, and *fire from heaven kindled the sacrifice*, then it mounted up to heaven, *like a pillar of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, and all the powders of the merchant.*

Sometimes they get a sensible *feeling* of his *power;* they have felt a sweet power coming along with the word, the sacrament, the prayer, the duty, that hath set the lawful captive at liberty, and loosed their bands; *Truly I am thy servant, thou hast loosed my bands*, Psal. cxvi. 16. O says the man, At such a time I am quit of the band of fear, I am quit of the band of unbelief, I am quit of the band of doubts, I am quit of the band of corruption; a power hath come, and knocked off my fetters: I felt his hand passing through the hole of the door of my heart, and my bowels were moved for him; he said to me, as it were to unbelieving Thomas, *Reach hither thy hand, and put into the hole of my side*, and let my wounds silence all your faithless fears, discouragements, and jealousies; and I was obliged to cry out, *My Lord, and my God.* I thought he took me, as it were, by the hand, as he did Peter upon the water, ready to sink, saying, *O why didst thou doubt?*

doubt? He ſhed abroad his love upon my heart ſo ſweetly, that I could doubt no more. I could have been content that the valley of viſion had been my burial-place, and that I had never gone back to the world again; for his love raviſhed my heart, and ſtruck the bottom out of all my doubts and fears: I got all my backſlidings healed; I got all my prayers anſwered; I got my burdens eaſed; I got grace to pour out my ſoul into his boſom; I got grace to bring all my corruptions to him, to be daſhed to pieces; I got grace to creep into his heart, and hide myſelf in his wounds; I got grace to caſt all my burdens over upon him, and my heart was lightened; and my ſoul was more eaſed and pleaſed, than if I had been a crowned emperor of all the kingdoms of the world.—Theſe are ſome of the merciful experiences that ſometimes they will get, to make them ſing of mercy. I might have mentioned many more to this purpoſe, both of ordinary and extraordinary mercies; but I go on,

2*dly*, To the *ſecond* queſtion here propoſed, *What it is* IN *mercy that affords ground of ſinging?*

1. The *freeneſs* and *undeſervedneſs* of the mercy, makes them ſing of mercy: when the man deſerves hell, and the juſt ſentence of the law to be paſt againſt him, mercy comes and takes hold of him. What is the cauſe of mercy? There is nothing in man to merit it but miſery; which is indeed the occaſion that God takes, to manifeſt his mercy through Chriſt: but yet miſery cannot be the cauſe of mercy; for neither merit nor miſery can be conſidered here to have any cauſal influence, it is juſt abſolute ſovereignty; *It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that ſheweth mercy.* Sovereign mercy is a thing that can neither be obtained by any good, nor hindered by any evil about us; he gives no account of his dealings: *I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy.* He loves, and we ſhall be loved: let all our high imaginations and proud reaſonings ſtrike ſail to the ſovereignty of free grace. O ſhall I not ſing of mercy, that when I deſerved a hell, I got a heaven! I deſerved eternal death, and I got a ſweet view of eternal life! This accents the praiſes. *O what am I,—that thou haſt brought me hitherto?*

2. The *unexpectedneſs* of the mercy, makes them ſing of mercy: O! when I was expecting a frown, I got a ſmile; when I was expecting nothing but wrath, I got a glance of love; inſtead of a ſtroak of vengeance, I got a view of glory. Hezekiah got a meſſage of death, and was looking for it, when he got the news of life, and it made him ſing of mercy, Iſa. xxxviii. 15. The mercy of God is ſurprizing mercy; ſome have gone diſconſolate and caſt down to an ordinance, and ere ever they were aware, their ſouls have got ſomething, which hath cauſed them to cry, *O! is this the manner of man, O Lord?* Some have gone to a cloſet, or a field, or a barn, or perhaps to a dike-ſide, with little or no expectation; but behold they have been ſurprized with an armful of heaven; perhaps at ſuch a ſermon, they have been ſurprized with a word of love on the back of deep humiliation, or deſertion; a word, like a live-coal, hath been caſt in, and ſet their breaſt on fire, and their heart in a flame.

3. The *ſeaſonableneſs* of the mercy, makes them ſing of mercy: for, he comes with grace to help in time of need; *I was brought low, and he helped me:* I was brought to the brink of ruin, and the border of deſpair, when mercy ſtept in for my relief and comfort: when I was at the loweſt extremity, he ſtept in, and made it the ſweeteſt time that ever I ſaw; *He brought me out of the horrible pit, and ſet my feet upon a rock, and put a new ſong in my mouth, even praiſes unto our God. He pitied us in our low eſtate, for his mercy endureth for ever.*

4. The *greatneſs* and *riches* of the mercy, makes them ſing, ſaying, *O how great is thy goodneſs, which thou haſt laid up for them that fear thee, which thou haſt wrought for them that truſt in thee, before the ſons of men!* Pſal. xxxi. 19. We read of the *riches of his mercy*; the *exceeding riches of his grace:* his people ſometimes meet with exceeding rich favour; ſuch as not only exceeds their worth infinitely, but even exceeds their ſenſe, exceeds their thoughts, exceeds their words, exceeds their deſires, exceeds their prayers, exceeds their praiſes, exceeds all that they can aſk or think; and this makes them ſing. We read of his *abundant mercy:* it is abundant in reſpect of its *fountain;* for his mercy is his nature, and muſt be infinite: it is abundant in reſpect of its *ſtreams*, as it is let out abundantly towards the object thereof: it is abundantly great in reſpect of its *various kinds*, temporal mercy, ſpiritual mercy, eternal mercy; *temporal* mercy makes them ſing, and ſay, *I am leſs than the leaſt of all thy mercies: ſpiritual* mercy makes them ſing, and ſay, *He hath bleſſed us with all ſpiritual bleſſings in heavenly places in Chriſt Jeſus: eternal* mercy makes them ſing and rejoice in *the hope of the glory of God.* O how abundant are they in their kinds, outward and inward mercies! *Outward* mercies are abundant: O the mercy that attended my birth, my education, the place of my ſituation in the world, ſo as to be brought under the drop of the goſpel; my preſervation from innumerable dangers; my protection, my proviſion; he hath fed me all my life long. *Inward* mercies are abundant; the mercy that appeared in my being awakened, convinced, humbled, converted, confirmed, comforted, called, juſtified, adopted, ſanctified. O what ground of ſinging of mercy! It is great and abundant in reſpect of the *qualities* of it: O what matter of ſinging might be gathered out of the views of mercy, as it is preventing mercy, ſparing mercy, conſcending mercy, covering mercy, tender mercy, waiting mercy, conſtraining mercy, reſtraining mercy, reſtoring mercy, following mercy! Even when I fled away from mercy, mercy and goodneſs followed me. But the bare mentioning of all would be impracticable; O the greatneſs of the mercy of which they may ſing! O the greatneſs of the *Author* of it, a great God! If we be ſaved, what does he get? if we be damned, what does he loſe? yet he ſhews mercy. O the greatneſs of the *object* of it! it is extended towards the chief of ſinners. O the greatneſs of the *effects* of it! Hereby great ſins are pardoned, great bleſſings are conferred, great wrath is averted, and great ſalvation is obtained: O! how can they but ſing of mercy! O the greatneſs of the *attendants* and *companions* of it! It makes them ſing, not only when they notice the mercy, but the contents concomitants of it, and what comes alongs with it: how ſweetly will the ſoul ſing, when it can ſay, I not only got ſuch

and

a mercy, but I saw God in it, and Christ in it, and the Spirit in it, and heaven in it, and glory in it! O! how sweet, when they consider this favour hath a necessary connection with heaven! it is a fore-taste of what I shall enjoy for ever: it is connected with God's everlasting love. And hence,

5. Not only the greatness, but the *sweetness* of the mercy makes them sing. And there are two things, among many others, that make it sweet to them, namely, the *excellency* of the mercy itself, and then their *relation* to it. On the one hand the *excellency* of the mercy; *How excellent is thy loving kindness, O Lord! Thy favour is better than life: His mouth is most sweet*, says the church: *The words of his mouth are sweeter than honey, or the honey-comb.* On the other hand, their *relation* to the mercy, contributes to the sweetness of it; the more of faith's application, the more sweet. O says faith, there is a promise, and it is mine; there is a pardon, and it is mine; there is a robe of righteousness, and it is mine; there is a crown of glory, and it is mine; there is a God, and he is mine: all is mine, because Christ is mine. O then he sings of mercy. But,

6. To name no more, The *sureness* and *firmness* of the mercy makes them sing; they are called the *sure mercies of David*, Isa. lv. 3. The Septuagint renders it as the apostle does, Acts xiii. 34. τὰ ὅσια Δαεὶδ, the *holy, just*, and *faithful* * *things of David.* The mercies of God in Christ, our mystical David, are his *holy, just*, and *faithful things;* his holiness, justice, and faithfulness are concerned to make good and secure his mercy to them that believe. Hence it is said of believing penitents, 1 John i. 9. that *God is faithful and just to forgive him his sins.* Faithfulness hath a respect to God's promise, and justice a respect to the price and ransom paid by Christ: and God hath bound himself; he is bound by his own faithfulness, on the one hand, he will be faithful to his word of promise; and he is bound by his own justice on the other hand, which is fully satisfied in Christ: he is thus obliged to give out mercy, and secure it for the believer; this makes it indeed the *sure mercies of David;* and so they are eternally secured, and therefore everlasting mercies. In a word, the thing that makes them sing of mercy is, When then they see the mercy to bear in it the tokens of God's love; when they find such a mercy is not only the answer of prayer, but the fruit of God's electing grace; when they see God's everlasting love to be the fountain from whence it flows, Christ's everlasting righteousness the channel in which it runs, and the powerful operation of the Spirit making the effectual conveyance and application of all.—Now, these are some of the mercies, and the things in these mercies, both more ordinary and extraordinary, that are ground of singing: *I will sing of mercy.* But to the other part of the song.

* τὰ πιστὰ.

II. The *second* thing was, to speak of the *judgments* that the Lord's people meet with; and what it is *in* judgment that may be matter of a song of praise unto God. To sing of mercy is what I understand, may you say; but how to sing of judgment, I want to know. Here then I would follow the same method as in the former head, namely, 1. To speak of some of these *judgments* they may meet with. 2. What it is *in* judgment that may be matter of a song of praise to God.

1*st*, Now, as to the *first* of these, *viz.* The *judgments* of which they are to sing; in order to clear this, you would know, that the word *judgment* hath various sanctifications in scripture; I shall name some of these.

1. *Judgment* sometimes signifies (when spoken with relation to *man*) *understanding* and *equity:* sometimes it signifies *understanding*, and a faculty of *discerning*, in opposition to *ignorance; I pray that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge, and in all* JUDGMENT, Phil. i. 9. Sometimes it signifies *equity*, in opposition to *injustice; I know Abraham, that he will command his children and his household after him, that they keep the ways of the Lord, and do justice and* JUDGMENT, Gen. xviii. 19. Now, though the doing judgment thus, and that with an understanding heart, be one of the ways by which we are to sing the praises of God and glorify him, of which more afterwards; yet other things are here intended. Therefore,

2. *Judgment* (when spoken of with relation to *God*) signifies several other things; as,

(1.) It sometimes signifies God's *just* and *righteous government of the world*, particularly by Christ Jesus; *The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all* JUDGMENT *to the Son*, John v. 22. *Righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne;* and that both in the iron rod, by which he takes vengeance on his enemies; and in the golden sceptre, by which he rules his own people. And indeed, whatever be intended in the text, this government of Christ is matter of a song of praise; *The Lord reigns, let the earth rejoice; the Lord reigns, let the earth be glad.* But,

(2.) *Judgment* sometimes signifies the *rectitude* of *Christ's administration*, in his reforming the world, and bringing things into order, which sin and Satan had put into confusion; so may that word be understood, John ix. 34. *For* JUDGMENT *am I come into this world:* and again, *Now is the* JUDGMENT *of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out.* Of this *judgment* also will the believer sing, when the Spirit is come to convince, as of *sin* and *righteousness*, so also of *judgment; because the prince of this world is judged.* But,

(3.) *Judgment* sometimes signifies the *precepts of the law*, as ye know they are frequently called, God's testimonies and *judgments*, especially, Psal. cxix. And when a man learns these in a gospel-way, they are matter of a song of praise also, Psal. cxix. 7. *I will praise thee with uprightness of heart, when I have learned thy righteous* JUDGMENTS. Yea, they delight therein, and sing of these *judgments*, Psal. cxix. 54. *Thy statutes have been my song in the house of my pilgrimage.*

(4.) *Judgment* sometimes signifies the *doctrine of the gospel; I will put my Spirit upon him, and he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles*, Mat. xii. 18. It is cited out of Isa. xlii. 1. *He shall shew judgment to the Gentiles;* that is, He will publish the gospel; the way and method of salvation, which he came, as a Prophet, to teach and proclaim; as a Priest, to work out; and as a King, to apply: and if we should take *judgment* in this sense, surely all believers sing of judgment, whenever faith is in exercise; for the gospel is the song of the saints; it is the joyful sound, while with joy they draw water

out of this well of ſalvation. Pſal. lxxxix. 15. Iſa. xii. 3.

(5.) It ſometimes ſignifies the *puniſhment inflicted upon Chriſt*, when he ſubſtitute himſelf in our room; *He was taken from priſon and from* JUDGMENT; or, as it may be rendered, and as you will ſee in the margin of ſome of your Bibles, *He was taken away* BY DISTRESS *and judgment;—while it pleaſed the Lord to bruiſe him*, Iſa. liii. 8, 10. O but this infinitely ſevere act of juſtice and judgment againſt Chriſt was an infinite act of mercy towards us! And, as we had periſhed eternally, if we had not been thus judged and condemned in a Surety; ſo this *judgment* execute upon him is noble matter of a ſong. To ſing of *judgment*, in this ſenſe, is one of the ſweeteſt hymns to the praiſe of God.

(6.) *Judgment* ſometimes ſignifies the *ſolemnity* of the *laſt day*; *Behold, the Lord comes with ten thouſands of his ſaints, to execute* JUDGMENT *upon all*, Jude, ver. 14, 15. And though it will be a day of terrible vengeance to the wicked Chriſtleſs world, yet the ſaints may ſing of *judgment* in this ſenſe, and *lift up their heads with joy*; for, *the day of their redemption draws near: when Chriſt, who is their life ſhall appear, they ſhall appear with him in glory. Awake and ſing, ye that dwell in the duſt.*

(7.) *Judgment* ſometimes ſignifies the *puniſhment of the wicked* in a *wrathful manner*; and the heavy plagues which he pours out upon any perſon or people, whether it be ſword, famine, peſtilence, or any other ſtroak; Exod. vi. 6. *I will redeem you from Egypt* (ſays God of Iſrael) *with a ſtretched-out hand, and with great* JUDGMENTS; that is, with great *plagues* and *puniſhments* upon the Egyptians. *The Lord is known by the* JUDGMENTS *which he executeth.* And ſometimes the Lord gives his church and people occaſion to ſing of *judgment* in this ſenſe, as Iſrael did at the Red-ſea, after God had poured out all his plagues upon Pharaoh and upon his proud hoſt; on which occaſion, you have the ſong of Moſes, Exod. xv. In this ſenſe it is ſaid, *The righteous ſhall rejoice when he ſees the vengeance*; not that he will love to feed his eyes upon the blood and ruin of his fellow-creatures, but rejoice in that God is glorified in the deſtruction of his enemies, and the ſalvation of his church and people.

(8.) *Judgment* ſometimes ſignifies the *chaſtiſement* of the *godly*: for, as there is a *wrathful judgment*, which God exerciſes towards his eneenemies; ſo there is a *fatherly judgment*, which he exerciſes towards his friends. In this ſenſe we may underſtand that word in the inſtitution of the ſacrament, even as it concerns the godly themſelves, *He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation* [or, JUDGMENT,] *to himſelf*, as the word may be rendered, 1 Cor. xi. 29. And indeed, as a believer may communicate unworthily, ſo his unworthy communicating may bring on him heavy *judgments* or *chaſtiſements* from the Lord; *For this cauſe many are weak and ſickly among you, and many ſleep*, ver. 30. *Judgment*, I ſay, ſignifies ſometimes *fatherly judgments* or *chaſtiſements*: and thus it is to be underſtood, 1 Pet. iv 17. *The time is come that* JUDGMENT *muſt begin at the houſe of God*; and in this ſenſe eſpecially I conceive *judgment* to be meant in the text, *I will ſing of mercy and of* JUDGMENT: So that by judgment here we are to underſtand all the *hardſhips* and *ſorrows* of a believer's lot, whether punitive or probative, *that is*, whether for the puniſhment of his ſins, or the probation of his graces: all penal diſpenſations for his correction, or whatever diſpenſations make for his trial: all adverſity, ſufferings, and diſtreſſes, of whatſoever kind.

Now, if you aſk more particularly what theſe judgments are? I think they may be all reduced to theſe four ordinary words, 1. The judgment of *affliction*. 2. The judgment of *temptation*. 3. The judgment of *deſertion*. 4. The judgment of *ſin* itſelf, which may be ſo called, when a man is left to fall into it for the puniſhment of other ſins. I am not yet come to ſhew how theſe, or any of theſe, may afford matter of a ſong; I am as yet telling you what are the judgments they may meet withal. And,

1. The judgment of *affliction*. Many are the afflictions of the righteous, even their outward afflictions: ſometimes they are afflicted in their bodies, with ſickneſs; ſometimes in their eſtate, with poverty; ſometimes in their name, with reproach; ſometimes in their relations, either by the graceleſneſs of their relations, or by their death; if they were gracious, then they are afflicted with grief that they have loſt them; if they were graceleſs, then they are afflicted with fear leſt they be gone to hell; if they know not whether they died in Chriſt or not, they are afflicted with perplexity, becauſe they know not what is become of them: ſometimes they are afflicted in their families, with this and the other croſs, and diſorder, and confuſion; ſometimes in their neighbours and brethren, whether wicked or godly, from whom they may have trials of many ſorts; ſometimes in their cauſe they maintain, and for conſcience ſake, they may be perſecuted and harraſſed; *If any man will live godly in this world, he muſt ſuffer perſecution: through much tribulation we muſt enter into the kingdom of God.* There is a neceſſity for it; for the believer here is like the tribe of Manaſſeh, half on this ſide Jordan, in the land of the Amorites; and half on the other ſide, in the holy land: I mean, he hath both corruption and grace, and hence a neceſſity of affliction and ſuffering; for if he hath any good in him, the devil will ſurely gnaſh at him, and endeavour, if he can, to devour him; and if he hath evil in him, he muſt look that God will afflict him. But,

2. There is the judgment of *temptation*, that the children of God ſometimes meet with, even *the fiery darts of the devil:* for the Lord ſees fit ſometimes to let Satan looſe on his people; who will not be wanting to improve any liberty granted to him, with his uttermoſt power and policy, as we ſee in the caſe of Job. It is ſtrange to read how Chriſt was tempted of the devil, Mat. iv. 3,—10. And after that, let none think ſtrange, that the followers of Chriſt may be tempted to deny their ſonſhip; tempted to doubt of God's care; tempted to deſtroy themſelves; yea, tempted to worſhip the devil: for, *In all theſe things he was tempted like as we are, yet without ſin*; and in that he himſelf, though he ſinned not, yet ſuffered, *being tempted, he is able to ſuccour them that are tempted.* The children of grace may be tempted to atheiſm, and to doubt of the being of a God; tempted to blaſphemy, and horrible things, that they dare not tell for a world. It

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is ſaid by the ſpouſe, Song ii. 4. *He brought me to the banqueting-houſe, and his banner over me was love.* Why? what is the meaning of a banner in a banqueting-houſe? A banner is rather for a battle: but indeed, Sirs, here the banquet and the banner go together; for the battle many times follows the banquet. It may be, Satan and corruption are ſleeping, as it were now; but I aſſure you they are not dead: ſo long as ye have ſin, ye ſhall have temptations to ſin; ſo long as there is a finger of the believer out of heaven, the devil will be ſtriking at it. If temptations have not aſſaulted you already ſince the ſacrament, as I fear they have, yet be ſure the Philiſtines will be upon you.

3. There is the judgment of *deſertion*, which is yet ſorer than any of the former; *Thou didſt hide thy face, and I was troubled.* Sometimes the believer comes under the ſad loſs of the light of God's countenance, and the ſenſe of his love; and may loſe his gracious comfortable preſence very ſuddenly, even when he is juſt opening the door of his heart, as it were, to let him in; *I opened to my Beloved, but my Beloved had withdrawn himſelf, and was gone*, Cant. v. 6. Sometimes he loſes that comfortable preſence very unworthily, even in a fit of drouſineſs and ſpiritual ſecurity, as in that ſame fifth of the Song, ver. 3. Sometimes he loſes it very long; *I ſought him, but I found him not; I called on him, but he gave me no anſwer.* I went from duty to duty, from ordinance to ordinance, and yet not ſo much as a word or a look from him. In this caſe, it cannot but be a very melancholy time with the believer, when he goes *mourning without the ſun*, ſaying, *O that I knew where I might find him! O that it were with me as in months paſt!* Eſpecially if he knows that he hath not loſt that preſence by ſovereignty on the Lord's part, but ſinfully on his part, and that he hath ſinned him away. How ill went it with Aſaph, when he was forced to ſay, *I remembred God, and was troubled*, Pſal. lxxvii. 3. Why? he remembred his own unkindneſs and ingratitude, that provoked the Lord to be gone. O! it is not eaſy to comfort the ſoul in this caſe. This ſoul-deſertion is ordinarily attended with the want of life and ſpirit for the performance of duty; *Mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, ſo that I am not able to look up*, Pſal. xl. 12. His ſpiritual ſtrength was ſo worn away, that he was neither able to pray nor praiſe; or do any duty with livelineſs or activity. In this caſe, the ſoul cannot pray with life or power; it cannot hear with joy or profit, it cannot meditate with any delight or ſpirituality; it cannot act with any freedom or liberty; it cannot ſuffer for God with any zeal, patience, boldneſs, or reſolution. O what a judgment is deſertion! In this caſe, the ſoul is filled ſometimes with fearful apprehenſions of the wrath of God, and everlaſting vengeance; though believers be ſecured againſt this, by the oath of God, the blood of Chriſt, and the ſeal of the Spirit; yet, under unbelief, temptation, and deſertion, they may have fearful apprehenſions of it, and that for their correction for their ſins; for, though he *pardon their iniquity*, he *will take vengeance on their inventions.* Here the believer may be afraid of terrible judgments; *My fleſh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgments*, Pſal. cxix. 120. He may ſometimes be afraid, leſt God lay open the filthineſs and wickedneſs of his heart to the world, and make him a reproach and a ſcandal to the godly and the wicked; this made the pſalmiſt pray, *O make me not the reproach of the fooliſh: let none that fear thy name be aſhamed for my ſake.* Sometimes he may be afraid leſt God ſtrike him ſuddenly with a viſible and ſignal judgment, and take him off the ſtage in a terrible manner; hence ſays David, *Take me not away in thy wrath.* Sometimes he may be afraid leſt he be the Jonas that hath raiſed, or may raiſe the ſtorm of God's wrath againſt the family, the congregation, the church, the land where he lives: the apprehenſions of this nature may be grievous and perplexing, and create a multitude of thoughts within him; yea, in this deſerted caſe, he may be filled with the *terrors of God* and the *arrows of the Almighty drinketh up his ſpirit*, Job vi. 4. They may be brought to that paſs, that the *ſorrows of hell compaſs them about*, ſo as they *chooſe ſtrangling and death rather than life;* and yet all this may be in a way of fatherly judgment, for the puniſhment of their ſins; as David's bones were broken for his murder and adultery: though ſometimes he hath done it in ſovereignty; yet the terrors of the Lord may bring them the length of diſtraction; *While I ſuffer thy terrors, I am diſtracted*, Pſal. lxxxviii. 15. O what a ſtorm is this! Deſertion may come to a great height, and bring along with it dreadful ſtorms of fear, terror, and diſtraction. It may be, your mountain is ſtanding ſtrong, believer; but look to yourſelf, and beware of God-provoking ſins, for he may hide his face, and then be ſure ye ſhall be troubled. Many, under ſenſible enjoyments, are like a man in a meadow, the ſun ſhining upon him, and, or ever he is aware, the miſt comes about him, and he knows not where he is. There may come a miſt about your ſoul, that you will hardly know where you are, or where you have been, or whether your former experiences have been any thing, but a dream. However, this is one of the judgments that the people of God may meet with.

4. There is the judgment of *ſin*, which is worſt of all, and hath the nature of a judgment; when God lets the man fall into one ſin for the puniſhment of another, as he may do even with his own, when his fatherly anger burns hotly againſt them; this is the ſaddeſt judgment and ſevereſt chaſtiſement that, I think, a child of God can meet with: and it would ſeem that David's adultery was thus, in part, chaſtiſed, by letting him fall into murder; and Peter's pride and ſelf-confidence, by letting him fall into a threefold denial of his Lord and Maſter; and thus he may do till the time of reſtoring their ſouls, which he hath determined, ſhall come. O how ill, how dreadfully ill does it go with the children of God, when they are brought to that pitiful complaint, *O Lord, why haſt thou made us to err from thy ways, and hardened our hearts from thy fear?* Iſa. lxiii. 17. And when led captive by ſin, Satan, and an evil heart; by *the luſt of the eye, the luſt of the fleſh, and the pride of life.*——Thus I have told you ſome of theſe judgments that the people of God may meet with.

2*dly*, Now the *ſecond* queſtion upon this head, was, What it is *in* or *about* judgment, that may afford matter of ſinging, or of a ſong of praiſe? And now, ſome may be thinking, O Sir, theſe judgments you have been ſpeaking of, are juſt the

the things that mar all my ſinging, and it will be ſtrange, if there be any matter of ſinging, notwithſtanding of theſe; for if theſe be the judgments, what can be the ſong or the ground of ſinging, when they afford ſuch ground of ſighing and lamentation? I ſhall endeavour to ſhew you, upon what grounds the ſovereign Lord may even make theſe things matter of a ſong of praiſe. And,

1. Say you, What ground to ſing of judgment may a child of God have, when *affliction* is the judgment? Indeed, *No affliction of itſelf is joyous, but grievous;* but *the Lord can bring meat out of the eater, and ſweet out of the ſtrong*; and a ſweet ſong out of a ſad ſtroak and affliction: Hence David ſings of affliction, and ſays, *It was good for me that I was afflicted, that I might learn thy ſtatutes*, Pſal. cxix. 71. Now, there is ground to ſing of judgment, when affliction is not in wrath, but in love; when it comes not from a wrathful, but a fatherly judge; when it is not ſatisfactory, but caſtigatory; when it is not to ſatisfy divine juſtice, but to correct vicious habits; when it is not expiatory, but exprobatory; when it is not to expiate ſin, but to prove grace: *That the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold that periſheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praiſe, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jeſus Chriſt*, 1 Pet. i. 7. That Chriſt drank out all the wrath out of the cup of affliction, and left nothing behind but love for his people to drink, O what matter of ſong is here! For, *Being juſtified by his blood, we are ſaved from wrath through him*, Rom. v. 9.—There is ground to ſing of judgment, when affliction is attended with *inſtruction*, even ſaving inſtruction: to this purpoſe the pſalmiſt ſings, *Bleſſed is the man whom thou chaſteneſt, and teacheſt out of thy law.*—When, by affliction, a man comes to learn the ſinfulneſs of ſin, and the evil of it; the emptineſs of the creature, and the vanity of it; and the fulneſs of Chriſt, and his all-ſufficiency. O when the God of heaven does famiſh all our gods on earth, and ſtarve us as to creature-comforts, to make us hunger after the fulneſs and ſweetneſs of Chriſt. What matter of ſinging is this!—There is ground to ſing of judgment, when affliction makes us *conform* to the *Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, who, as *he ſuffered for us*, ſo *he left us an example that we ſhould follow his ſteps:* ſurely, to be herein conform to the Son of God, who *endured the contradiction of ſinners againſt himſelf*, is ground of ſinging.—Again, there is ground to ſing of judgment, when affliction tends to the *deſtruction* of ſin; *For by this ſhall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit to take away his ſin.*—When it tends to gain the heart more to God, and wean the heart from the world, and all the things of the world, and luſts of the world; and is a fire to remove the droſs, and a file to remove the ruſt.—Again, there is ground to ſing of judgment, when afflictions are *badges of honour;* when they are ſigns of love; *For whom the Lord loves he chaſtens:* when they are marks of ſonſhip; for, *He ſcourges every ſon whom he receives*: and, *If you be without chaſtiſement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye baſtards, and not ſons*, Heb. xii. 8. Yea, what a badge of honour is it, when a man is helped to a patient ſubmiſſion to his heavenly Father? What an honour did God put upon Job, in that ſignal ſentence, *Ye have heard of the patience of Job?* Alexander the conqueror is not ſo renowned as Job the ſufferer.—Again, there is ground to ſing of judgment, in that affliction tends to make you *happy* and *holy; We are afflicted for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holineſs:* For, though the affliction be *grievous for the time*, yet *afterwards it yields the peaceable fruits of righteouſneſs to them that are exerciſed thereby*, Heb. xii. 10, 11. When the deluge of affliction makes us fly as a dove to the window of the ark, and when by faith we make uſe of the water of affliction to make us ſwim the faſter to Chriſt; then is it ground and matter of a ſong.—In a word, there is ground here to ſing of judgments, in that they make *preparation* for glory; *For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.* And ſo the worſt that God does with his children by affliction, is but to whip them home to heaven.——Thus you ſee what ground there is to ſing of judgment, when affliction is the judgment.

2. What ground to ſing of judgment may a child of God have, when *temptation* is the judgment? Indeed, under temptation he is ready to ſay, *All theſe things are againſt me*, and yet they may all be *working together for his good:* and therefore, if a child of God be tempted, in the manner that I ſpoke of before, there is here ground to ſing of judgment, in that temptation forces him to his knees: the more furiouſly Satan tempts, the more ſeriouſly the believer cries and prays; *A meſſenger of Satan was ſent to buffet me, but for this I beſought the Lord thrice*, 2 Cor. xii. 7, 8.—There is here ground to ſing of judgment, in that temptation abates the man's *pride*, ver. 7. *Leſt I ſhould be exalted above meaſure*, this meſſenger of Satan was ſent: the temptation that humbles the ſoul, and makes it ly low in the duſt, is matter of praiſe.—There is here ground to ſing of judgment, in that temptation is ſometimes the opportunity of the *communication* of *grace; I beſought the Lord, and he ſaid to me, My grace is ſufficient for thee, and my ſtrength is made perfect in thy weakneſs;* hereupon the man falls a ſinging, *Moſt glodly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Chriſt may reſt upon me; for when I am weak, then am I ſtrong*, ver. 8, 9, 10.—There is ground to ſing of judgment here, in that many times temptation to ſin, keeps from *committing* a ſin: the more Satan tempts to blaſphemy, the more the believer trembles at it, and is afraid of himſelf, while he does not ſee the tempter.—There is ground to ſing of judgment, in that the temptation hath *mercy* in it; mercy to others, while we are the more fitted to comfort them when they are under temptation, 2 Cor. i. 4.; mercy to ourſelves, in that we become the objects of the Mediator's ſympathy; *For we have not an High-prieſt that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all things tempted like as we are, yet without ſin*; therefore will ſuccour them that are tempted.—There is here ground to ſing of judgment, in that as it is *no ſin* to be tempted; ſo the temptation can do no harm, where there is no yielding: I ſaid, that it is no ſin to be tempted, and I ſay it again; though to yield to the leaſt temptation is a ſin, yet it is no ſin to be tempted to the greateſt ſin; for Chriſt, who could not ſin, was tempted to ſin: there is no ſin in it, where there is no yielding to it: in that caſe, it is the ſin of the tempter, but not the ſin of the tempted.—But, ſay you, O the temptation

temptation conquers me, and therefore how can I ſing of judgment in this reſpect? Why, the prevailing of a temptation is a ſad thing indeed; but yet there may be ground to ſing of judgment, if the prevailing of the temptation tend to the increaſe of grace and godly ſorrow, as Peter's fall coſt him many a ſalt tear; and if the prevailing of the temptation tend to the increaſe of watchfulneſs, and make him more afraid to commit ſin, and more afraid to neglect duty, and more careful to improve Chriſt; in this caſe there is ground to ſing of judgment.—Why, ſay you, if the prevailing of a temptation will iſſue in a ſong of praiſe, may not that make us careleſs whether we yield or not? *Anſwer.* The prevailing of a temptation is one thing, and the yielding to a temptation is another thing; the prevailing of it may iſſue in joy, as I have told you, but the yielding to it may iſſue in ſorrow; and if that ſorrow be turned into joy, it will be a wonder of grace: O! *Shall we thus ſin, that grace may abound? God forbid.* The wind of temptation is croſs to the wind of the Spirit; and if we flee before the wind of temptation, we flee away from God and heaven: and therefore, if we ſing of judgment ſweetly and ſafely, it will be by reaſon of the wiſdom of God making uſe of croſs winds to blow us to heaven, and not of our fleeing before theſe.——Thus you ſee what ground there is to ſing of judgment, when and even though temptation is the judgment.

3. What ground to ſing of judgment may a child of God have, when *deſertion* is the judgment? Deſertion and divine withdrawing is a very heavy caſe, whether it be a withdrawing in reſpect of grace, the withholding the influences of the Spirit, the quickening, grace-exciting influences thereof; or in reſpect of comfort, the withholding the light of his countenance, and leaving the ſoul in the dark: when light is away, there is nothing but darkneſs in the air; when the Lord is away, nothing but darkneſs, diſorder, and confuſion in the ſoul. Now, *How can I ſing one of the ſongs of Zion in ſuch a dark land?* Nay rather, *Mine eye, mine eye weeps, becauſe the Comforter that ſhould relieve my ſoul is far removed:* Inſtead of ſinging, *I muſt hang my harp upon the willows.* Is there any ground to ſing of judgment, when deſertion is the judgment, unleſs it be a heavy ſong, while I cannot but *mourn as a dove, and chatter as a crane?* Why, even in deſertion, the child of God (and indeed none but a child of heaven is capable of deſertion) he may ſing of judgment; in regard, that as the ſeed of grace may be where there is not the flower of joy; ſo, though *weeping may endure for a night, yet joy comes in the morning; and they that ſow in tears, ſhall reap in joy:* and the reaping time is haſtening on, for deſertion is but for a *ſhort time,* Iſa. liv. 8. There the Lord gives this to be the ground of ſinging, even in ſuch a caſe; *For a ſmall moment have I forſaken thee, but with everlaſting mercy will I gather thee; in a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment, but with everlaſting kindneſs will I have mercy on thee.*—There is ground to ſing of judgment, when deſertion tends to *awaken the ſoul* out of its *drouſy diſtemper: I ſleep,* ſays the ſpouſe, Song v. 2. and preſently Chriſt withdraws; *My Beloved had withdrawn himſelf and was gone.* Why, then ſhe fell a *ſeeking him whom her ſoul loved.* It is true, it is one of the ſad effects of deſertion many times, that the ſoul grows careleſs, and cannot ſeek with any life: but yet, if a godly ſoul become ſenſible of the Lord's departing (for ſome time, the Lord may be away, and they do not know or conſider, as it is ſaid of Samſon, *He wiſt not that the Lord was departed from him;* but I ſay, when a godly ſoul becomes ſenſible of it) and ſees him going off, or hears him ſaying, Farewel: O then, like friends at parting, he follows him, and cannot part with him.—There is ground to ſing of judgment here, when deſertion tends to *alienate the heart from the world;* when the ſoul refuſes to take comfort from any thing in time, becauſe the abſence of Chriſt darkens all, or makes all things bitter to you, becauſe his ſweet preſence is away, it is matter of praiſe.—There is ground here to ſing of judgment, in that deſertion makes you *prize the light of his countenance* the more, ſaying, *O to ſee thy power and glory, as I have ſeen it in the ſanctuary!* When the night of deſertion makes you welcome the riſing of the Sun of righteouſneſs, it is a happy parting; that contributes to make a joyful meeting.—There is here ground to ſing of judgment, in that deſertion makes you *hate ſin* that cauſed the ſame, as a ſtone in the pipe hinders the current of the water: that deſertion is matter of praiſe, that makes ſin odious to you, as that which robs you of your beſt jewels, and that makes you lament his abſence, and the cauſe of it. It is indeed matter of ſighing, to want his preſence; but it is matter of ſinging, to lament his abſence. It is ground of ſorrow, to be without him at any time; but it is ground of praiſe, that you cannot live contentedly without him: I mean not a ſinful diſcontent, that frets at his abſence; but a holy diſcontent, that longs for his preſence, and laments his abſence; this I call matter of praiſe.—There is ground to ſing of judgment, in that Chriſt drank out all the wrath of God out of the cup of deſertion, when he ſuffered that heavy deſertion himſelf, that made him cry, ELI, ELI, LAMASABACHTHANI; *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?*—Further, there is ground to ſing of judgment here, in that this deſertion makes the *expectation of heaven ſweet* here, and the *poſſeſſion of it pleaſant* hereafter: when the believer longs for heaven the more now, and loves it the better, then, is it not matter of praiſe? O there is no hiding, no deſertion, no cloud there, but a conſtant viſion of glory; *We ſhall be like him, for we ſhall ſee him as he is.*—In a word, there is ground to ſing of judgment, in that deſertion makes room for *faith* and *hope,* till *viſion* and *fruition* come. It is matter of ſorrow indeed, when there is occaſion to ſay, *Verily thou art a God that hideſt thyſelf, O God of Iſrael, the Saviour:* but it is matter of praiſe, when the ſoul is brought to ſay, *I will wait on the Lord, that hideth his face from the houſe of Jacob, and I will look for him,* Iſa. viii. 17. It may be, ye get a breathing now and then in the air of ſenſible manifeſtations, but ye muſt up to faith and hope again; and through the cloud ye muſt look for him, and bleſs him when he helps you to do ſo; for, though it were a killing deſertion, or a flaying-like diſpenſation, yet there is reaſon to ſing, when he helps you to ſay, *Though he ſlay me, yet will I truſt in him.*——Thus you ſee what ground there is to ſing of judgment, even when deſertion is the judgment.

4. What ground to ſing of judgment may a

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child of God have, when *ſin* is a part of the judgment; when either the ſins of others are the affliction, or his own ſins are the affliction? When the *ſins of others* are the affliction, can there be any ground to ſing of judgment? When I ſee the generation loaden with ſins and abominations, grievouſly departing from the Lord, ſurely it is ground of ſighing and lamentation; and it is duty to *ſigh and cry for all the abominations that are done in the midſt of Jeruſalem*, Ezek. ix. 4. It is true: and yet the ſong of praiſe muſt not go down among the children of God; for there is ground to ſing in this caſe, when ye can ſay, *I beheld tranſgreſſors and was grieved.* For, as it is child-like to be grieved for the injuries done to your Father; ſo it is Chriſt-like, for *he was grieved for the hardneſs of their hearts:* Yet it is matter of ſinging, as it is a mark of love to God; for one may weep for his own ſins from fear of hell, but he weeps for the ſins of others from love to God.—It is matter of ſinging, when the more ſin you ſee in others, it makes you *hate ſin the more*, and ſwim againſt the ſtream: when the faſter they run to hell, it makes you run the faſter to heaven, and ſets you a praying; that when they are haſting to the priſon, ye may haſten to a palace.—It is matter of ſinging, when the ſins of others are the *glaſs wherein ye ſee your own hearts*, and ſee the roots of all that wickedneſs to be within you; and therefore are made the more thankful, that God reſtrains you by his power from doing the ſame; and conſtrains you by his grace to do otherwiſe. When ye are helped to ſay thankfully, what the Phariſee ſaid boaſtingly, *The Lord be thanked that I am not as other men; and that I have not ſo learned Chriſt.*—It is matter of ſinging alſo, when their ſins make you *more holy;* and when their unſavourineſs makes your graces to ſend forth a *fragrant ſmell:* and when thereby the Lord gives you an occaſion to *convince* and *convert* them; and to be the inſtruments of doing good to their ſouls.——Well, ſay ye, but the great queſtion is, When my *own ſins* are the affliction, can there be any ground to ſing of judgment? Indeed ſinning can be no ground of ſinging; for ſin is in itſelf a damnable thing, worſe than hell: and, in God's name, I will ſay, Whatever tends to diſcourage holineſs, and encourage ſin, let it be ANATHEMA; and curſed be the preaching that tends to the encouragement of ſin; yea, curſed be the thought, in the preacher or hearer, that makes the doctrine of grace an encouragement thereto. Many ſuch thoughts may enter into us all; but may vengeance from heaven come down upon them, and deſtroy them in us, that we may not blaſpheme a holy ſinleſs Jeſus, to make him a miniſter of ſin. However, ſin being the worſt of all affliction and judgment, it would be an everlaſting damp to the ſong of mercy and judgment, if a ſovereign God could not, in his infinite wiſdom, bring a ſong of praiſe out of the evil of ſin. Why then, there is ground to ſing, notwithſtanding of ſin, when God makes your ſin a *burden to you*, and you to look upon yourſelves as wretched becauſe of it, ſaying, *O wretched man that I am! Who ſhall deliver me from the body of this ſin and death?* When the burden of ſin makes you *weary of this life;* ſaying with Rebecca, *I am weary of my life becauſe of the daughters of Heth.*—There is ground to ſing, notwithſtanding of ſin, when God makes the *prevalency of ſin* the mean of drawing you to a *Saviour*, and to the *blood of Chriſt that cleanſes from all ſin;* when daily ſin makes daily application to the *fountain open for ſin and uncleanneſs;* when the bitterneſs of ſin makes Chriſt ſweet and precious to you, and the ſting of ſin draws out your eye to look to the brazen ſerpent; and ſo the man ſees God get more glory, and Chriſt more honour, and his righteouſneſs more renown, then he ſings and *glories in his infirmities, that the power of Chriſt may reſt upon him.*—There is ground to ſing, notwithſtanding of ſin, when the ſenſe of ſin makes a man to *judge himſelf*, and condemn himſelf, that he may not be judged and condemned of the Lord; when it makes him examine himſelf more ſtrictly, ſaying, *Search me, O God, and try if there be any wicked way in me;* and obſerve himſelf more cloſely, ſo as to watch over his heart and way, ſo as to find out ſin, and expel it, through grace, and live more circumſpectly for the future.—There is ground to ſing, notwithſtanding of ſin, when ſin makes a man to *abhor himſelf*, and to *repent in duſt and in aſhes;* when it makes him, with David, to *water his couch with his tears;* and with Peter, to go *out and weep bitterly*, and lays him low in the duſt before the Lord: 'Therefore, as one ſays, Better 'is the ſin that makes us humble, than the 'duty that makes us proud.' The hypocrite's riſing is the mean of his fall; but the believer's fall, is the mean of his riſing. While the ſenſe of his ſin makes him holy, and ſenſe of his pride makes him humble, his hypocriſy ſincere, his hardneſs makes him ſoft, his carnality makes him ſpiritual; happy that victory of ſin over a man, that iſſues in a bloody war againſt it: yet no thanks to ſin, but to a ſovereign wiſe God, that turns the malady into a medicine——If any ſhould hereupon take encouragement to ſin, let them conſider, if they do ſo, whether their ſpot can be the ſpot of God's children; for, *to ſin, that grace may abound*, is a preſumptuous ſin of the higheſt degree; and true grace dare not draw ſuch a bitter concluſion from ſuch ſweet promiſes; or, if a child of God ſhould do ſo, and make bold with ſin, let him conſider, if this be all his *kindneſs to his friend?* Though God do not damn you, he may ſend you to a hell in this life, and fill you with horrors, terrors, and agonies of ſoul, ſuch as I ſpake of before: let this therefore be a rail to keep you back from the burning mountain. To ſing of judgment in reſpect of ſin, is not to ſing of our folly in committing it, but to ſing of God's wiſdom in deſtroying it: you have no cauſe to ſing of ſin, which of itſelf brings death, ruin, and damnation; but ſtill cauſe to ſing of judgment concerning ſin, or of the Lord's executing judgment upon it.—But what if *hell* be the judgment at laſt, would you have me to ſing in that caſe? I fear I go to hell when all is done; I fear I never get to heaven; and how ſhould I ſing? I *anſwer*, Have you not cauſe to ſing, that ye are out of hell, and that it is not as yet your lot? But I will tell you, if you were beginning to ſing, it would be the beginning of heaven; *Bleſſed are they that dwell in thy houſe; they will be ſtill praiſing thee.* Will you ſay, as an honeſt exerciſed Chriſtian once ſaid, when tempted to fear hell, and thereupon to give over the duties of religion, 'Why, ſays he, if I ſhall never praiſe 'him in heaven, I ſhall endeavour to praiſe

'him

'him all that I can on earth.' This would be a ſweet token that you ſhall ſing in heaven for ever, among the redeemed.——And thus you ſee, whether we view judgment with reſpect to affliction, temptation, deſertion, or ſin, in what reſpects it is that we are to ſing of judgment; it is even to ſing of the mercy that God exerciſes in theſe judgments: and ſo *I will ſing of mercy and of judgment.* It comes all to this, as if the pſalmiſt ſhould ſay, *I will ſing of* MERCIFUL JUDGMENTS; for judgment is mercy, as it is the matter of the ſong; or, to take them ſeparately, *I will ſing of mercy* IN *mercies;* and, *I will ſing of mercy* IN *judgment:* and ſo I will ſing of my blinks and of my ſhowers; I will ſing both of my cloudy and my clear day; both of my ups and downs; both of ſmiles and frowns; I will ſing both of frowning and favourable-like diſpenſations; *I will ſing of mercy and judgment; unto thee, O Lord, will I ſing.*——So much for the ſecond head.

III. The *third* general head propoſed was, What this ſinging *imports;* and *how* we are to ſing of mercy and judgment to the praiſe of God. I ſhall ſpeak a little to the *quality* and *import* of this ſong.

1ſt, The *import* of this ſinging: *I will ſing to the Lord;* that is, I will praiſe the Lord; and it does not ly in the ſimple ſound of a voice, but imports the glorifying of God with our hearts and lips, in our lives, and in our death or ſuffering.

1. To ſing to the Lord, is to glorify him with our *hearts;* to give him the love and adoration of our hearts. In this ſinging, there is the inward act of the ſoul; *Bleſs the Lord, O my ſoul: and all that is within me, bleſs his holy name,* Pſal. ciii. 1. It imports a deep impreſſion of God upon the ſoul, and a lively ſenſe of his mercy in Chriſt, and of our own unworthineſs of it: and here the ſoul, and all that is within it, is acting and moving: the judgment moves with admiration and wonder at God for his glorious grace; the memory moves with a thankful recording of his favours, *Forget not all his benefits;* the affections move with joy and delight in God, and love to him for the riches of his grace in Chriſt. O ſhall I not love the greateſt and beſt of Beings, for the greateſt and beſt of benefits! The heart is here employed: neither prayer nor praiſes, without the heart, are of any worth: many ſing with their voice, when their hearts are a hundred miles off, gading here and there: but a fixed heart is a ſinging heart; *My heart is fixed, O Lord; my heart is fixed, I will ſing and give praiſe.* We are called to *ſing with grace in our hearts,* Col. iii. 16.: we are to ſing with faith in our heart; *He that is ſtrong in the faith glorifies God:* we are to ſing with love in our hearts, with fear in our hearts, and with joy in our hearts.

2. To ſing to the Lord, is with our *lips* to glorify him: we are to give him *the calves of our lips.* When the heart is full of love, the tongue will be full of praiſe. Our tongues ſhould be as well-tuned organs, to ſound forth the high praiſes of God, pleading his cauſe, defending his truths, avouching his name, and confeſſing him before the world; *Thy loving kindneſs is better than life, therefore my lips ſhall praiſe thee,* Pſal. lxiii. 3. When our *hearts are inditing a good matter, our tongues will be as the pen of a ready writer,* to *ſpeak of the things that concern the king;* Pſal. xlv. 1. when our *hearts are glad,* then our *glory* [*i. e.* our *tongues,*] *will rejoice,* Pſal. xvi. 9. and xxx. 12. O! the little heavenly diſcourſe argues a very ſad degeneracy!

3. To ſing to the Lord, is, with our *life* to glorify him: when the love of our hearts, the calves of our lips, and the ſervice of our lives, are preſented unto God together, they make a harmonious ſong: the praiſe of the life is the life of praiſe; *Whoſo offereth praiſe, glorifieth me,* Pſal. l. 23. When we devote all the actions of our life to his diſpoſing will, then we ſing a ſong of praiſe unto God. When we live by faith on the Son of God; for no leſs is worth the name of life, but what is derived from him, and devoted to him, then we may be ſaid to glorify him in our lives. It is a practical way of ſinging the praiſe of God, that is here intended by the pſalmiſt, as appears from the reſt of the pſalm.

4. To ſing to the Lord, is, with our *death* and *ſufferings* to glorify him, as well as with our life and actions: thus we are called to *glorify the Lord in the fires,* Iſa. xxiv. 15. Does God call you to ſuffer affliction in perſon, name, eſtate, family, or concerns; to ſuffer want of huſband, wife, brother, ſiſter, children, or other outward comforts? Why then, you ſing of mercy and judgment, by ſuffering patiently and ſubmiſſively; and God is as much glorified by your paſſive obedience, as by your active. Whenever you are afflicted any way, believer, know that then God hath ſome employment for your graces, and expects praiſe thereby; yea, if he ſhould call you to ſuffer death and martyrdom for his name, you are to ſing his praiſe, by dying in and for the faith, as well as living by faith. O man, woman! could you die for him, that died for you? That is a great matter. "O it "is a ſmall matter to die once for Chriſt, *ſaid* "*a martyr;* if it might poſſibly be, I could "wiſh that I might die a thouſand deaths for "him!"—Thus you ſee the import of ſinging to the Lord.

2dly, As to the *qualities* of this ſong; or how we are to ſing of mercy and judgment. And,

1. We are to ſing of mercy and judgment *chearfully.* Singing is a chearful work; we are to *ſing with melody in our hearts to the Lord,* and to *make a joyful noiſe unto God.* It is an antedating of the joy of heaven; though you be in a hell of troubles and trials, yet you have reaſon to praiſe him that you are not in a hell of fire and brimſtone: though you had one hell on your back, and another in your boſom, you have reaſon to praiſe him that you are not in the midſt of hell among devils.

2. We are to ſing of mercy and judgment *highly* and *loftily,* ſaying with the angels, *Glory to God in the higheſt.* We are to praiſe him with the higheſt eſtimation, with the higheſt adoration, with the higheſt admiration, with the higheſt delight, the higheſt raviſhment, the higheſt wonder; for, as he is highly exalted above all things and beings, and above all bleſſings and praiſes; ſo his mercies are the higheſt mercies, and his judgments the greateſt deep; and therefore, as we ought to ſing loud and high, ſo we ought to ſing low. Therefore,

3. We are to ſing of mercy and judgment *humbly*

humbly and *lowly*. Pride and praiſe are inconſiſtent; and therefore we ſhould join trembling with our praiſe and ſinging; having awful impreſſions of God upon our ſouls, and knowing the infinite diſtance betwixt him and us. When the twenty-four elders ſing, they *come down from their thrones*, and *caſt down their crowns and their palms*, Rev. iv. 10. as if they would ſay, We are not worthy to ſit upon a throne, or to wear a crown in his preſence: they make their crowns and their thrones a footſtool unto him. When we ſing of mercy and judgment, we are to mind, his judgments are a great deep, and we ought to be deeply humbled before him, ſaying, *O the depth of the riches both of the wiſdom and knowledge of God! how unſearchable are his judgments, and his ways paſt finding out!* Rom. xi. 33.

4. We are to ſing of mercy and judgment *conſtantly* and *unweariedly*. Every new mercy and judgment ſhould be matter of a new ſong: and O, his mercies are new every morning, new every moment; and therefore we ſhould ſtill be ſinging and ſaying, *I will bleſs the Lord at all times, his praiſe ſhall be continually in my mouth*, Pſal. xxxiv. 1. *Let ſuch as love thy ſalvation, ſay continually, The Lord be magnified*, Pſal. xi. 16. It is true, the ſaints will never ſing without intermiſſion, till they reach above theſe clouds: it is true alſo, when they ſee mercy, they are ready to ſing; but when they cannot ſee the ſun of mercy, through the cloud of judgment, they are ready to *ſigh*, and *hang their harps upon the willows:* yet nevertheleſs, as the obligation to ſing does always take place; ſo they have always matter of praiſe, and ground to ſing of mercy and judgment.

5. We are to ſing of mercy and judgment, both *conjunctly* and *ſeverally*: when you meet with a mercy, ſing of mercy; when you meet with a judgment, ſing of judgment; when you meet with mercy and judgment both, then ſing of mercy and judgment both; and improve both for matter of a ſong of praiſe, ſo as God may be glorified, both in his mercy and judgment.

6. We are to ſing of mercy and judgment *devoutly* and *obedientially*, as knowing it to be a commanded duty. It would take many an hour to tell over all the ſcriptures, whereby we are called to praiſe the Lord: it is a good, pleaſant, and comely duty; *Praiſe ye the Lord: for it is good to ſing praiſes unto our God; for it is pleaſant, and praiſe is comely*, Pſal. cxlvii. 1. There you ſee three epithets given to this duty, to move us thereto.

(1.) It is a *ſoul-inriching* duty; it is a good way to make a ſad caſe grow better: the ſpouſe, under deſertion, fell a ſinging and ſaying, *My Beloved is white and ruddy, the chief among ten thouſands:* and never was ſhe in a better caſe than when in this praiſing tune. It is good to cry down our complaints with praiſes: it is good, in that it is all the tribute that the King of heaven can have from us; and to deny him this, is the height of treaſon, for it is rent due to him; *Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name.* It is good by way of eminency; for it is a greater mark of love than other duties: ſelf-love may influence a man to prayer; but love to God makes him praiſe. If you can draw out a long libel of complaints before God, and yet have never a word of praiſe for the mercies you enjoy, it is to be feared that ſelf-love hath the penning of your prayers. It is a token of enmity with your neighbour, when you receive many favours from him, and never ſo much as give him thanks; ſo it is a token of enmity againſt God, when notwithſtanding of his mercies, yet you do not ſing his praiſe. It is every way good.

(2.) It is a *pleaſant* duty: no muſic does God delight ſo much in, as ſinging his praiſes. It is the pleaſant work of heaven, where new ſcenes of glory will open, and open, and open to all eternity, and new ſongs of praiſe will ſtill be ſung for ever and ever. It may be you think, when once you come to heaven, you will praiſe your fill; but now, when ſo many dead weights are upon you, you cannot, and you ſhould not ſing and praiſe: well, no thanks to you to praiſe him when you are once in heaven; but, if you glorify him now in the fires, and praiſe him now, in ſpite of devils and oppoſition in your way, you do more honour to him than to praiſe him in heaven, where there is no trouble, no temptation, no ſin or ſorrow to interrupt your ſong. To ſing like Paul and Silas in the ſtocks, is more than to ſing in heaven; though not more pleaſant, yet in ſome reſpect it is more honourable, noble, and glorious. And ſo,

(3.) It is a *comely* duty; the garment of praiſe is a very graceful ornament. An ungrateful and unthankful man is an ugly ill-favoured man; nothing more uncomely in the eyes of God and man. We are to praiſe him then devoutly, under a ſenſe of duty.

7. In the *laſt* place, we are to ſing *reſolutely*, or with holy purpoſe and reſolution; ſaying, with the pſalmiſt here, *Unto thee, O Lord, will I ſing*. And, becauſe this is a part of the text, I ſhall ſhew what is *imported* in the pſalmiſt's *reſolution*, and the *manner* of expreſſing it; *I will ſing of mercy and judgment; unto thee, O Lord, will I ſing*.

(1.) I think it imports a *grounded* reſolution, that he had got a diſcovery of the glory of God's mercy and juſtice in the face of Jeſus Chriſt; and a diſcovery of the glory of God in all his merciful and afflictive diſpenſations. He had a ſenſe and impreſſion of the goodneſs of God, in all the favours that he met with; and he had a ſenſe and impreſſion of the wiſdom of God, in ordering all afflictive providences to his ſoul's advantage. *I will ſing of mercy and judgment.*

(2.) It imports a *grateful* reſolution, that the ſpirit of gratitude filled his ſoul: ſo much does his reſolution to ſing import; for it ſays, that his ſpirit was ſweetened with a ſenſe he had of the kindneſs of God; his *meditation of him was ſweet*, and that makes him reſolve upon ſuch a ſweet exerciſe: he ſaw what ſtrong and manifold obligations he was under to praiſe and magnify the name of the Lord.

(3.) I think, the manner of expreſſion imports a *cordial* reſolution; heart and will are engaged in it: there is twice *I will* in the text; *I* WILL *ſing of mercy and judgment; unto thee, O Lord, I* WILL *ſing*. He had a good will to the work: where the underſtanding is enlightened in the knowledge of God, in his mercy and judgment, there the will is ſubdued and made willing; willing to praiſe, willing to glorify God by the obedience of faith and love through grace.

(4.) The

(4.) The manner of expreſſion imports a *fervent* reſolution; ſo much I think lies in that word, *O* LORD, *I will* do it; *to thee, O* LORD, *I will ſing*. To be fervent in prayer, is a notable exerciſe; but to be fervent in praiſe, is yet more notable: fervency in ſeeking is good; but fervency in ſinging is yet better; *To thee, O Lord, will I ſing*. Perhaps this *O* imports alſo a wonder; *O*, I will ſing; for thy mercies and judgments are ſo wonderfully great! *O*, I will ſing with wonder and admiration!

(5.) The manner of the expreſſion imports a *humble* reſolution: I cannot ſing of merit; but I will ſing of mercy, and through mercy I will ſing of mercy. To ſing of mercy muſt be a humble ſong; for mercy towards a miſerable ſinner is a melting word; and to ſing of judgment muſt be a humble ſong; for judgment in every ſenſe is an awful word; and the pſalmiſt breathes out his reſolution in a moſt humble manner, *O Lord, I will ſing of mercy and judgment.*

(6.) The manner of expreſſion imports a *ſolemn* reſolution made in the preſence of the great JEHOVAH; *To thee, O* LORD, *will I ſing*. It is not only reſolved in his own mind, that he will ſing to the Lord, but by way of ſolemn addreſs to the God of heaven, the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; *To thee, O Lord, will I ſing:* to thee will I give the glory of thy *mercy* and *judgment:* behold, I reſolve upon it before thee, O Lord.

(7.) The manner of the expreſſion imports a *ſkilful* reſolution. David was a ſweet and ſkilful harper, a dexterous muſician, even in a ſpiritual ſenſe; he had learned the holy art of praiſe, and how to ſing with wiſdom and underſtanding: he knew what ſhould be the *ſubject* of the ſong, and therefore ſays, *I will ſing of Mercy and Judgment;* and he knew what ſhould be the *object* of the ſong, or to whom it ſhould be ſung, and therefore ſays, *To* THEE, *O Lord, I will ſing:* he knew who ſhould be the *Singer;* and therefore ſays, *I* will do it: he knew what ſhould be the *manner;* and therefore ſays, *I will* SING *of mercy and judgment; to thee, O Lord, will I* SING. It is before the Lord he reſolves to ſing, as he did before the ark, which was a type of Chriſt; and ſo it is a ſong to the praiſe of God in Chriſt.

(8.) The manner of the expreſſion imports a *firm, fixed,* and *conſtant* reſolution; ſo the redoubling of it ſeems to import; *I will ſing, I will ſing*. He had a mind this exerciſe of ſinging ſhould not go down, but be his continual trade; *I will ſing, I will ſing;* I will ſing on earth, and I will ſing in heaven; I will ſing in time, and I will ſing through eternity. And indeed, all on whom the Spirit of praiſe and gratitude is poured out, they reſolve never to give over ſinging: and however their ſong be marred and interrupted here, yet when they are in the ſinging frame, they would wiſh never to give over ſinging. And becauſe they know it will not laſt always in time, nor their harp be ſtill in tune; therefore they reſolve, as it were, to make it their great errand to heaven, to ſing there for ever; *I will ſing, I will ſing.* David had *heard once, yea twice,* that *mercy* as well as *power belongs to the Lord;* and therefore, not only *once;* but *twice* in a breath, he reſolves to *ſing unto the Lord.* The word hath a great deal of elegancy and emphaſis in it; *I will ſing of mercy, I will ſing of judgment: O, I will ſing; O Lord, I will ſing; and I will ſing into thee.*

In a word, it imports, that a God in Chriſt was the ALL of the ſong; even the *Alpha* and *Omega* of it, the beginning and end of it: it was *of him,* as the *Alpha;* for the diſcovery of the mercy of God in Chriſt brought him to it; *I will ſing of mercy and judgment:* and it was *to him,* as the *Omega;* for the ſong is dedicated to the Lord; *To thee, O Lord, will I ſing.*—Theſe things, I think, are imported in the manner of the expreſſion, and they may help to regulate our reſolutions in *ſinging.*

IV. The *fourth* head propoſed was, *Why* it is ſo ordered of the Lord, that his people ſhould have ground to ſing of *mercy* and *judgment* both? why is there both mercy and judgment in their lot, to be the matter of their ſong, while in this world?

1. The *firſt* reaſon is, To put a *difference* betwixt *heaven* and *earth;* for in heaven there will be no judgment, no affliction, no deſertion, no ſin, no ſong of judgment preſent, but of judgment paſt: The ſong of heaven will be of mercy preſent, and judgment paſt, among the triumphant company; but the ſong of the militant church, is of mercy and judgment, both preſent. Now, *we ſee through a glaſs darkly,* and therefore ſing confuſedly; but then ſhall we *ſee face to face,* and therefore ſhall ſing diſtinctly: now *we know in part,* and ſing in part; but then the perfect knowledge will make a perfect ſong: now we are very unlike to Chriſt, becauſe we ſee but little of him, and ſo the ſong is but heavy, dull, and flat; but then *ſhall we be like him, for we ſhall ſee him as he is,* and ſo the ſong will be chearful and raviſhing: now when a mercy raiſes the ſong, a judgment bears it down, ſome cloud or other interrupts the ſinging; but then there ſhall be no preſent judgment, no cloud, no night, no complaint to mar the ſong, for there the mercy is not mixt with any judgment, nor the joy mixt with any ſorrow.

2. The *ſecond* reaſon is, That they may put *honour upon the divine wiſdom,* that does ſo wonderfully reconcile theſe oppoſites, ſuch as mercy and judgment are. O the infinite wiſdom of God, that can make antipods meet in a ſong of praiſe, and contraries in a hymn of glory to him. O the wiſdom that makes *mercy and judgment meet together, and kiſs one another!* O the wiſdom that brings the greateſt good out of the greateſt evil, and the beſt bleſſings out of the worſt of evils; as out of the firſt Adam's ſin and fall, brings the ſecond Adam's glory and honour, and the greateſt happineſs of his ſeed! O the wiſdom that brings life out of death, light out of darkneſs, liberty out of bondage, love out of enmity, happineſs out of miſery, holineſs out of ſin, joy out of ſorrow, mercy out of judgment! O, can we look down to this great depth, without crying with the apoſtle, Ὦ βάθος πλούτου καὶ σοφίας καὶ γνώσεως θεοῦ! etc. *O the depth of the riches, both of the wiſdom and knowledge of God! how unſearchable are his judgments, and his ways paſt finding out?* Rom. xi. 33.

3. The *third* reaſon is, That they may be *trained up gradually for ſinging hallelujahs in heaven.* They are not yet fit and qualified for ſinging of mercy without judgment; and though judgment is turned into mercy to the people

of God, and so is matter of a song; yet the present sense and feeling that they have of judgment, makes the manner of their singing suitable to their imperfect condition, wherein they are not capable to sing of mercy without a mixture of judgment. They are but learning to sing; and by judgment they are disciplined to sing gradually better and better: when mercy does not prevail to make them sing aright, he sends a judgment to make them sing better. They are learning the language of heaven before they go there; but at their first learning they are but scholars, and need the correction of judgment. If they abuse mercy, and do not sing aright of it, there comes a heavy judgment to make them take heed how they sing, and then they learn to sing the seventy-first verse of the hundred and nineteenth psalm; saying,

It hath been very good for me,
That I afflicted was,
That I might well instructed be,
And learn thy holy laws:

And then they learn to sing the 75th verse;

That very right thy judgments are,
I know and do confess;
And that thou hast afflicted me,
In truth and faithfulness.

4. The *fourth* reason is, That the *burden of the song may be proportioned to their back.* They cannot bear to have all mercy, and no judgment; for then they would swell in pride, and be exalted above measure: they cannot bear to have all judgment, and no mercy; for then would they sink into despair, and be pressed above measure. On the one hand, to sing of nothing but mercy, would be a burden too great and heavy; they find, when their hearts at sometimes are lifted up to a high note, they cannot get praised; they are ready to invite angels, saints, sun, moon, and stars, to help them to praise, for it is too great work for them alone; they cannot get their notes raised high enough: but when the praising frame is over, if nothing but a sense of mercy remain, then having a body of sin that abuses all mercies, some proud thought, and self-exalting imagination, rises in their breasts, and would rise above measure, if it were not keeped down with judgment.—On the other hand, to sing of nothing but judgment, would be a damp instead of a song, a melancholy sighing instead of singing: and therefore, they are well mixed together in infinite wisdom.

5. The *fifth* reason is, That their song may be the more *melodious.* As in natural, or artificial music, there is no melody where there is but one note; there must be different sounds to make the music melodious. I think the apostle speaks after this manner, 1 Cor. xiv. 7. *Even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sound, how shall it be known what is piped or harped?* So it is here in the spiritual music, whether you look to the consummate song of the redeemed above, or the initial song of the redeemed below, the song of mercy present, and judgment past, makes the sweetest melody in heaven; and the song of mercy and judgment, both present, makes the sweetest melody that can be attained on earth. Mercy and judgment, like bass and treble, make holy melody in the spiritual song: here are the different notes of music; mercy makes a high and lofty note, and judgment makes a humble and low note, and both make the song melodious. When a man not only sees mercy, but mercy and judgment, mercy before judgment, and mercy after judgment, and mercy in judgment, and mercy with judgment, and mercy out of judgment, and mercy backing judgment, and mercy blessing judgment, and mercy ordering and disposing judgment, mercy qualifying judgment, and mercy moderating judgment, and mercy sweetening judgment, and mercy rejoicing over judgment, and mercy running through judgment, and mercy at the root of judgment, and mercy at the top of judgment, mercy on this side of judgment, and mercy on that side of judgment, mercy round about judgment, and mercy turning judgment into mercy; O then, how does he sing with melody in his heart to the Lord!——It is to make the song melodious.

6. The *sixth* reason is, That they may *prize both their mercies and their judgments;* both their crosses and their comforts, both their rods and reliefs, as both affording matter of a song; and that they may neither on the one hand sport at his mercy, nor on the other hand spurn at his judgments; and that they may neither abuse enlargements, nor despise chastisements, but that they may give both their proper place and room in their hearts and esteem; that they may sing of both, and love the Lord their God in both, and so may love a frowning as well as a smiling God, an absent as well as a present God, a hiding as well as a shining God, a correcting as well as a comforting God; and that both out of their clear and cloudy days they may pen a song to the praise of his name.—In a word, the Lord orders it so, that their song should be both of mercy and judgment, and puts both in their lot; that, in the *view of mercy,* they may not *despair;* and, in the *view of judgment,* they may not *presume:* that they may sing hopefully, because of mercy; and humbly, because of judgment: and that their song may be full, and take in all his dispensations, like the song of Moses and the Lamb; *Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints,* Rev. xv. 3.——So much for this head.

V. The *fifth* head was the *application,* in the following *inferences.* Hence see,

1. That there is an over-ruling and wise providence, making *all things,* whether comforts or crosses, sweet things or sad things, *contribute* and *co-operate* for the *good* and *advantage* of the hidden remnant; *We know that all things work together for good, to them that love God, and are the called according to his purpose,* Rom. viii. 28. Mercy and judgment, and all adverse and prosperous things, work together to be the matter of a song: surely there is a *wheel within a wheel;* there is a secret hand that draws up and tunes all the strings of the harp of providence, to make a sweet song of praise unto God; there is an infinitely wise hand, like that of a cunning player upon this harp, that makes all the most seemingly jarring notes to contribute to melody, even as he made the malice of the Jews, the treason of Judas, and the

rage

rage of devils, to work for the ſalvation of an elect world.

2. See the *ſweetneſs of true religion*, and that *wiſdom's ways are pleaſantneſs*; a religious life is a ſinging life, whether providence ſmile or frown. If a believer ſigh and mourn at any time, and be not ſinging at the ſame time, it is when religion is at a low ebb with him. You may think religion is a melancholy life, man, becauſe *many are the afflictions of the righteous*, and *judgment may begin at the houſe of God*; but you do not conſider, that true religion makes a man to ſing of judgment, as well as of mercy. Out of all the ups and downs, the viciſſitudes and changes, ſmiles and frowns, of the believer's lot, the Lord brings a ſong of praiſe. *Truly, God is good to Iſrael*, whether Iſrael think it or not; for even judgment will be matter of a ſong. It is the language of unbelief, when they ſay of judgment, as Jacob did of his afflictions, *All theſe things are againſt me*; but when once the gallant grace of faith takes the field again, it will ſay, All theſe are for me, and I will ſing of all.

3. See hence the *difference* betwixt *carnal* and *ſpiritual mirth*, carnal and ſpiritual ſinging; betwixt the joy of the world and the joy of the ſaints. The world may rejoice, if they have, and while they have ſome outward mercy; but to ſing of judgment, when theſe mercies are withdrawn, is what they know nothing of; nay, take away the world, and then they will ſay with Micah, *They have taken away my gods, and what have I more?* But ſpiritual joy can ſing in the midſt of ſorrow, and ſay, *Though the fig-tree ſhall not bloſſom, neither ſhall fruit be in the vines, the labour of the olive ſhall fail, and the fields ſhall yield no meat, the flock ſhall be cut off from the fold, and there ſhall be no herd in the ſtalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my ſalvation*, Hab. iii. 17, 18. O Sirs, down, down, down with all carnal mirth and worldly joy, in compariſon of this: down with ſinging, and piping, and dancing; theſe things are but folly and madneſs.

4. Hence ſee, that the *godly need not take any ſinful ſhift to ſhun ſuffering*, or any ſinful courſe to ſhun the croſs; for, come the croſs when it will, they may even ſing with the croſs on their back, as Paul and Silas in the ſtocks, Acts xvi, 24, 25. Is the godly man tempted to make any ſinful compliance with the courſes of the time? What need he be annoyed, as if his life of outward comforts in a world would be at an end, as if bonds and impriſonments, the loſs of worldly goods and enjoyments were abiding him, if he makes not this and the other compliance? What need any annoyment? For his ſuffering time may be his ſinging time; *I will ſing of mercy and of judgment*. Beſides, all his *light afflictions here, which laſt but for a moment, work for him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*.

5. Hence ſee, what a *ſweet place heaven muſt be*, and *what ſinging muſt be there*: If a ſong of mercy mixt with judgment here is ſweet, and ſometimes even raviſhing, O what a ſweet ſong is that of the redeemed about the throne, where there is no more judgment, no more ſorrow, or ſin! And little wonder that the believer long for heaven, ſeeing his ſweeteſt ſongs are mixt with ſighs, and his mercies with judgments; his ſweeteſt ſongs here have ſtill this heavy ſigh in them, *Ah*, and *wo is me*, that wherever I go in this world, I am always drawing a body of death along with me. O what a happy time is the day of death to a believer, when he ſhall take an everlaſting farewel of all his luſts and idols! O believer, what would you think to be ſaying, Farewel darkneſs, and welcome everlaſting light; farewel enmity, and welcome everlaſting love; farewel ſorrow, and welcome everlaſting joy; farewel all my ſins, and heart-plagues, and ſtrong corruptions, and welcome eternal happineſs, and uninterrupted felicity? O would you not ſay, Farewel, farewel, with a thouſand good-wills to all theſe evil things, and triumphantly ſay, Glory to God that we ſhall never meet again? Hence ſee then, I ſay, what a ſweet place heaven muſt be: if even judgments, ſufferings, and temptations to ſin here be made matter of joy and ſinging ſometimes to the believer, what ſhall glory be? If the worſt things on earth may contribute to a ſong, what will the beſt things in heaven do? If the croſs be ſometimes ſo ſweet, what will the crown be? If the waters of Marah be made ſo ſweet, what will the wine of paradiſe be? If God's rod hath honey at the end of it, what will his golden ſceptre have? O! how happy are they who have got the ſtart of us, and are exalted above theſe viſible heavens already, and paſt all their fears and doubts, and are ſinging praiſes without wearying!

6. Hence ſee, what a *black and white garment the believer wears*. The garment of praiſe is a garment of diverſe colours; dyed white and black, with mercy and judgment; *I am black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jeruſalem, as the tents of Kedar, and* yet *as the curtains of Solomon*, Cant. i. 5. Not only black in themſelves, and comely in Chriſt; black as ſinners, and comely as ſaints; black with ſin, and comely with grace: but ſometimes black with perſecution, and comely with conſolation; black with affliction, diſtreſs, and judgment, but comely with the mixture of mercy in their cup of adverſity, while they get *the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praiſe for the ſpirit of heavineſs*. Hence, with what heavineſs have you gone to prayer! ſometime under the ſenſe of inward trouble from your luſts, or ſome outward trouble from the world; ſome particular affair about your huſband, your wife, your children, your family, that hath been diſtreſſing to you: You have in heavineſs gone away to God in prayer, and come away with your ſoul leaping as a hart within you. O believer, you need not ſhudder or be grieved at the cup of affliction, which your Father gives you to drink; for, though it be bitter at the top, yet the ſugar is at the bottom of the cup: *What I do, thou knoweſt not now, but thou ſhalt know hereafter*.

7. Hence we may ſee, the *happineſs of the ſaints*, and of *all believers in Chriſt*: They may *in every thing give thanks; for this is the will of God in Chriſt concerning them*; be it proſperity or adverſity, mercy or judgment, in life or in death; he may ſing, that nothing in a world can make him miſerable, no loſſes, croſſes, bonds, perſecutions, famine, or peſtilence. If he may ſing of judgment, ſurely the judgments are not vindictive judgments, but fatherly chaſtiſements; for God deals not with him according to the tenor of the law, as a covenant of works; nay, he is not under the law, nor liable to the penal ſanction of it: they are judgments of a fatherly

fatherly judge, not of a wrathful judge, otherwise he could not sing of judgment. How little cause hath the believer to be discontent at outward trials? What! are you discontent at that, out of which God is bringing a song of praise in time, and a weight of glory through eternity?

8. Hence see the *misery of the wicked.* Whatever matter of singing the children of God have, yet ye have matter of sighing, howling, and lamentation; for ye are under the curse of God, under the curse of his law, and so continue in a dreadful, damnable state: while ye are out of Christ, all the mercies that ye meet with are curses to you, and all the judgments you meet with are drops of divine indignation, and pieces of hell. Your temporal mercies are curses; *The prosperity of fools destroys them;* and so your table is your snare: spiritual mercies are curses to you; from all the flowers of heavenly blessings ye suck poison; the word is the *savour of death* to you; the gospel is a *stumbling-block* to you, over which ye fall into perdition: and as the same wind that blows one ship to an haven, blows another on the rock; so the same breath of the minister, that blows some to heaven, blows you to hell: the sacrament is a curse to you, for *ye eat and drink your own damnation;* the Bible is a curse to you, for the word of the Lord is against you, and ye are against it. What shall I say to you, graceless, Christless, desperate sinner? O will you tremble and quake, lest Christ himself, the blessing of all blessings, and mercy of all mercies, be a curse to you, and a stone of stumbling, over which you will break your neck! for *he is set up for the falling, as well as the rising of many in Israel.* O that this thunder would awaken souls that are sleeping securely in a course of sin! As all mercies are curses to a reprobate world, so judgments are judgments indeed to you that live all your days without Christ; for judgment without mercy is the portion of your cup: every affliction is a judgment of wrathful and vindictive nature unto you. You will say, O for patience under such a trouble and sickness! Poor graceless soul, speaking of patience under trouble; you are thus contending with God, and struggling like a fly under a mountain, and striving to be quiet under that which God hath sent to disturb you. God does not afflict men that are out of Christ to exercise their patience, but to disturb their false peace and security. O that God would awaken you! If God call for famine on the land, and make you feel the effects of this terrible drought *, it is a judgment indeed, and a pledge of hell unto you; if God lay you on a sick-bed, and afflict you in your name, estate, person, friends, all is a piece of hell to you; judgments to you are drops of vengeance. Again,

9. See how *reprovable* they are, from this doctrine, who *never sing of mercy and judgment.* Some never sing at all the praises of God: there is a gentle or rather deistical fashion among some in our day, in public ordinances, they do not open their mouth to sing with the congregation. Oh! will they ever sing in heaven, that scorn to sing on earth? Many indeed sing with their mouth, that know not what it is to sing with their heart, nor sing with their life to glorify God. Many never sing of mercy, notwithstanding of their receiving many mercies; they pray for what they want, but never praise for what they have: and there is much of this ingratitude among believers themselves. Many again, instead of singing of mercy, they slight their own mercies, and fight against God with his own favours; they abuse their peace to security, their drink to drunkenness, their meat to gluttony, and their mercies to presumption. *Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise?* Many, if they sing of mercy, they know not what it is to sing of judgment; *When God's judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world should learn righteousness.* What are ye learning out of this great drought, whereby God is threatening to send a famine on the land, and break the staff of bread? To sing of *judgment*, is to *hear the rod, and who hath appointed it;* to sing of *judgment*, is to see the hand of God in the affliction, to kiss the hand that smites; to glorify God in the fires; to bless him that *remembers mercy in the midst of wrath:* and to answer the call of God by such and such a dispensation. Many, instead of singing of mercy and judgment, they slight both mercy and judgment; mercy does not melt them, and judgment does not move them. O take with the reproof.

10. See how *comfortable* this doctrine may be to *all believers* and *lovers of our Lord Jesus Christ:* ye have ground to sing, not only of mercy, but of judgment: I know no case you can be in, believer, but there is room for *singing;* the saint may *sing of mercy in the midst of judgment.* O how can I sing, when I missed my errand at this occasion? says one; let them give the praise that have got the profit; but for me, I am left under heavy judgment, under affliction, temptation, desertion; yea, and the prevalency and power of sin and corruption; and therefore there is no room for my singing, but rather for sighing, mourning, and lamenting before the Lord, and to be humbled to the dust. Why, man, indeed it is not humility, but pride, that makes you refuse to praise: you undervalue the *day of small things*, and any little measure of grace and mercy you enjoy, because, forsooth, you have not all you would be at; and, it may be, God is saying, I will send trouble after trouble upon you, till you be so humbled as to be thankful for the least mercy, till you be thankful that you are out of hell, and thankful that you was not born in America, where people are worshipping the devil. O how many millions of mercies have you to bless God for! And will you take offence at, or differ with your God, and deny him his due, because you get not all your will? You have ground of singing, believer, notwithstanding all that you have said.—O! but how can I sing, when I find sin, by which God is dishonoured, raging in my heart; and corruptions, like so many devils, roaring and domineering? If corruption were slain, I think I would sing, but no otherwise. Why, poor soul, I tell you that you must even in that case *sing of mercy and judgment*, and sing because he hath said, *Slay them not, lest my people forget*, Psal.

* The summer in which this sermon was preached [*viz.* 1723.] was a very remarkable season for drought, there being scarce one drop of rain during the summer months; on which account, many were afraid that the staff of bread would have been cut off from them; though providence so interposed, that, by the frequent and heavy dews, there was, in the issue, abundance of corn for man, but little provender for the cattle.

lix. 11. If your corruptions were ſlain, as you would have them, you would, perhaps, forget your own weakneſs; forget your deliverer; forget your dependence on him; forget prayer; forget pity towards theſe that are afflicted and toſſed as you are: it may be, you would forget the fountain open; forget to make daily uſe of Chriſt; forget to ſympathize and bear with others, when they fall or are overtaken in a fault; forget to walk humbly; forget the ſweet experiences of his *pardoning* and *purging grace*; and forget to call yourſelf a *dog* when you go before him, ſaying, *Truth, Lord, I am a dog*, I am a devil, I am a lump of hell: And therefore, though you may think it ſtrange to hear of bleſſing the Lord that corruptions are not ſlain outright, yet, ſince infinite wiſdom ſees that nothing leſs will cure your *forgetfulneſs* while here, even bleſs him, who hath ſaid, *Slay them not, leſt my people forget.* Bleſs him, that he hath not only ſaid, of affliction, temptation, deſertion, *Let not my people want them, leſt they forget;* but even of ſins, corruption, and ſpiritual enemies, *Slay them not, leſt my people forget:* better they be not ſlain, than that you forget to give Chriſt the glory of his ſaving offices, by employing him daily to heal all your diſeaſes, and fight all your battles.

11. Hence ſee the *mark of a true believer*, and try yourſelves by this doctrine. Do you ſing of mercy and judgment? I might tell you for marks, that if you have learned this ſong of mercy and judgment, as the ſong hath been introduced with ſorrowing, I mean with legal conviction and humiliation; ſo you will find it *interrupted with ſighing*, becauſe all the powers of hell and corruption will oppoſe this ſweet exerciſe; you will find your harp muſt perpetually be tuned by the hand of the Spirit, and that you are incapable to ſing, till he pen the ſong; for it is with the believer as with the marygold, it opens and ſhuts as the ſun riſes and ſets; and yet even when the ſun is ſet, as it were, that you cannot open and praiſe, you will find *praiſe waiting for the Lord in Zion*, Pſal. lxv. 1.; or, as it may be rendered, *Praiſe is* SILENT *for thee in Zion*: Why? the Spirit of praiſe is ſometimes ſilent, but yet it is a waiting ſilence; you will be waiting for the Spirit of praiſe to be poured out, and in the mean time acknowledging your debt of praiſe; and ſo, while it is not ſenſibly running out, it is gathering a dam, as it were, till the Spirit be poured out from on high, and then it will flow amain.—But, inſtead of all other marks that might be mentioned, I offer this; If you be one that hath learned to ſing of mercy and judgment, then you have got a diſcovery of the *glory of God's mercy and judgment*, as reconciled together, and mutually embracing one another in Chriſt Jeſus. There are two letters of God's name, Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7. the one is *mercy* and *grace; The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious;* the other is *juſtice* and *judgment; The Lord that will by no means clear the guilty:* and theſe are the two ſtrings of the harp, on which the believer ſings. Now, have you been taught of God, to reconcile theſe two letters of God's name, and ſo to play upon theſe two ſtrings, by admiring the infinite wiſdom, that hath made them *meet together*, and *kiſs one another* in Chriſt? Pſal. lxxxv. 10. Have you ſeen ſalvation ſpringing out of both theſe, and glory ariſing to both theſe attributes of God, from Chriſt's obedience to the death, *whom God hath ſet forth to be the propitiation?* Have you ſeen mercy running in the channel of a complete ſatisfaction to juſtice, and ſo God by no means clearing the guilty, without a ſacrifice and atonement? Many pretend to ſing of mercy, and ſay, I hope in God's mercy; but they know not what it is to ſing of mercy, to the higheſt praiſe of mercy, in finding out a ranſom, whereby mercy is magnified, not to the diſparagement, but to the higheſt praiſe of infinite juſtice; becauſe judgment was execute upon the Surety to the uttermoſt, that the curſe of the law, and the vengeance of heaven againſt ſin, could demand. If ever you ſang to purpoſe of mercy and judgment, you have ſeen and admired the glory that ſhines in this mutual embracing betwixt mercy and judgment.

12. The laſt inference I offer, is this. Hence we may ſee the *duty of all the people of God*, namely, to *ſing of mercy and judgment:* As it is the duty of all hearing me, to ſeek and pray while they are out of heaven, ſo to ſing and praiſe while they are out of hell. But whatever others do, believer, you in particular are to ſing of mercy and judgment: he hath done much for others, but he hath done more for you; he hath given you himſelf to be your God, his Son to be your ſhield, his Spirit to be your guide, his covenant to be your charter, and his heaven to be your inheritance: he hath given you his word and oath, that though he *will viſit your iniquity with the rod, and your tranſgreſſion with ſtripes*, and execute judgment on your luſts, and take vengeance on your inventions, *yet his loving-kindneſs will he not take away, nor alter the word that hath gone out of his mouth. Once hath he ſworn by his holineſs, That he will not lie unto David;* and therefore you may ſing of mercy and judgment: and even at your loweſt, when you are crying out, *Behold, I am vile!* O I am black, I am black, I am black; yet even then he is looking upon you in Chriſt, and ſaying *Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair*, not only by imputed righteouſneſs, but even by implanted grace, which makes you look upon ſin as the greateſt evil, and groan under it as the greateſt burden: even at your loweſt, there is ſomething about the bottom of your hearts, that ſays, O! I could be content to live in a coal-pit with Chriſt, rather than in a palace without him; *A day in his courts is better than a thouſand; I had rather be a doorkeeper in the houſe of my God, than to dwell in tents of wickedneſs.* O to ſee his name glorified in the world, and his kingdom coming in me, and in thouſands about me! O ſing, ſing, ſing of mercy and judgment! you have both to ſing of.

QUEST. *How ſhall I ſing one of the ſongs of Zion in a ſtrange land?* I offer ſome general directions, and then I cloſe.

1. See that your ſong be ſung upon a *new harp;* I mean, with a new heart and a new ſpirit. Ye that are graceleſs will never ſing, till you get a new heart; O go to God, and cry for it: ye that are gracious will never ſing aright, unleſs the new harp get a new ſet, and the ſtrings be drawn up, and the heart tuned by the hand of the Spirit; and therefore ſeek the new influence for every ſong, and the Spirit to dictate the ſong, and to raiſe the notes. As the dial in the day-light will not ſhew the

hour without the ſun, ſo your harp of graces will not afford melody without the Spirit; therefore ſeek the Spirit to help you, when you cannot utter his praiſe: and when ye find your hearts in a praiſing frame, O continue at the exerciſe, ſaying, as David, *My heart is fixt, my heart is fixt, I will ſing and give praiſe.*

2. If you would ſing aright of mercy and judgment, then you may ſing in your *beſt robes;* I mean, putting on Chriſt Jeſus, and his righteouſneſs, for your garment; this is the *garment of praiſe;* and this garment *ſmells of aloes, myrrh, and caſſia,* and is the only thing that can perfume the praiſes of the ſaints. If you have Eſau's garments, what though you have Jacob's voice; ſo as you want a tongue, and a heart, and a voice, to praiſe him as you ought; yet, with your elder Brother's garment, you may get the bleſſing. Come to God, under a ſenſe of your own unworthineſs, and want of righteouſneſs, and yet ſaying, *Worthy is the Lamb that was ſlain.* O pray and praiſe both under the covert of blood.

3. Put a *mark upon mercy.* If you would ſing of mercy, though it were never ſo little, it is more than you deſerve. I have heard of a Jewiſh doctor, that was called *Rabbi* THIS TOO, becauſe he uſed to ſay, whatever befel him, *This is good too,* and *this too,* and *this too:* you may well ſay, how little ſoever you have, This is more than I am worthy of, and this too, and this too. He that ſees that nothing is his but ſin, cannot but wonder that any thing is his but hell: put a mark upon mercy, ſaying, *O my ſoul, forget not all his benefits,* Pſal. ciii. 2,—5. Mind the viſit he gave you at ſuch and ſuch a place, in ſuch and ſuch an ordinance; mind his words of grace, and emanations of love: put up ſome of the manna in the golden pot.

4. Put a *mark upon judgments.* If you would ſing of judgment, as well as mercy, and lay your account with judgment, let not national judgments paſs without a remark, that God may get the glory of his holy and juſt adminiſtrations: many judgments are come upon us, and many ſad tokens of judgment a-coming, becauſe of our national apoſtaſy from the work of reformation, our covenant-breaking, our perjury, and, O the other rampant abominations of our day. Learn the language of judgment, *Hear the rod.* See Iſa. xxiv. 14. It is matter of ſinging, that Chriſt hath a greater concern for his church than you can have; for, *the government is upon his ſhoulders:* God will take care of his own church; and Chriſt hath more care of it than you can have; and, *upon all the glory there ſhall be a defence;* but no thanks to a corrupt party, that would ſet doctrine, diſcipline, worſhip, and government, and all, before the wind. God uſually brings about church-reformation with a judgment, and then will the remnant ſing of judgment, when God ſcums the pot, and caſts the ſcum into the fire; as you have it, Ezek. xxiv. 12. *She hath wearied herſelf with lies.* O but Scotland hath wearied herſelf with lies of carnal-policy, with the lies of court-flattery; and there is a great ſcum that covers and clouds all our reformation-light, a great ſcum of ſelf-juſtifying pride, that will rather ſacrifice truth, than take with a fault, and rather let truth ſuffer, than her credit; and yet her credit is cracked, ever ſince her covenant with God was broken, and burnt, and never a-hand put forth to take it out of the fire, and renew it, ſince that time; but yet the covenant ſhall be on the field, when the ſcum ſhall be in the fire. But, what ſhall we ſay? there ſeems to be nothing but ſcum among us, nothing but filth and baggage: muſt all go to the fire together? Yea, though it be ſo, yet *a remnant ſhall ſing in the fires,* when the ſcum will be conſumed therein, as you ſee, Iſa. xxiv, 13, 14, 15. If this ſhall be done in the *iſles of the ſea,* ſurely the iſles of Britain and Ireland are not excluded.—Let not perſonal judgments and ſtroaks paſs without a remark, but let God get the glory of his frowning, as well as of his ſmiling diſpenſations; and lay your account with judgments, that you may ſing of judgment when it comes. Be not ſurprized, though affliction, temptation, and deſertion come upon you, on the back of a communion: God uſes to feaſt his people, to fit them for a trial: days of ſweet enlargement are uſually like ſun-blinks before a ſhower; as Peter and John were witneſſes of Chriſt's transfiguration on the mount, that they might next be witneſſes of his agony in the garden. Lay your account with trials from heaven, earth, and hell, that having laid your account with them before-hand, you may never forget to ſing; yea, lay your account that the Philiſtines will be upon you, Samſon; all your luſts and corruptions will be upon you: therefore, *Watch and pray, that you enter not into temptation;* and that your iniquity get not ſuch hold upon you, that you ſhall not be able to ſing. And therefore,

5. If you would ſing aright of mercy and judgment, let your ſong be a *practical ſong.* Here I muſt tell you, that ſome take the words, for David's mercy and judgment that he was reſolved to exerciſe in his government, namely, to be merciful and juſt; the mercy of God ſhall teach me to be merciful, and his juſtice and judgment ſhall teach me to be juſt: I will praiſe thee, by exerciſing mercy and juſtice in my ſtation, as a king and a magiſtrate. His reſolution here is, that the mercy and juſtice of God ſhould be extolled in his thoughts, expreſſed in his words, and exemplified in his actions, according to that command, Hoſ. xii. 6. *Keep mercy and judgment, and wait on thy God continually.* If you would ſing of mercy and judgment, then keep mercy and judgment: have you ſhared of the mercy of God, and will you not be merciful, as your heavenly Father is? Do you know the judgment of God, and will you not be juſt and righteous, and equal in all your dealings with men, and converſation in the world? David's ſong here is a practical ſong; and you may ſee, at your leiſure, the ſeveral notes of this practical ſong in the following part of the pſalm: and do you the ſame according to your ſtation. One note of his ſong is, ver. 2. *I will behave myſelf wiſely in a perfect way,* etc. *i. e.* that, through grace, he will act conſcientiouſly and conſiderately; and in the mean time praying that the Lord would come and dwell with him in his houſe, *O when wilt thou come to me?* Another note of his ſong is, ver. 3. where he reſolves to practiſe no evil himſelf, but ſhuts his eyes from ſeeing evil. Another note of his ſong, ver. 4, 5. he will not keep bad ſervants, nor employ theſe about him that were vicious; that he would have nothing to do with malicious people, theſe that were ſlanderers of their neighbours, nor

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theſe that were proud and haughty, nor theſe that were deceitful, and made no conſcience of lying and deceit. Another note of his ſong, ver. 6. That he would keep company with them that feared God; that he would keep good company, and honeſt ſervants: You do not practically ſing to the praiſe of God, if you do otherwiſe. Another note of his ſong is, ver. 8. That he will extend his zeal to the reforming of city and country: we are to ſtudy the reformation of manners, and the ſuppreſſion of vice, in our ſeveral ſtations; being filled with a zeal for the glory of God, the intereſt of Chriſt and his truths. The goſpel-church is the city of the Lord; we are to ſeek the honour of God in the purity of his church.

6. And *laſtly*, In order to your ſinging aright this practical ſong, lay the *burden of the ſong* upon the *back of the chief muſician*. Who is the chief Singer? Even Jeſus Chriſt, in whoſe obedience to the death was raiſed a ſong of praiſe and glory to God in the higheſt; and by the breathing of whoſe Spirit alone you can ſing and ſerve the Lord acceptably. He hath ſaid, *Without me ye can do nothing*; and ſurely without him you cannot ſing; therefore depend upon him, who only can make the tongue of the dumb to ſing. If there were more dependence on him, the tongue as well as the life of profeſſors would be more employed in ſinging his praiſes, and talking of his name, and ſpeaking of his glory. What a ſad matter is it, that a dumb devil hath poſſeſſed the generality of profeſſors as to ſpiritual converſe? O the idle worldly talk upon Sabbath-days; yea, on communion-days! Some will go away even from this communion, talking more of the corn and weather, or any thing elſe, than upon the word they have heard, or any ſoul-edifying diſcourſe ſuitable to the occaſion. What ſaid Chriſt of the poſſeſſed man in the goſpel? *Thou dumb and deaf ſpirit, I charge thee to come out of him.* O look to him, that he would charge the dumb devil to come out of you, that your tongues may ſing his praiſes, and ſpeak of his glory. How hardening is it to a wicked world, to ſee profeſſors as carnal and worldly as themſelves! O then employ the chief Singer to help you to ſing, and plead his promiſe for this end, *They ſhall ſing in the ways of the Lord, for great is the glory of the Lord*, Pſal. cxxxviii. 5. yea, he hath promiſed to give ſongs in the night of adverſity; that is, a ſong of mercy in the midſt of judgment and affliction; *I will give her the valley of Achor for a door of hope, and ſhe ſhall ſing there*, Hoſ. ii. 15. O believer, whatever be your diſcouragement and complaint, while ſurrounded with judgments and trials, let not the world ſee you dampt and diſcouraged, leſt they ſay, You ſerve a bad maſter, that does not allow you to ſing. Whatever dead weights you have upon your ſpirit, which God and you know, ye may tell him of it, and tell ſome godly perſon that will ſympathize with you in it; but let not the world hear of your complaints and diſcouragements, let them know you ſerve a good maſter; and remember how he encourages you to this, ſaying, *How great is the loving-kindneſs thou haſt laid up for them that truſt in thee before the ſons of men!* or, as it may be explained, who carry boldly and couragiouſly, under whatever difficulties and dangers, before the ſons of men, and ſo glorify God before the world: and therefore, though you may weep in ſecret places before the Lord, and get to little more than a ſigh or a ſob, yet endeavour to ſing before the world at leaſt, that they may bring up a good report of religion, and that the world may know you believe what you profeſs; that yet a little while, and you ſhall *return to Zion with ſongs, and everlaſting joy upon your heads, and ſighing and ſorrowing ſhall for ever fly away;* and that though your body will be laid in the duſt within a little time, yet a little while, and the happy joyful morning of a glorious reſurrection is haſtening on, when the voice will be heard, *Awake and ſing, ye that dwell in the duſt*, Iſa. xxvi. 19. O ſing, ſing, amidſt all your ſorrows and ſighing; ſing of mercy and judgment, in hope of ſinging there, where *ſorrow and ſighing ſhall fly away.* O go away ſinging, in ſpite of the devil and corruption; and take Chriſt the chief Singer along with you, to tune your harp, whenſoever the devil puts it out of tune: *Go up from the wilderneſs, leaning upon him, who hath engaged to work in you both to will and to do.*

And now, when we are parting, alas! is it not a ſore matter, that there are many here, that will never learn to ſing on earth, nor ever be admitted to the very firſt note of the ſpiritual ſong, which is, to *believe on the Son of God*; for, *without faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe God*, or praiſe him; and, as they never get to this, ſo it never coſt them an hour's care, or made them loſe an hour's ſleep, that they could not believe in Chriſt. O wretched man! are you careleſs and indifferent, whether you ſing in heaven among angels, or roar in hell among devils, to all eternity? Yea, there are ſome here, that do not believe there is ſuch a perſon as Chriſt in heaven; they have had a fancy about him, by their hearing of him in the goſpel, but never had the faith of the Son of God, by the Spirit's revealing him in the heart: and yet you are living careleſs and ſecure, in the purſuit of your ſins and idols: you are going ſtraight to hell, with a cart-load of ſermons on your back, and making poor miniſters ſpend their breath and labour in vain, and preach you to the devil, when they would gladly preach you to Chriſt. O! ſhall we part, and not a ſoul of you be touched and turned to the Lord, or brought to learn any other ſong, but to ſing yourſelves aſleep in the arms of the devil and your luſts? Some are ſleeping in the arms of a black devil, in the purſuit of groſs and abominable luſts, of drunkenneſs, whoredom, Sabbath-breaking, *etc.* Others are ſleeping in the arms of a white devil, going about to eſtabliſh a righteouſneſs of their own, reſting on their legal duties and prayers; having a *form of godlineſs, but denying the power thereof*; expecting God will have mercy on them, becauſe they obſerve ſeveral duties of the law, which others neglect; and ſo ſinging a falſe ſong of mercy, or hope of mercy, while they never knew the judgment of God, nor ſaw the wonders of God's executing all the judgments threatened in the law upon the glorious Surety Chriſt Jeſus, nor ever came under that covert to eſcape the judgment of God: but, while you are ſtrangers to Chriſt, all your worſhip is but hypocriſy, your zeal but madneſs, your faith but fancy, and your work abominable to God. O! will none of you be prevailed with to cry with your heart

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to the Lord, saying, Lord, pluck me out of the arms of the devil, and as a brand out of the burning? As you would not despise the riches of his mercy, and incur the fury of his judgment, go to a corner, and cry to him, that he would teach you how to sing of mercy and judgment. It may be the Lord will pity you for his name's sake. O may the Lord himself shew his glory to you, and make you see mercy and judgment meeting and embracing each other, and with joint harmony carrying on your salvation-work, in spite of all the opposing legions of hell; and bring you to put in practice the psalmist's sweet resolution here, *I will sing of mercy and judgment; unto thee, O Lord, will I sing!*

SERMON VII.*

The HARMONY of the DIVINE ATTRIBUTES displayed, in the Redemption and Salvation of Sinners by JESUS CHRIST.

PSALM lxxxv. 10.

Mercy and Truth are met together, Righteousness and Peace have kissed each other.

MY friends, at a solemn marriage-supper, there is usually a friendly company that meets together; and when at such an occasion, all things are managed with sobriety and decency, it is very heartsome and pleasant to the parties concerned, to see the members of the meeting with mutual kindness to one another, harmoniously gracing the solemnity: even so at the marriage-supper of the Lamb; I mean, the sacrament of the Lord's supper, which we have been celebrating, there is a heartsome company, not of men and women, for that would make but a poor earthly meeting; nor yet of saints and angels, for that would make but at best a mean creature-meeting; but it is a glorious heartsome company of divine attributes and perfections, in the sweetest concord, meeting together, and embracing one another. This wonderful conjunction of divine excellencies is the friendly company that meets together, to put honour upon this nuptial solemnity: and to see them thus harmoniously embracing one another in the salvation of sinners, is the sweetest sight, that the bride, the Lamb's wife, shall ever see at the marriage supper, whether it be at the lower or upper table.

There is a great meeting in this house, but an infinitely greater in this text; a meeting of divine excellencies, to grace the assembly of the marriage-supper of the Lamb: *Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other.* When God made heaven and earth out of nothing, he made them by a word, without any other ceremony; but when he made man, there was some particular solemnity, a grand council, as it were, of the glorious Trinity called; *Come, let us make man after our image.* But now, man having unmade himself, if God hath a mind for the praise of his own glorious grace to make him up again, by a new creation in Christ Jesus, there must be a more glorious solemnity yet; not only a council of the adorable Trinity, but a grand meeting of all the attributes of God, to consult their own glory that was marred, and reconcile their own interests, and seemingly contradictory claims; for the sin of man had brought real confusion among all the creatures of God on earth; yea, and a seeming war among all the attributes of God in heaven, concerning the execution of the sentence of the law upon mankind, the transgressor thereof. Some of these attributes, such as *Mercy*, saying, If the sentence of death be execute upon them, how shall I be glorified? Others, such as *Truth*, saying, If the sentence be not executed, how shall I be glorified? Is it to be expected that such opposites can meet together? Or if they meet, that they will agree together cordially? Yea, though it be beyond the expectation of men and angels, yet, behold, it is here celebrated with a song, *Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other.*

This psalm consists of a prayer of faith, and an answer of peace. *First*, the church's prayer, from the beginning to the 8th verse, where they are praying for the removal of many tokens of God's displeasure they were under, notwithstanding of their return out of the Babylonish captivity. *2dly*, The answer of peace that is made to their prayer, from ver. 8. and downward. We have here the psalmist listening and waiting for the answer; *I will hear what God the Lord will speak.* The answer itself in general is peace; *He will speak peace to his people, and to his saints.* If he give not outward peace, yet he will suggest inward peace; speaking that to their hearts by his Spirit, which he had spoken to their ears by his word, whatever other sort of peace and prosperity they enjoyed; when at length the children of the captivity, after a great deal of toil, had gained a settlement in their own land, yet peace with God and prosperity under the Messia's kingdom, was the great thing here promised, and prophesied of; and that is a peace that lays the soul under the strongest obligation to stand aback from all sin, which is the greatest folly, and to beware of backsliding thereto; *but let them not return again to folly:* For true peace with God brings in war with sin. But this is further explained in the main leading part thereof, namely, salvation and glory, ver. 9. *Surely his salvation is near to*

* This sermon was preached on the Sabbath-evening, immediately after the administration of the sacrament of the Lord's supper at Dunfermline, September 29, 1723. and hath already born four impressions.

them

them that fear him, that glory may dwell in our land. Now, whatever other ſalvation be here imported, Chriſt is the great ſalvation intended: when he is near in view, then the believer cries out with old Simeon, *Now mine eyes have ſeen thy ſalvation:* and whatever other glory and honour be here imported, Chriſt is the chief glory intended; when he goes away from a land, then ICHABOD, *the glory is departed;* but where he abides, glory dwells; for he is called, *A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of his people Iſrael.* But now, if we would know what ſort of glory it is that appears when Chriſt is revealed; why, it is even the glorious harmony of all the divine attributes illuſtriouſly ſhining in him, who is both our ſalvation and our glory: *Mercy and truth are met together, righteouſneſs and peace have kiſſed each other.* Now, though theſe words may be applied to the happy meeting of graces in men, upon the revelation of Chriſt in the ſoul, which I may afterwards notice in the ſequel, and in which ſenſe ſome interpreters underſtand it, yet I take it mainly to import, the happy meeting of perfections in God, to be glorified in the ſinner's ſalvation by Jeſus Chriſt; which is a gloſs that no interpreter, I have had occaſion to conſult, does neglect or omit; and if any of them ſhould miſs it, I think they would miſs the very ground-work and foundation of all other happy meetings: *Mercy and truth have met together, righteouſneſs and peace have kiſſed each other.*

In the words you may notice, 1. The *members* of the meeting. 2. The *manner* of the meeting. 3. The *harmony* of the meeting. 4. The *ſtrangeneſs* of it.

1. Notice, I ſay, *firſt*, The *members* of the meeting; *Mercy, Truth, Righteouſneſs, Peace.* I hope I need not caution ſome in this aſſembly, that they beware of imagining theſe various perfections of God, under the names of *Mercy, Truth, Righteouſneſs,* and *Peace,* as if they were really diſtinct and different things in God; or, as if they were really different parties, making a formal conſultation, in order to their agreement; for God is one, and cannot be divided; he is one infinite, eternal, and unchangeable Being: there are not diſtinct and different things in his nature and eſſence, however his perfections be thus repreſented to our weak, finite capacities, which cannot underſtand the perfections of God, but in ſeveral parts, as it were. By *Mercy* then here we are to underſtand God himſelf, as he is a *merciful and gracious God.* By *Truth* we are to underſtand the ſame God, as he is a true and faithful God. By *Righteouſneſs* we may underſtand his juſtice, or God himſelf, as he is a juſt and righteous God; and by *Peace,* the ſame God, as he is the God of peace, and a *God reconciling the world to himſelf.* So that the whole comes to this, It is the great and eternal God himſelf, conſulting with himſelf, in a manner becoming his infinite and adorable perfections, how to glorify himſelf in all his glorious attributes, in the way of ſaving ſinners, in and by Jeſus Chriſt.

2. The *manner* of the meeting: theſe excellencies and perfections of God meet together, as it were, in pairs; *Mercy* and *Truth, Righteouſneſs* and *Peace,* going hand in hand in to the council-chamber, to concert the matters that concerned their higheſt glory and honour.

3. The *harmony* of the meeting; having met together, they kiſs and embrace each other. Mercy and Peace, as it were, expreſs their complacency in Truth and Righteouſneſs; and Truth and Righteouſneſs expreſs their complacency in Mercy and Peace, and delight in one another's honour: for not one attribute of the divine Majeſty can, or will be glorified to the diſhonour of any other attribute, but mutually embrace each other in their everlaſting arms, for ſupporting the honour of each other's excellency, with complicated ineffable endearments.

4. The *ſtrangeneſs* and *remarkableneſs* of this meeting: for, the agreement of theſe parties met together is the more remarkable, in regard of their jarring and oppoſite claims: for, that Mercy and Peace ſhould meet together, and agree in favour to ſave us; and that Truth and Righteouſneſs ſhould meet together, and agree in juſtice to deſtroy us, were not ſo ſtrange and remarkable. And if they had kept ſuch a ſeparate meeting, and remained at variance without meeting together, man had been for ever ſeparate from God, and ſome darling attributes had never been glorified in man's ſalvation; our ſin and rebellion having in a manner ſet the attributes of God at ſuch variance, as nothing elſe than infinite wiſdom could provide a ſufficient anſwer to all their contradictory claims and intereſts, which behoved to be done, ere the propoſal concerning the ſalvation of any ſinner could be gone into. Why, ſays Mercy, It is my intereſt that the ſinner live and not periſh, that I may be magnified, ſince I have ſaid, That *I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy:* well, but, ſays Truth, It is my intereſt as a God of truth, that the ſinner die, ſince I have ſaid, That *the ſoul that ſinneth ſhall die:* yea, and ſays Righteouſneſs, I muſt join with Truth, and claim the ſinner's damnation, for the advancement of my intereſt and honour; for I have ſaid, and will not gainſay it, That *I will by no means clear the guilty:* O! but ſays Peace, I muſt join in with Mercy, and claim the ſinner's ſalvation, for advancing my intereſt, *for I create the fruit of the lips, peace; peace to him that is afar off, and to him that is near.* So there appears to be a war in heaven among infinitely adorable attributes and perfections, where Mercy and Peace are ſaying, We muſt have glory in ſhewing undeſerved pity on the ſinner, and yet Truth and Righteouſneſs are ſaying, We muſt have glory in executing the deſerved vengeance. And now, O men and angels! will you tell, can theſe antipodes meet together? Can theſe jarring-like attributes of the divine Majeſty embrace each other, in the ſalvation of the ſinner, ſo as to get all their demands anſwered, and their different intereſts advanced? What ſay you, children of men? Can you deviſe how theſe differences can be compoſed for your own ſafety? No, no; human wiſdom ſays, *It is not in me.* What ſay ye angels? you that *excel in ſtrength and wiſdom;* can you contrive the reconciliation of theſe irreconcileable demands? No, no; angelical wiſdom ſays, *It is not in me:* well, ſince creature-wiſdom fails, we may addreſs the infinite Wiſdom of the Deity, and enquire at a higher hand? Behold, *now we have taken upon us to ſpeak unto the Lord, who are but duſt and aſhes.* What ſayeſt thou? O infinitely wiſe JEHOVAH! can theſe oppoſite

claims be reconciled to the ſatisfaction of all parties, and the ſalvation of the ſinner? yea, it is done, it is done; it is done in a crucified Chriſt, whom we have been remembering at this ſolemnity; and therefore we may ſing this marvelous ſong upon the back of it, ſaying, *Glory, glory, glory to God, that mercy and truth are met together, and righteouſneſs and peace have embraced each other.*

OBSERV. *That in the ſalvation of ſinners by Jeſus Chriſt, the glorious attributes and perfections of God do harmoniouſly conſpire and embrace one another*; or thus, *That in Chriſt crucified, for the redemption of ſinners, all the glorious attributes of the divine Majeſty do harmoniouſly conſpire, and embrace one another.*

When God is well-pleaſed, no perfection of God is diſpleaſed; but God is well-pleaſed in Chriſt, and therefore every perfection of his nature is well-pleaſed; none of them diſpleaſed or diſſatisfied, but all pleaſed and ſatisfied to the full: ſee Hoſ. ii. 19, 20. This is declared by an audible voice from heaven, ſaying, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleaſed*, Mat. iii. 17. And why, even for the reaſon you have, Iſa. xlii. 21. *The Lord is well-pleaſed for his righteouſneſs ſake, he will magnify the law, and make it honourable.* We ſee he hath brought in a righteouſneſs anſwering the demands of all that ſtood in the way of our ſalvation. Did divine Truth and Righteouſneſs ſay, That the threatening of the law muſt be execute, ſo ſure as God is true, as well as its precept obtemperate and obeyed? Well, can a Righteouſneſs ſatisfying both theſe demands, do the buſineſs? Yea, ſays Juſtice itſelf, in concert with Mercy, if there be one righteous man in the Sodom of this earth, that can ſatisfy my broken and violated law, in its demand of complete ſatisfaction, then I will ſpare all the elect world, for the ſake of that one righteous man; and *by his knowledge ſhall my righteous ſervant juſtify many.* Well, ſays Mercy, Here is one whoſe name is WONDERFUL, and whom they call IMMANUEL, God-man, who hath brought in an everlaſting righteouſneſs, both active and paſſive, ſuiting the precept and penalty of the law: why then, might one attribute ſay to another, We are all pleaſed, and with one conſent let it be proclaimed on earth, That *the Lord is well-pleaſed, for his righteouſneſs ſake; for he hath magnified the law, and made it honourable.* And now the great affair of man's ſalvation is ſo well concerted and contrived, that God may have mercy upon them, and be at peace with poor ſinners without any wrong to his Truth and Righteouſneſs. The attributes of God have met and agreed, and ſealed their agreements with a kiſs of infinite kindneſs, harmony, and ſatisfaction: *Mercy and truth are met together, righteouſneſs and peace have kiſſed each other.*

Now, that I may ſpeak to this purpoſe a little more fully, the method I propoſe is,

I. To touch a little at this queſtion, Who are the *members* of this meeting? or, what are theſe *attributes of God*, which do thus harmoniouſly conſpire together, propoſing their various claims?

II. I would enquire *when* and *where* it is that they meet together, and embrace one another.

III. *How*, and after what *manner* it is that they meet together, and kiſs one another.

IV. *Why*, or for what *reaſon* it is that they have met together, thus harmoniouſly.

V. Make ſome *application* of the ſubject.

I. I would ſpeak a little of the *members* of this meeting, or the *attributes of God* that thus harmoniouſly conſpire together. We need not aſk at whoſe inſtance this meeting is called; it is at the inſtance, and by the order of JEHOVAH, Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, one God; his ſovereign will and pleaſure reſolving, in a manner like himſelf, to concert with himſelf; neither need we aſk, what is the occaſion of the meeting? Why, man had ſinned, and all mankind, by their ſin, was involved under the curſe of the law, and wrath of God; and yet God had reſolved and decreed, for the glory of his grace and mercy, to ſave a world of ſinners, *elect according to the foreknowledge of God.* And while Grace, Mercy, and Peace are upon this loving plot of ſaving ſinners, it was fit that Juſtice, Truth, and Righteouſneſs ſhould be called into the ſame council, to appear for their intereſt; ſince the propoſal of ſuch a ſalvation of ſinners ſeems to encroach upon their honour, which required the vengeance due to be executed upon the ſinner. Well, the meeting being called, compear theſe glorious perfections, Mercy, Truth, Righteouſneſs, and Peace; Mercy and Peace, full of pity; Truth and Juſtice, full of fury; which made a ſeeming controverſy in heaven. We may ſuppoſe Adam arraigned in the name of all mankind, and ſtanding as a trembling pannel; yea, his very tongue chained up in ſilence, by reaſon of ſin and guilt, ſentenced to eternal death, and ready to have the ſentence execute upon him, and all his poſterity.

We may ſuppoſe next, the ſeveral members of the meeting opening the aſſembly, by putting in their ſeveral claims: and we may notice them in the order of the text.

1. MERCY, being full of pity towards the miſerable, comes walking along in the cool of the evening, and meekly craving leave to ſpeak, notwithſtanding that Truth and Juſtice be preſent at the meeting. It is true, ſays Mercy, that man hath ſinned, and juſt that man ſhould die; but art not thou, O Lord, full of pity and compaſſion, *The Lord, the Lord God, pardoning iniquity, tranſgreſſion, and ſin?* What though man hath ſinned, and is all over beſmeared with mire and blood, yet look upon him in love, and deſtroy not the work of thy own hand: he was made a child after thy own image, though now his garment be rent and all bloody; yet ſee, is not this thy ſon's coat? Joſeph is gone, and wilt thou loſe Benjamin alſo? Angels are gone, and ſhall men be loſt alſo? Miriads of angels are fallen, and that irrecoverably, and ſhall man periſh alſo? O ſpare him! is he not a little one? and his ſoul ſhall live. I ſee, might Mercy ſay, that Truth and Righteouſneſs, or Juſtice, which have the poor ſinner in their chains, are here preſent, ready to ſpeak in this aſſembly, for their intereſt and honour, againſt the criminal: but let it be marked in the minutes of this court, that Mercy craves to be magnified, and muſt have honour at this meeting. Well, Mercy having ſpoken her mind,

2. TRUTH comes in, naked and with open mouth, in favours of God's Faithfulneſs, and in oppoſition to man's perfidy and treachery, ſay-

saying, I have heard what Mercy craves in favours of this criminal; but, O thou faithful and true God! the word is gone out of thy mouth, and there is no revoking it: thou hast said to Adam, *In the day thou eatest thou shalt surely die;* and now he hath eaten, he hath sinned, and shall he not die? What! is there yea and nay with God, who *hath faithfulness for the girdle of his loins?* Must not God's word of threatening take effect? *Yea, heaven and earth shall pass away, but a jot of his word shall not fall to the ground.* And therefore, whatever be the demand of Mercy, let it be marked in the records of this meeting, that Truth craves to be magnified; and that its honour be not infringed in the least, by any claim or plea that Mercy hath brought in. Well, Truth having spoken, gives way to her sister Justice; and thereupon,

5. RIGHTEOUSNESS, or JUSTICE, comes in and impleads against the rebel sinner; Righteousness, I say, bringing her scales in her hand, in which she had tried him, and found him lighter than vanity itself; he is weighed in the balances, and found wanting; yea, not only wanting and destitute of all that perfection and obedience that the law required, but full of all that rebellion which the law discharged, having sinned and come short of the glory of God; and so is righteously subjected to the sanction of the law, and sentence of eternal death: and therefore, says Righteousness, O thou infinitely righteous and just Judge, Mercy can have no hearing in this court to the prejudice of thy honour and glory, as a just and righteous God, as Truth hath pronounced the sentence of wrath and vengeance against sin; so, if thou be a just God, the infinite vengeance due to such an infinite evil must be execute to the full. This pannel is my prisoner, and loosed he shall not be till I get full satisfaction, and my sword shall be drunk with blood: for, *vengeance is mine, and I will repay it, saith the Lord: and I will by no means clear the guilty.* And therefore, let it be registrate in this court, that Righteousness craves to be magnified, and Justice to be glorified in a full satisfaction; and this is claimed and demanded in the name of the righteous and just Judge of the universe: and *shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?* Here is the language of Justice. What then? O! shall the demand of Mercy be utterly run down by these powerful opposing pleas of Truth and Righteousness? Is there no friend in this court to take Mercy's part? Yea, there is: and therefore,

4. PEACE immediately steps in with an olive branch in her hand, saying, *Fury is not in me;* and may I speak a word in behalf of forlorn mankind! may I offer a meek answer to the claim of Truth and Righteousness, which they have advanced in opposition to the demand of Mercy? For, *A soft answer turneth away wrath.* Well, Peace being allowed a hearing, proposes a healing overture, saying, O thou God of peace! may not an atonement be made, a reconciliation thought of betwixt thy majesty and thy creature? May not one be found out to stand in the gap, and bear off this wrath, to become surety for this great debtor, to acquit and liberate this poor miserable prisoner and criminal? May not one be found out, that will make up the breach, by vindicating the honour of Truth, and satisfying the demands of Justice, and so making way for the claim of Mercy? And then all differences may be peaceably composed, so as we may harmoniously agree, and kiss one another. O! may not then a Peace-maker be found out, in whom we may find all our demands satisfied at once, without prejudging one another? Why, if such an one can be found, surely his name shall be called, *Wonderful Counsellor, the Prince of Peace.*

Well, the overture and proposal of Peace being recorded among the rest of the archives of the glorious Court; and it being such a peaceable overture, no member of the meeting could disprove it: but the great question then is, how it could be effectuate; for if one man sin against another, a man might determine it; but if a man sin against Jehovah, who shall intreat for him? for when an infinite Majesty is offended, who among finite creatures is able to satisfy it? or, What can countervail the King's loss? *Wherewith then shall he come before the Lord, or bow himself before the most high God? will thousands of rams do it, or ten thousand rivers of oil, or the fruit of the body for the sin of the soul?* No, no: *Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not; for it is impossible that the blood of bulls or of goats should take away sin,* Heb. x. 5. What then, will angels become surety for the sin of man? No, no: though they had a will, they have not power; they have but oil enough in their vessels for their own lamps. What then shall be done? Why, might Peace say, let us not stand in a demur, we have infinite Wisdom here present with us at this meeting, let us hear her judgment concerning this peaceable proposal, if it be possible that such a person can be found, in whom we may harmoniously centre at last.

Then WISDOM sits down upon the privy council-bench, and being full of eyes doth gravely determine this doubtful case with a happy issue. It is expedient, says Wisdom, *That one die for the people, that the whole nation of mankind perish not;* but he must be such a righteous One, that can *justify many;* yea, he that will undertake this, must be finite, that he may die; and infinite, that he may conquer death, and satisfy infinite justice: but lo! there is none such to be found among all the creatures that ever God made; neither can such an one be found, unless the Son of God himself, the second Person of the glorious Trinity, shall be pleased, by an unspeakable mystery, to become flesh, *Made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that are under the law, that they may receive the adoption of sons,* Gal. iv. 4. That so when *he who hath no sin,* shall *become sin for man;* man, who hath no righteousness, *may become the righteousness of God through him,* 2 Cor. v. 21. And thus Mercy may be magnified, Truth justified, Righteousness cleared, Justice satisfied, Peace concluded; and all contented.

WISDOM having determined how this proposal of Peace might be effectuate, all parties hearkened, as it were, with pleasure, and willingly subscribed to the happy overture, and then heaven and earth conspired together, in solemn thanksgiving, saying, *Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace and good-will towards men.*——Thus the jarring attributes of God are now reconciled, and behold the members of the meeting, that seemed to be at the greatest variance, are embracing one another in their arms: *Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other.*

II. The

II. The *ſecond* thing was, *When* and *where* did theſe bleſſed parties meet together? When we ſpeak of a remarkable meeting, it is uſual to enquire into the time and place of the meeting. Now, the place where, and the time when as to this wonderful meeting, are two queſtions, which I put together, for they may both be anſwered at once, becauſe of their near relation.

1ſt, Then in general, the *meeting-place*, or the place of the meeting, is CHRIST; and the *time* of the meeting, was when Chriſt put himſelf in our room, or ſubſtitute himſelf in the place of the ſinner, to anſwer the demands of all the members of the meeting, that had any objection againſt our ſalvation, or any thing to lay to our charge: Where then, and *when did they meet together and kiſs each other?* Why, it was even in Chriſt, when he took our law-room to pay our debt, and purchaſe our liberty in ſuch a manner, as Mercy and Peace might have their intereſts advanced, without injury to Truth and Righteouſneſs; that Mercy might vent, to the credit of Truth; and Peace might be proclaimed to the honour of Righteouſneſs; and the ſinner ſaved, to the ſatisfaction of Juſtice. They meet together and embrace each other in him, as the Surety, *The Surety of the better teſtament*, Heb. vii. 22.

We were debtors to the mandatory and minatory part of the law, arraigned at the inſtance of divine Juſtice to pay the debt. Chriſt ſubſtitutes himſelf in our room, comes under the law to pay the whole debt: it is true, the debt was perſonal, and Juſtice had a demand upon the perſon that ſinned, by virtue of the covenant of works; but that covenant never excluded a ſurety, though it provided none. The law promiſed life upon our perſonal obedience, but in caſe we fail, it revealed no ſurety to make out an obedience in our room. There behoved, indeed, to be a ſecret reſerve in the covenant of works, whereby the perfect obedience of another was not excluded: for, if the covenant of works had abſolutely excluded a ſurety in our room, then the covenant of grace had been excluded, and our ſalvation had been impoſſible after our fall; but though the covenant of works did not exclude a ſurety, yet that covenant did neither provide, nor reveal a ſurety. This is done in the covenant of grace, which is Chriſt as Surety fulfilling for us the covenant of works, in all the articles of it.

Now, is Truth and Faithfulneſs at any loſs here? No: the truth of the promiſe and threatning both, of the law of works is fulfilled. On the one hand, the promiſe of eternal life, made to perfect obedience, which, though we forfeited in our own perſon, yet we recover in the perſon of Chriſt; the promiſe of life upon the ground and condition of perfect obedience, being fulfilled to us in him, who hath yielded that perfect obedience in our room. On the other hand, divine Truth and Faithfulneſs, in the threatening of the law, which was death, is glorified in that it is fulfilled upon the Surety; while we, who came under the ſentence of death in the firſt Adam, undergo that death in the ſecond.

Again, is Righteouſneſs and Juſtice at any loſs by this Surety in our room? No, no: whether we look upon it as vindictive or retributive Juſtice: vindictive Juſtice is diſplayed in its utmoſt ſeverity againſt Chriſt; *Awake, O ſword, againſt my Shepherd, and the man that is my Fellow.* And ſo the ſword is drunk in his blood to infinite ſatisfaction. Retributive Juſtice is glorioufly diſplayed alſo in the ſinner's being rewarded, juſtified, ſaved, upon this ground. It is true, might Juſtice ſay, I could have demanded ſatisfaction upon the ſinner himſelf, in his own perſon, but as I can ſuſtain no injury to my honour, by ſuch a Surety as this, whom they call IMMANUEL, God-man; ſo I find my honour and intereſt, inſtead of being impaired, is advanced by this exchange of perſons: for, though I ſhould damn the ſinner to all eternity, I will never get ſuch full and complete ſatisfaction upon any finite creature, as I will get by one ſtroak of my avenging ſword upon that Perſon of infinite dignity; and ſo *it pleaſed the Lord to bruiſe him.*——Why then, they meet together and embrace one another in him, as the *Surety*; and if Truth and Righteouſneſs be both pleaſed to the full, the parties cannot but all agree, and embrace each other.—Again, they meet together and embrace one another in him, as a *Sacrifice*; *A ſacrifice and offering of a ſweet-ſmelling ſavour unto God*, Eph. v. 2. Why, *He offered up himſelf by the eternal Spirit.* O great! Even by his eternal Godhead; a valuable ſacrifice indeed!—They meet together in him as a *propitiation*; *Whom God hath ſet forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteouſneſs for the remiſſion of ſins that are paſt, through the forbearance of God*, Rom. iii. 25. Behold him righteous in ſhewing Mercy! Here is the atonement, the propitiation: that very word which the Septuagint calls the *mercy-ſeat*, in the Old Teſtament; and it is the word that the poor publican made uſe of, when he was ſeeking Mercy, *God be merciful to me a ſinner*; ὁ Θεὸς ἱλάσθητί μοι, *Be thou* PROPITIOUS *to me*, Luke xviii 13. He had mind of this ἱλαστήριον; this *Mercy-ſeat* and *Propitiation.* It is not *ſimple mercy* that he ſought, but Mercy *through a propitiation*; he looked to the blood of atonement, to the ſacrificed Lamb of God, ſaying, Give me Mercy for this; by that ſolemn propitiation: *Be thou propitious to me.* Here it is that Mercy and Juſtice meet together.—They meet together in him as a *ranſom*; *Deliver his ſoul from going down to the pit; I have found a ranſom*, Job xxxiii. 24.—In a word, they have met together, and kiſſed one another in a *crucified Chriſt*; whoſe death was the payment of our debt, the puniſhment of our ſin, the price of our redemption, and a purchaſe of our life, liberty, and eternal ſalvation.—— Here is the meeting-place then of theſe glorious perfections of God: here is the perſon in whom they centre, that they may be all glorified to the higheſt. Mercy, Truth, Righteouſneſs, and Peace, all are pleaſed. Mercy is gratified, and conſtitutes him to be *the Mercy-ſeat:* Truth is ſatisfied, and centres in him as *the way, the truth, and the life:* Righteouſneſs is contented, and declares him to be *the Lord our righteouſneſs:* Peace is perfected, and proclaims him to be the *Prince of peace:* yea, not only are all the members of the meeting pleaſed and ſatisfied for themſelves, in the advancement of their own particular intereſts, but they are infinitely well-pleaſed in each other; and that the intereſts of their ſeemingly oppoſite parties are advanced, as well as their own particular claims. Mercy is pleaſed, that Truth hath

hath got all its demands; and Truth is pleaſed, that Mercy hath got all her deſire; and Righteouſneſs is pleaſed, that Peace is proclaimed; and Peace is pleaſed, that Righteouſneſs is honoured. Mercy and Peace rejoice that they are magnified, to the infinite glory of Truth and Righteouſneſs; and Truth and Righteouſneſs rejoice, that they are glorified, to the infinite pleaſure of Mercy and Peace: and hence they not only *meet together*, but *kiſs one another*. Here you ſee where they meet together.——So much for an anſwer thereto more generally.

2*dly*, More particularly, as to the *meeting-time*, you may take theſe following particulars, for further clearing of it. Although this bleſſed meeting once taking place, is ſtill continued, and cannot be ſaid properly to adjourn from time to time, and from place to place; for this aſſembly never diſſolves; yet, in a ſuitableneſs to our weak capacity, and finite underſtanding, which cannot rightly conceive of a meeting that never had a time to meet, becauſe they met in eternity, and never ſhall have a time to part, becauſe they meet to eternity: we cannot conceive of it, I ſay, but by taking it, as it were, into ſo many parts, or conſidering it in ſo many periods; and there are theſe eight remarkable periods, wherein Mercy and Peace meet with Truth and Righteouſneſs, and kiſs each other.

1. The firſt remarkable period is this, They met together at the *council-table* of the *covenant of redemption* from all eternity; before ever the *foundation of the world was laid*, and ere ever the *morning ſtars ſang together*, Mercy and Truth met together, Righteouſneſs and Peace kiſſed each other; for the council of peace did then meet, Zech. vi. 13. And all was concerted by infinite Wiſdom, how Mercy ſhould be magnified, Truth cleared, Righteouſneſs vindicated, and Peace concluded; and all in Chriſt, who, according to the tenor of that covenant (whereof the covenant of grace is but a tranſcript) was to *give his ſoul an offering for ſin*; and then was to *ſee his ſeed, and the pleaſure of the Lord to proſper in his hand*. Then it was that this pleaſant meeting was firſt conſtitute, as you may ſee, Prov. viii. 30, 31. He being ſet up from everlaſting, ere ever the earth was, God in all his glorious perfections was delighted in him: and, in him, *His delights were with the ſons of men*. This was the grand meeting, at which the time and place of all the ſubſequent meetings were concerted, and all the other particulars, we are to mention, are but the reſult of this, and, as it were, emanations therefrom; for it is a meeting that never diſſolves, though in ſeveral periods it appears like a new meeting unto us. Therefore,

2. Another remarkable period, is their meeting together in the *garden of Eden*, after man had made himſelf naked and obnoxious to the flaming ſword of divine Juſtice. Mercy comes walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the guilty pannel being examined in open court, behold Mercy and Truth meet together in the happy ſentence that was pronounced, *The ſeed of the woman ſhall bruiſe the head of the ſerpent*, Gen. iii. 15. Behold Righteouſneſs and Peace kiſſing one another in the righteous vengeance, that was to be execute upon the devil and his works, in order to effectuate a happy peace betwixt God and man. This meeting was gradually cleared up under the Old Teſtament; and in the legal ſacrifices, pointing out the great propitiatory Sacrifice.

3. Another remarkable period, is their meeting together at *Bethlehem Ephratah*, upon Chriſt's incarnation, Micah v. 2, 4, 5.

4. Another remarkable period, is their meeting together at the *banks of Jordan*, when Chriſt was baptized, Mat. iii. 13, 16, 17.

5. Another remarkable period, is their meeting together in the *garden of Gethſemane*, when Chriſt being in an agony did ſweat great drops of blood under the preſſure of avenging Juſtice; every drop of blood was an ocean of Mercy: and while he was preſt in the wine-preſs of God's wrath, Mercy was expreſſed. No mercy to Chriſt; for, *God ſpared not his own Son*, even when he cried, Mercy, mercy; God's mercy, ſaying, *Father, if it be thy will, remove this cup from me*. No, no; no mercy was ſhown to him, otherwiſe no mercy had been ſhown to us; Juſtice muſt have its due from him, that mercy might vent towards us; and ſo, here Mercy and Truth meet together.

6. Another remarkable period, is their meeting on *mount Calvary*, where Chriſt was crucified. It was upon the croſs of Chriſt that Mercy and Truth met together, that Righteouſneſs and Peace kiſſed each other; for there it was that he paid all the elect's debt, to the leaſt farthing that Truth and Righteouſneſs could demand; until *he cried with a loud voice, and ſaid, It is finiſhed*. Having done all that the law could injoin, he ſuffered all that the law could threaten, ſo as it cannot crave a farthing more: *It is finiſhed:* All that was ſtipulated for with the Father, in that federal tranſaction; all that was promiſed, in that eternal compact, is finiſhed; every article agreed to in the council of peace was finiſhed. The bargain that he had ſigned with his hand, he now ſealed with his blood; and in this appearance upon the croſs, or in his obedience to the death, did all the attributes of God meet, as in a centre. And on this account was mount Calvary more glorious than mount Sinai; for, in mount Sinai, God appeared in his terrible majeſty, making the mountain to tremble, and the earth to ſhake; but here in mount Calvary, he appeared not only in his terrible majeſty, but in his tender mercy, in his terrible fury againſt ſin; and in his tender favour towards the ſinner: and now, the controverſy betwixt Juſtice and Mercy ſeems at a criſis; here was the critical juncture, wherein their different demands behoved to be decided; and it was done with ſuch a ſolemnity as made the whole univerſe, as it were, to tremble and quake: for then did *God ſhake, not the earth only, but alſo heaven;* for when Chriſt was under the mighty load of this terrible wrath, in the ſinner's room, there was *a great earthquake*, and *the heavens grew black, the ſun was eclipſed;* and, that at a time, contrary to the common rules of nature, which made a heathen philoſopher, at a diſtance, cry out, "That either the frame of nature was on the "point of diſſolution, or the God of nature "was ſuffering." And indeed he was ſuffering unto blood, and unto death. Behold the living and eternal God here, in our nature wounded to death, and bleeding out his life, to be a ſacrifice for ſin, that juſtice might be ſatisfied, and mercy might be magnified, and

all the attributes of God glorified to the higheſt. O wonder! that GOLGOTHA the *place of a ſkull*, ſhould be ſuch a famous meeting-place for the divine perfections. It was a place of the greateſt ſhame and ignominy; but, in him *who endured the croſs, and deſpiſed the ſhame*, it was made a place of moſt reſplendent glory; for, in the croſs of Chriſt, Mercy and Truth, Righteouſneſs and Peace met, and embraced each other. God's attributes did harmoniouſly join together, ſo as the one does not blacken, but illuſtrate the glory of the other, while they ſhined glorioufly in the face of Chriſt crucified, as a beautiful and bright conſtellation; for he was *ſet forth to be a propitiation*, to declare the Righteouſneſs and Juſtice of God, together with his other glorious names.

7. Another remarkable period, is their meeting together at the *bar of God's great Juſtice-court in heaven, within the vail, whither the Forerunner hath for us entered, even Jeſus*, Heb. vi. 20. When Chriſt was upon the croſs, *The vail of the temple was rent in twain, from the top to the bottom;* and a way was made for entering into the holy of holies: and as the prieſts under the law were not only to offer the ſacrifice without the camp, but after that were to enter the holieſt of all, not without blood, but with the blood of the ſacrifice, *to ſprinkle the mercy-ſeat*, Lev. xvi. 14, 15. *Even ſo, Chriſt having offered himſelf a ſacrifice, and ſuffered without the gate*, Heb. xiii. 12. *He is entered into the holy place by his own blood*, Heb. ix. 12. there to appear as our High-prieſt, in the power and virtue of his blood, to make a full atonement, and ſprinkle the mercy-ſeat. Hence believers are ſaid to *be come to Jeſus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of ſprinkling;* and where is this? Even in heaven, as you ſee in the context, Heb. xii. 23, 24. Now, in this work, Chriſt carried the price of his blood into the very *preſence of God for us*, Heb. ix. 24. and paid it down before him: and in this act, Juſtice hath its ſatisfaction brought home; and by this act, Mercy and Juſtice actually are met; for hereby Chriſt ſpirinkled the very mercy-ſeat with blood, all over, both upon it, and before it, as the forecited, Lev. xvi. repreſents. For the mercy-ſeat of old ſtood ſo, that it could be ſeen but two ways, namely, *upon it*, and *before it*, as a table next to the wall; and ſo this points out, that whatever way we look to mercy by faith, we may ſee mercy and blood mixed; mercy and juſtice met together; and all ſorts of mercy conveyed through the blood of Chriſt; top mercies, and ſide mercies, upper mercies, of a ſpiritual nature, and lower mercies, of a temporal nature; for the mercy-ſeat is ſprinkled with blood upon it, and before it, and whatever way you look to it. The ſacrifice was finiſhed on the croſs; and all ſacrifices finiſhed therein: but the blood of the ſacrifice behoved alſo to be carried within the vail in order to the full atonement, that what was written in blood upon the croſs, might be ſealed in the preſence of God at the heavenly bar: and we act not our faith far enough for redemption, unleſs we follow Chriſt from the croſs to the bar of God's juſtice-court in heaven, to ſee all ſealed and ſecured there within the vail, where this blood is expoſed as it were, and pled at the bar; where *Mercy and Juſtice meet together, and embrace each other.*

8. Another remarkable period, is their meeting together at the *bar of conſcience*, God's lower court, on the day of actual reconciliation betwixt God and the ſinner; for then, *The blood of Chriſt, who, through the eternal Spirit, did offer himſelf without ſpot to God, doth purge the conſcience*, Heb. ix. 14. And *the blood of ſprinkling, wherewith the conſcience is purged from dead works to ſerve the living God*, doth put forth its purgative power and virtue by a certain internal ſpeech; and what doth it ſpeak to the conſcience? *It ſpeaks better things than the blood of Abel;* that ſpeaks vengeance, but this ſpeaks mercy and peace, in conjunction with truth, righteouſneſs, and juſtice: for where-ever juſtice-ſatiſfying blood cries for mercy and peace, there *Mercy and Truth, Righteouſneſs and Peace meet, and embrace each other.* This blood is the cement whereby they are joined together; before this blood be applied, the conſcience of the convinced ſinner is all in a flame, like mount Sinai; thunder, and lightening, and ſmoak, and darkneſs, and fear of hell and vengeance, compaſſing the ſoul about, while it is arraigned at the inſtance of the fiery law, to pay the double debt to the mandatory and minatory part of the law; that is, perfect obedience upon the pain of eternal death and damnation. The ſinner finds himſelf loſt and undone for ever by this law; but then, whenever the blood of ſprinkling comes in, and appears at the bar of conſcience, it ſpeaks better things: it is a better ſpeaker than the law; and what ſays it? Why, the language of it is, With your leave, O law, you have nothing to crave; for Chriſt the Son of God was arraigned at the inſtance of divine Juſtice, to pay all this debt, becauſe he was this ſinner's Surety and Subſtitute; and he actually paid it, by obeying the command, and undergoing the penalty of the law; and for this I produce the antient records of God; *In the volume of his book, it is written of Chriſt, that when ſacrifice and offering would not, he ſaid, Lo, I come, I delight to do thy will: and that the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all: That he was made a curſe for us; yea, that he was made ſin for us, even he who knew no ſin, that we might become the righteouſneſs of God in him.* And therefore, O law, though thou haſt Truth and Righteouſneſs on thy ſide, yet Truth and Righteouſneſs have met with Mercy and Peace, and they have concerted matters, and agreed harmoniouſly, and kiſſed one another, in token of their full agreement in Chriſt; ſo that in Chriſt all charges are anſwered. And thus in the believer's conſcience parties meet together.

III. The *third* thing propoſed was, *how* and after what *manner* is it, that they meet together, and kiſs each other? We are to conceive of it after the manner of God; for it is more than a meeting of ſaints; it is more than a meeting of angels; it is a divine meeting of all the glorious attributes of God; and we may notice theſe following qualities of it.

1. It is a *wonderful* and *myſterious* meeting: it is above our comprehenſion and conception. O! how wonderful a meeting is this! The very name of the Perſon, that is made the triſting-place, the meeting-place, is called WONDERFUL, Iſa. ix. 6. Becauſe the meeting is about us, his name is called, IMMANUEL, *God with us.* O how myſterious is this meeting! *Great is the myſtery of godlineſs, God manifeſted in the fleſh*, 1 Tim. iii. 16. That is all the attri-

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butes of God meeting together, and harmoniously embracing one another in the eternal Son of God, who hath assumed our nature into his own personality: this is the most wonderful mysterious meeting that ever was in heaven or earth.

2. It is a *joyful* meeting: they meet with infinite pleasure and satisfaction in one another; *Behold my Servant, whom I uphold; mine Elect, in whom my soul delighteth*, Isa. xlii. 1. As the perfections of God are glorified in Christ, so they rejoice and are delighted in him; *For* JEHOVAH *is well-pleased for his righteousness sake; and therefore the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand; and he shall see the travel of his soul and be satisfied.* Surely, if God hath his pleasure, and Christ his satisfaction, no attribute of the divine Majesty, no member of the meeting is displeased, or out of humour; no, no; *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.* My Justice is pleased, my Mercy is pleased, and all my other attributes are pleased. O it is a heartsome, pleasant, and joyful meeting! May all that hear me be well-pleased to see it: no joyful meeting, but what hath a respect to this.

3. It is a *holy* meeting: some meetings among men that are called heartsome meetings, yet are very unholy and sinful meetings; but here is an infinitely holy meeting; *holiness to the Lord*, is the motto of it. A meeting of holy saints, and holy angels, is not such a holy meeting as this meeting of the holy attributes of God, to advance the great design of infinite holiness. All the holy meetings that ever were, or ever will be, are the result of this, and the effect of some portion of holiness sent from it; for all holiness issues from it. Here *Mercy and Truth meet together*, in a holy manner; *Righteousness and Peace salute each other*, in a holy way, and *greet one another with a holy kiss.*

4. It is a *happy* meeting; all happiness and blessings flow from this meeting: Christ the meeting-place is the centre *of all spiritual blessings*, Eph. i. 3. Many unhappy meetings have been in the world since sin entered into it; and sinful unholy meetings are always miserable and unhappy meetings: but this holy meeting, must be a happy meeting; and this holy kiss, must be a happy kiss. If Mercy and Truth had not met together, we had never met with God; if Righteousness and Peace had never kissed each other, we had never got a kiss of the fair face of the Son of God, nor ever been taken into the divine embraces.

5. It is a *free* meeting; Mercy and Truth met together freely, without being constrained; Righteousness and Peace kissed each other freely, without being forced: no motive from without could ever take place to move God to call this meeting from eternity; it was according to *his own purpose and grace, which is given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began*, 2 Tim. i. 9. Free sovereign grace is the original of the meeting. It is also such a free assembly, where every member might freely speak, and not one to interrupt another, as is usual in meetings among men, where some cry one thing, and some another, in a confused manner; like that assembly, Acts xix. 32. where it is said, *The assembly was confused, and the greater part knew not wherefore they were met together; and some cried one thing, and some another:* no, this meeting is free, in opposition both to all constraint and compulsion from without, and to all confusion and commotion from within: where sovereign free Grace is the master-conveener, there can be no compulsion; and where the God of order is the manager, there could be no confusion; and where the God of peace was all in all, there could be no dissention. Therefore,

6. It is a *harmonious* meeting: whatever different claims and pretensions the members of the meeting may seem to have, yet they harmoniously concur in advancing one another's honour and glory; and hence, as they mutually meet together, so they affectionately embrace one another. There was no discord at this assembly, no proper variance or striving for state; but gloriously conspiring with joint hearts and hands, to glorify each other in the salvation of a company of sinners, by Jesus Christ. The divine essence is undivided; and as *there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Spirit; and these three are one;* so the attributes of God, however manifold to our apprehension, yet there is no division among them, they are all one; and their conspiring together in Christ for our redemption, is called Πολυποίκιλ☞ Σοφία τ☞ Θε☞, THE MANIFOLD WISDOM OF GOD. The manifold perfections of God meet together in one, with one consent and with one heart. Behold Mercy and Justice in one another's arms; and so closs is the embracement, that they are just one. Though it be a full meeting, and all parties present, yet there is no war, no jar, no dissention, no division, but all harmony and concord, all love and affection: it is the most peaceable meeting that ever was. And yet,

7. It is a *bloody* meeting; and never was, and never will there be such a bloody meeting in heaven or earth: the mercy-seat must be sprinkled with blood; Mercy cannot be vented without blood; Truth cannot be cleared, without blood; Righteousness cannot be vindicated, without blood; and Peace cannot be purchased, without blood; *without shedding of blood there is no remission;* no mercy to be vented, no peace to be proclaimed; *Christ hath made peace by the blood of his cross*, Col. i. 20. *A bloody husband hast thou been unto me*, said Zipporah; but, O how much more may Christ say, a bloody meeting hath this been unto me! *Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozra?* Isa. lxiii. 1. Why, what is the matter that his garment is dyed with blood? Why? when Mercy and Truth met together, they pressed to be so near one another in him, that they pressed the blood out of his veins; and so it was a bloody meeting: and when Righteousness and Peace kissed each other, it behoved to be in Christ, and so the sword of justice behoved to pierce him through and through; that so these sacred lips might meet and kiss each other in his heart; and so it was a bloody kiss: they kissed each other with such good-will, that Christ was, as it were, bruised betwixt their lips, that the blood might cement and glue them together. One would think, such a bloody kiss would be no pleasant kiss; nay, but *it pleased the Father to bruise him:* they met together on a sea of blood.——Thus it was a bloody meeting. Again,

8. It

8. It is an *efficacious* meeting: many meet and aſſemble together, and yet do nothing for their meeting; it is to no effect: but here Mercy and Truth meet together efficaciouſly, co-operatively; all is done at the meeting, that God propoſed to be done, and all is done that concerns the glory of God and ſalvation of men; their meeting together, is their working together, and that to perfection; *For God the Lord is a rock, and his work is perfect.* Their meeting together, is their building together; Pſal. lxxxix. 2, 3. *I have ſaid, Mercy ſhall be built up for ever: thy faithfulneſs ſhalt thou eſtabliſh in the very heavens.* There is Mercy and Truth both a building, and the foundation of the building is laid in Chriſt: *I have made a covenant with my choſen; I have ſworn unto David my ſervant.*

9. It is an *unexpected* meeting; it is beyond the expectation of men and angels. If friends and intimates ſhould meet, and ſalute one another, it would not be ſurprizing; but to ſee oppoſites, antipodes, and antagoniſts meet together, and embrace each other, this were ſurprizing and unexpected: ſo to ſee light and darkneſs, love and enmity, life and death meeting, how unexpected were that? Thus it is here, Mercy and Truth, Righteouſneſs and Peace, theſe attributes of God, with reſpect to us, were oppoſites and antipodes. The language of Truth and Righteouſneſs, is death and damnation to the ſinner; the language of Mercy and Peace, is life and ſalvation to the ſinner; and when a ſinner finds himſelf purſued to death, at the inſtance of divine Juſtice, and the truth and veracity of God engaged againſt him, according to the threatening of the law, O how unexpected a rencounter is it! when he finds Mercy and Peace meeting with Juſtice and Truth, and ſtopping the purſuit, according to the promiſe of the goſpel, to the credit of the oppoſite parties, ſaying, *Deliver his ſoul from going down to the pit; I have found a ranſom*, and ſo all differences are adjuſted; all oppoſites reconciled, to the infinite ſurprize, and beyond the expectation of all created beings. No wonder then, upon this meeting diſcovered, the poor ſoul cries, *Is this the manner of man, O Lord? O, who is like unto thee! Nay, there is none like unto the God of Jeſurun, that rides on the heaven for their help, and in his excellency on the ſkies.*

10. It is an *everlaſting, indiſſolvable* meeting: other meetings will adjourn their meetings from time to time, and from place to place; yea, other meetings muſt part, and when they part, they may never meet again; and we that are here met, muſt part, and never all meet again in time; even as ſome others that met together with us the laſt year, are away to eternity. But O! this meeting betwixt Mercy and Truth, Righteouſneſs and Peace, it is a meeting where there is no parting; the meeting is from everlaſting to everlaſting; their meeting together, and kiſſing each other, is an eternal and unchangeable meeting, and an eternal and unchangeable kiſs: it is every way like God, without beginning, without ending, and without ſucceſſion. Whatever beginning, iſſue, or increaſe it hath with reſpect to its manifeſtation to us, yet in itſelf, it is ſtill the ſame in Chriſt Jeſus, who is *the ſame yeſterday, to-day, and for ever; without any variableneſs or ſhadow of turning*, Heb. xiii. 8. The meeting never breaks up; it is a continued meeting, never to be diſſolved; and there they kiſs one another to all eternity; *for his mercy endureth for ever, and his righteouſneſs to all generations: and becauſe of truth, meekneſs, and righteouſneſs, in his majeſty he ſhall ride proſperouſly: and of the increaſe of his government and peace there ſhall be no end. I have ſaid, Mercy ſhall be built up for ever; and I have ſaid, Truth ſhall be eſtabliſhed in the heavens.* Why, what is the meaning of all theſe expreſſions? The language is, as if one glorious attribute of God, ſhould ſay to another, O! the ſin of man ſet us all, as it were, at variance, and the whole creation knows not how to reconcile God with himſelf, if he ſhall ſave one ſinner; but behold we, having met together in Chriſt the Righteouſneſs, the Ranſom, the Atonement, the Propitiation; having embraced one another in behalf of thoſe poor miſerable ſinners, our arms ſhall never ſeparate, that are claſped together. Mercy and Truth have met together, ſaying, You and I ſhall never part; Righteouſneſs and Peace have kiſſed each other, ſaying, You and I ſhall never ſunder, nor ſuſpend the embracement; neither death nor life, nor hell, nor devils, nor ſin itſelf, ſhall ever ſeparate us. It is a bargain among us, a divine match; they have met together by an everlaſting covenant, ſealed the bargain with an everlaſting kiſs, and faſtened a knot in an everlaſting Righteouſneſs, which is the band of the union, even Chriſt; *for the covenant does ſtand faſt with him*, Pſal. lxxxix. 28. Where you will alſo ſee how this everlaſting meeting is eſtabliſhed in Chriſt, ver. 14. *Juſtice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne*; or, *the* ESTABLISHMENT *of thy throne*, as it may be rendered; *And mercy and truth ſhall go before thy face.* And ver. 21. *With him my hand ſhall be eſtabliſhed; and my faithfulneſs, and my mercy ſhall be with him.* And ver. 28. *My mercy will I keep for him for ever.*——Thus it is an everlaſting meeting.

IV. The *fourth* thing propoſed, was, *Why*, or for what *reaſons* they have met together, and kiſſed each other? Why have the perfections of the glorious God conſpired ſo harmoniouſly, and met together in ſuch a ſweet ſolemnity? Surely ſuch a meeting as this muſt have noble deſigns in view; and I will tell you theſe four reaſons of the meeting, or four things that were to be concerted at this great aſſembly.

1. They met together, to concert meaſures for advancing the *glory of God* to the higheſt. This parliament of heaven met together upon ways and means, for bringing in the greateſt revenue of praiſe and glory to the crown of heaven, to Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt; and all the glorious attributes of this great and eternal God. Theſe glorious attributes conſpired harmoniouſly to ſet forth and glorify themſelves moſt illuſtriouſly: they met together, and kiſſed one another, that they might glorify each other. The glory of God was the firſt and laſt end of the meeting. What is the chief end of man, but to glorify God, and enjoy him for ever? and, O! what is the chief end of God! It is even to glorify himſelf in all his perfections, and to enjoy himſelf for ever. And how does God glorify himſelf moſt brightly? It is even in Chriſt, the meeting-place of theſe perfections, with a view to our redemption,

redemption, *to the praiſe of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved*, Eph. i. 6. And how does he enjoy himſelf moſt ſweetly? It is even in Chriſt, *Behold mine Elect, in whom my ſoul delighteth; I was daily his delight*, ſays Chriſt *while my delight was with the ſons of men*, Prov. viii. 30. They met together to put a crown of glory and honour upon each other. Adam's ſin and rebellion, and your ſin, man, woman, and my ſin (O that God diſhonouring evil ſin!) it had pulled off that crown of glory, as it were, from the head of the great King, eternal and immortal, and thrown it into the mire, and ſtained it with filth and pollution: but behold theſe attributes of God meet together to take up the crown, to rub off the duſt and dung that ſin had caſt upon it, and to add ſome more ſparkling jewels to it than ever, and ſet it upon the head of their Sovereign, to the higheſt praiſes of his Mercy, Juſtice, Truth, Righteouſneſs, Grace, Love, Holineſs, Wiſdom, and all his other excellencies; that men and angels might ſing and ſay, *Glory to God in the higheſt, peace on earth, and good will towards men;* that all the ſaints might ſing a conſort in praiſe of the meeting betwixt Mercy and Truth, Juſtice and Peace, ſaying, as it is Pſal. lxxxix. 14.

Juſtice and judgment of thy throne,
Shall be the dwelling-place:
Mercy, accompany'd with Truth,
Shall go before thy face.

And that every ſaint might ſing the fifty-ſeventh pſalm, and ninth and tenth verſes.

I'll praiſe thee 'mong the people, LORD,
'Mong nations ſing will I;
For great to heav'n thy mercy is,
Thy truth doth reach the ſky.

They met together, to put a *crown of glory* upon the head of Chriſt, Heb. ii. 9. in whom they met. This aſſembly did conveen for the coronation of the Son of God: for, *he having humbled himſelf, and become obedient unto death, even the death of the croſs; God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name, that at the name of* JESUS *every knee ſhould bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue ſhould confeſs that Jeſus Chriſt is* LORD, *to the glory of God the Father*, Philip. ii. 8,—13. Chriſt hath glorified the Father, and therefore the Father glorified him, *And now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him; and if God be glorified in him, God ſhall alſo glorify him in himſelf*, John xiii. 31, 32. *Him that honoureth me, I will honour*, ſays God, 1 Sam. ii. 30. And in whom does this take place to perfection? It is in Chriſt; God is honoured moſt highly by him; and therefore he is honoured moſt highly: AMEN, *ſo let it be, and ſo ſhall it be.*—And therefore it is concerted in that meeting, that all the *ſaints* ſhall glorify him; hence that royal edict comes forth, *He is thy* LORD, *worſhip thou him*, Pſal. xlv. 11. And ſo we find them doing, Rev. v. 9. *Thou art worthy to take the book, and open the ſeals; for thou waſt ſlain, and haſt redeemed us to God by thy blood.*—It is concerted in that meeting, that all the *angels* ſhould glorify him; hence that edict comes forth, *Let all the angels of God worſhip him*, Heb. i. 6. And ſo we find them doing, Rev. v. 11, 12. *I heard the voice of many angels, and the number of them was ten thouſand times ten thouſand, and thouſands of thouſands, ſaying, with a loud voice, Worthy is the* LAMB *that was ſlain, to receive power, and riches, and wiſdom, and ſtrength, and honour, and glory, and bleſſings.*—It is concerted in this meeting, *that all the creatures in heaven and earth, ſea and land, ſhall glorify him*, as we ſee ver. 13.—But leſt the ſinful creatures upon earth, like you and me, ſhould not glorify him, or ſee his glory, it is concerted in that glorious meeting, that the Holy Ghoſt, the eternal Spirit, one God, equal in power and glory with the Father and the Son, ſhall be ſent down to the earth to glorify him, *He ſhall glorify me, for he ſhall receive of mine, and ſhew it unto you*, John xvi. 14.——O! hath the Spirit of God been ſhewing any thing of Chriſt among you this day! any thing of his grace, fulneſs, and righteouſneſs, ſo as to glorify him, and make him glorious above all things to you: why then, we may reckon that you have found ſomething of the ſaving fruits of this glorious meeting; for the grand deſign of it was to glorify God in Chriſt, by the Spirit. They met to concert all things relating to the glory of the Father, in the Son, by the Holy Ghoſt. They met to conſult their own glory in Chriſt, that Mercy and Truth might be glorified in him.

2. They met together to concert their *proper work*, in carrying on this great end, of the glory of God, and his perfections. They do not meet together to ſit idle, and do nothing; no, they meet together to concert each of them their proper buſineſs, as Chriſt ſaid to his friends, *Wherefore was it that ye ſought me? Wiſt ye not that I muſt be about my Father's buſineſs?* So may I ſay here, the attributes of God met together, that they may go about God's buſineſs: what buſineſs? what work belongs to each of them ſeverally? Why, Mercy and Truth meet together, that they may be ſent upon an embaſſy together; *God ſhall ſend forth his mercy and his truth*, Pſal. lvii. 3.; his Mercy, to give in the promiſe of the goſpel; and his Truth, to make out the ſame. Thus Mercy and Truth met together, that they may be ſent forth upon ſome gracious expedition, particularly both to be leaders and followers; to the remnant whom God appointed unto life. On the one hand, to be leaders; hence the pſalmiſt cries, *O ſend forth thy light and thy truth; let them lead me, and bring me to thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacle: then will I go to the altar of God, to God my exceeding joy.* Behold the wonderful buſineſs of Mercy and Truth, and the work they are ſet out upon, even mercifully to lead blind ſouls to God in Chriſt.—On the other hand, it is to be not only leaders, but followers; *Surely goodneſs and mercy ſhall follow me all the days of my life*, Pſal. xxiii. 6. If the child of God, under any temptation, refuſe to be led by Mercy and Truth, and give up with them as his leaders, yet for all that, he ſhall not hinder them to be his followers: he may run out of God's way, but Mercy will follow and bring him back; and when Mercy follows, it is always in company with Truth. And, O! what think you of this wonder! Mercy and Truth meet together, that they might go forth together, like two pages, to follow you, believer, through all the ſteps of your wilderneſs journey; *Goodneſs and mercy ſhall follow me all the days of my life.* Here is a piece of work, that Mercy and Truth have met together for, even to be ſent forth, as

as leaders and followers of poor elect ſinners, till they be out of all hazard, *in* IMMANUEL'S *land, where glory dwells:* ſee Pſal. lxi. 7. But then, as *Mercy and Truth have met together*, to purſue their proper work; ſo, *Righteouſneſs and Peace have kiſſed each other*, for purſuing of theirs. Well, ſay you, what is the work of Righteouſneſs and Peace? You have a word in the laſt verſe of this pſalm, where our text lies, *Righteouſneſs ſhall go before him, and ſet us in the way of his ſteps.* Divine Righteouſneſs diſplaying itſelf in Chriſt Jeſus, the *Sun of righteouſneſs*, goes before him to prepare his way, and bring us to God, and to our duty: and, to be ſure, when ever Righteouſneſs goes before, Peace will follow after; *for the fruit of righteouſneſs is peace*, whether it be imputed or implanted. Here then the work of Righteouſneſs and Peace kiſſing each other, is to bring in theſe bleſſed effects in their order: we conſider them as divine perfections in the text, and in theſe effects, Righteouſneſs leads the van, and Peace comes up with the rear.

3. Theſe attributes conſpire harmoniouſly, they meet together and kiſs each other, for this reaſon, that by their meeting together, they may concert the *diſſolving of ſome unhappy meetings*. Theſe oppoſite-like attributes of God meet together, that ſome intimates may be ſeparate, and ſad and ſinful agreements may be broken up: there is a ſad meeting, and agreement we read of, Iſa. xxviii. 15. *We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement.* Why, is not this the caſe of all men by nature? Yea: but how is this ſad and miſerable meeting diſſolved? See verſe 16. *Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation, a ſtone, a tried ſtone, a precious corner-ſtone, a ſure foundation.—Judgment alſo will I lay to the line, and righteouſneſs to the plummet.* Well, when Judgment and Righteouſneſs mercifully meet in Chriſt, the ſure Foundation, what will be the effect? It follows, ver. 17, 18. *The hail ſhall ſweep away the refuges of lies, and your covenant with death ſhall be diſanulled, and your agreement with hell ſhall not ſtand.* Whatever ſad aſpect this ſcripture may have to the deſpiſers of Chriſt, yet it hath a merciful aſpect to all the choſen of God, and all that deſire to live to the Lord Jeſus; yea, there is here a foundation of faith laid, for all that hear the joyful ſound, that whatever ſinful and miſerable meetings and agreements there are betwixt hell and them, betwixt death and them, yet it cannot ſtand before this glorious meeting, that was deſigned to break up and diſſolve the oppoſite meetings, that ſtand in a contrariety thereto. There are many black unions, which this bleſſed union doth diſſolve; and there is no diſſolving of them, but by this bleſſed meeting. There is the black union betwixt the ſinner and the law, which is the foundation of the black union, betwixt the ſinner and his ſin: for, when the union betwixt him and the law is diſſolved, then the union betwixt him and his ſin is diſſolved, according to Rom. vi. 14. *Sin ſhall not have dominion unto you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace.* Now, what is the covenant of grace? Why, Mercy and Truth meeting together, Righteouſneſs and Peace, kiſſing each other in Chriſt Jeſus, is the ſubſtance, the marrow, the kernel of the covenant of grace; and it is this bleſſed meeting, that diſſolves the union betwixt the ſinner and the law, and ſo betwixt the ſinner and his ſin. O view the glorious deſign of this meeting! They met together that you might be ſeparated from your ſad aſſociates.—By nature you and the *devil* had met together, and you was a ſlave to him; and it is the virtue of this meeting in Chriſt, that diſſolves that; *The ſeed of the woman ſhall bruiſe the head of the ſerpent.*—The *world* and you had met together, and you took pleaſure in your wicked companions, or elſe was wholly drowned in worldly affairs; O! it is the faith of this meeting that diſſolves that: *This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith.*—The *curſe of God* and you had met together, and you lie under that curſe, till in the faith of this meeting, you ſhall ſee, *that Chriſt hath become a curſe for us.*——This meeting is deſigned for the breaking up of all theſe, and the like unhappy meetings. They met together in a glorious band, to looſe all the knots that the devil had tied.

4. Theſe glorious attributes of God do conſpire harmoniouſly, they meet together and kiſs each other, that they might concert and *carry on ſome happy meetings*, and make up *ſome bleſſed matches*. Theſe oppoſite-like attributes harmoniouſly meet, that oppoſites, and irreconcileable things might meet together harmoniouſly, and kiſs each other, whether real or ſeeming oppoſites.

1*ſt*, There are *real* oppoſites that meet together harmoniouſly, by virtue of this glorious meeting; particularly theſe ſix.

(1.) Theſe oppoſite-like attributes meet together harmoniouſly, that oppoſite *natures* might meet together, even that God and man might meet together, and embrace each other. And there are theſe two meetings betwixt God and man, that were concerted at this meeting; the one is the meeting betwixt God and man, in the *hypoſtatical union* of the two natures of Chriſt, our IMMANUEL, God-man, in one perſon: this is the *great myſtery of godlineſs, God manifeſted in the fleſh*; and this is the foundation of all other ſaving and merciful meetings betwixt God and man.—The other is the meeting between God and man in the *ſpiritual union* betwixt Chriſt and his members, in one myſtical perſon, by the bond of the Spirit; *for he that is joined to the Lord is one ſpirit*: and this union is the foundation of all ſpiritual communion with God. We were not only at an infinite natural diſtance from God, as we are creatures, but at an infinite moral diſtance from him, as we are criminals and ſinners: but the attributes of God met together and kiſſed each other in Chriſt, that God and man might meet together, in a cloſe ſpiritual union, and embrace each other in a ſweet ſpiritual communion. Whatever ſpiritual communion you have with God, believer, this day, it flows from this glorious meeting of the divine attributes in Chriſt: and this union and communion is indeed a meeting of oppoſite natures; God became man, and took on our nature, and he makes us partakers of his nature, 2 Pet. i. 4.

(2.) Theſe oppoſite-like attributes met together and kiſſed each other, that oppoſite *wills* might meet, and embrace each other. God's will and ours are oppoſite; this is indeed a branch of the former; but our wills are the great forts of corrupt nature, that ſtand out againſt God and his will; *we are enmity againſt*

gainſt God, and not ſubject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. Now, how comes the will to be reconciled to God's will? It is only by Chriſt, in whom the perfections of God meet together: *Thy people ſhall be willing* [Heb. WILLINGNEESSES] *in the day of thy power*, Pſal. cx. 4.

(3.) Theſe oppoſite-like attributes meet and kiſs each other, that oppoſite *perſons, viz.* Jews and Gentiles, man and man, that were enemies and haters of one another, might meet together; that Jews and Gentiles might meet together, and men at variance with men might meet together: hence it is ſaid of him, in whom the attributes of God do meet, *He is our peace, who hath made both one,* [i. e. Jews and Gentiles] *and hath broken down the middle wall of partition: having aboliſhed in his fleſh the enmity, even the law of commandments, contained in ordinances, for to make in himſelf, of twain, one new man, ſo making peace: and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body, by the croſs, having ſlain the enmity thereby*, Eph. ii. 14,—16. If any thing ſlay the enmity to God or man, this is it.

(4.) Theſe oppoſite-like attributes of God meet and kiſs each other, that oppoſite *climates* might meet together; I mean, that heaven and earth might meet together; the church militant, and the church triumphant. Heaven and earth were at variance by our ſin; but now in Chriſt, ſaints in heaven, and ſaints on earth meet together. Hence we are ſaid to be *come to the general aſſembly, and church of the firſt-born, that are written in heaven,—to the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect*, Heb. xii. 23. All believers are ſaid to be thus *come to mount Zion,—the heavenly Jeruſalem*, ver. 22. Yea, in Chriſt, angels in heaven, and men on earth do meet together: hence alſo believers are ſaid *to be come to the innumerable company of angels: and the angel of the Lord encamps about them that fear him*, Pſal. xxxiv. 7. Yea, all things in heaven and earth do meet together, and kiſs each other in Chriſt, the meeting-place; *Having made peace, by the blood of his croſs, by him to reconcile all things to himſelf; whether things in heaven, or things in earth*, Col. i. 20. Eph. i. 10. See how, upon the back of this meeting in the text, heaven and earth are ſaid to meet together in the following verſe, *Truth ſhall ſpring out of the earth; and Righteouſneſs ſhall look down from heaven;* which I inſiſt not upon here.

(5.) Theſe oppoſite-like attributes of God meet and kiſs each other, that oppoſite *covenants* might meet and embrace each other; even the covenant of works, and the covenant of grace, in Chriſt the meeting-place of the divine perfections. Theſe two covenants do, as it were, join hands and agree. Did the covenant of works command perfect obedience? and being broken, did it demand complete ſatisfaction? Behold Chriſt's obedience to the death anſwers both; God's covenant of grace diſpenſed to us, is juſt Chriſt fulfilling, for us, the covenant of works; and ſo in him they meet, and kiſs each other; *For he is the end of the law for righteouſneſs, to every one that believeth.* Again,

(6.) Theſe oppoſite-like attributes of God meet and kiſs each other, that oppoſite *thoughts* might meet together, and embrace each other; even God's thoughts and our thoughts; how oppoſite theſe are you may ſee, Iſa. lv. 8. *For my thoughts are not your thoughts; nor your ways my ways; for as the heavens are higher than the earth, ſo are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.* Some have preſumptuous thoughts, while they look only to God's mercy, and ſo they think certainly God will have mercy on them, though yet they are ſtrangers to Chriſt: theſe are oppoſite to God's thoughts; he hath no thoughts of ſhewing mercy that way. Others have deſpairing thoughts, while they look merely or moſtly to God's juſtice, and ſo their thought is, "O! will God have "mercy on the like of me! and, he cannot in "juſtice ſave the like of me!" Theſe thoughts are alſo oppoſite to God's thoughts; my thoughts are not your thoughts met together: why, let a man view the mercy and juſtice of God met together, and harmoniouſly kiſſing each other in Chriſt, ſo as to ſee *God in Chriſt reconciling the world to himſelf.* If your thoughts be ſpiritualized, to diſcern mercy venting through the ſacrifice, that ſatisfies divine juſtice, then God's thoughts and your thoughts meet together and kiſs each other.——Thus the divine attributes meet together harmoniouſly, that real oppoſites may meet together harmoniouſly. This glorious meeting lays a foundation for theſe happy meetings.

2dly, There are ſeeming oppoſites, that meet together harmoniouſly, by virtue of this glorious meeting; as,

(1.) Theſe oppoſite-like perfections of God meet together, and kiſs each other harmoniouſly, that oppoſite-like *providences* might meet together, and kiſs each other. There are frowning providences, and ſmiling providences; croſſes and comforts in the believer's lot: here is a providence that favours the promiſe, and there is a providence that ſeems to contradict the promiſe: at one time the believer is exalted, and his mountain ſtandeth ſtrong; at another time he is troubled, depreſſed, and caſt down. Well, how ſhall theſe unite and cement together? Why, they meet and embrace each other in Chriſt, the meeting-place; for *all things work together for good to them that love him, and are the called according to his purpoſe.* Hence we will find, not only light and darkneſs in the believer's lot, but ſometimes light and darkneſs meeting together, Zech. xiv. 7. there you read *of a day, that is neither day nor night; yet a day known to the Lord; neither clear nor dark, but at evening time it ſhall be light.* There evening darkneſs uſhering in the morning light. Hence they have occaſion to *ſing of mercy and of judgment;* becauſe of their meeting together, and kiſſing each other, and working together for good. Behold the croſs and the crown meeting together.

(2.) Theſe oppoſite-like perfections of God meet together, and kiſs each other, that oppoſite-like *deſires* may meet, and embrace each other, while Mercy deſires our life, and Juſtice ſeems to demand our death; theſe are reconciled only in Chriſt, in whom Mercy and Truth, Righteouſneſs and Peace, meet and embrace each other. But look to our deſire of God's glory, and our own ſalvation, men and angels could never have contrived how theſe two deſires could be reconciled, if Mercy and Truth had not met together, and kiſſed each other; for the glory of God's truth and righteouſneſs, in the threatning of his law, ſeems to reſt ſatisfied with nothing leſs than our deſtruction; and therefore to deſire God's glory, would have been to deſire our own damnation; and conſequently in deſiring our own ſalvation, we muſt have deſired God's diſhonour: but now this bleſſed

contrivance

contrivance of infinite Wiſdom, lets us ſee how theſe two are not only reconciled, but made inſeparable; *Having ſet forth Chriſt to be the propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteouſneſs in the remiſſion of ſins.*

(3.) Theſe ſeemingly oppoſite attributes, meet and kiſs each other, that ſeemingly oppoſite *graces* might meet and embrace each other: for example, *reverence* and *confidence;* how ſhall *fear* and *reverence* meet together with *faith* and *confidence?* Why, *Truth* and *Righteouſneſs* are at the meeting; and therefore *fear* and *reverence* becomes us; but *Mercy* and *Peace* are alſo on the bench, therefore *faith* and holy *confidence* may boldly ſtep in: *We have boldneſs to enter into the holieſt by the blood of Jeſus.*

(4.) Theſe oppoſite-like attributes meet and embrace each other, that oppoſite-like *duties* may meet together: *prayer* and *praiſe* ſeem oppoſite duties in ſome caſes; prayer ſuppoſes our wants to be great, otherwiſe, why ſhould we pray? Praiſe ſuppoſes our enjoyments to be great, otherwiſe, why ſhould we praiſe? Well, Truth and Righteouſneſs, theſe awful attributes, preſent at the meeting, ſay, We have nothing in ourſelves, therefore we ought to pray; but Mercy and Peace ſay, we have all, we have enough in Chriſt, and therefore we ought to praiſe. *Humiliation* and *gloriation* ſeem oppoſite duties; but the ſeemingly oppoſite attributes of God meeting together, bring alſo theſe duties to meet and embrace each other. Is Truth and Righteouſneſs in the company with Mercy and Peace? then humiliation is our duty: but is Mercy and Peace in company with Truth and Righteouſneſs? Then gloriation is our duty. *Let him that glories, glory in the Lord.*

(5.) Theſe ſeemingly oppoſite attributes of God meet and embrace each other, that ſeemingly oppoſite *experiences* may meet and embrace each other, and be reconciled, though ſeemingly irreconcileable. There are ſad experiences, and ſweet experiences: O! here is the ſad experience of a guilty conſcience, a powerful corruption, and a conquering temptation: can ever that be reconciled with the experience of holy peace, pardon, and victory? Yea, here is a foundation laid for the reconciliation of theſe oppoſites.—If Juſtice and Mercy have met together, then a guilty conſcience, and a mercy-ſeat may meet together; a prevalent corruption and pardoning, purifying blood may meet together; as they did in the pſalmiſt's caſe; *Iniquities prevail againſt me: but as for our tranſgreſſions thou ſhalt purge them away,* Pſal. lxv. 3.—The ſad experience of fatherly anger, or of the feeling of divine wrath, may meet with the ſweet experience of felt love and favour; for Mercy and Juſtice are met together, Iſa. liv. 7, 8.—The ſad experience of perplexing thoughts may meet with the ſweet experience of ſpiritual conſolation, and be ſwallowed up therein; ſince Truth and Juſtice have met with Mercy and Peace: Hence it was that theſe two met together in David; *In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my ſoul,* Pſal. xcix. 19. O! is ſuch a ſad experience conſiſtent with an intereſt in Chriſt? Why, both terrible and amiable attributes of God meet together in Chriſt; and therefore it is not ſtrange, that the ſaddeſt and ſweeteſt experiences meet together, ſo as not to be inconſiſtent with the ſtate of a believer that is in Chriſt. To ſee awful Juſtice, and lovely Mercy meeting together, in a ſweet-ſmelling ſacrifice, is a greater wonder, than to ſee your ſaddeſt and ſweeteſt experiences meeting in Chriſt, to make up a HALLELUJAH, *Praiſe ye the Lord:* and the former meeting is the reaſon of this.

(6.) Theſe irreconcileable-like attributes of God meet and embrace each other, that irreconcileable-like *ſcriptures* might meet together and embrace each other: How ſhall Exod. xxxiv. 7. *He will by no means clear the guilty,* (or, juſtify the ſinner,) be reconciled with Rom. iv. 5. where he is ſaid *to juſtify the ungodly?* O! how can theſe two oppoſites meet together? Why, Mercy and Truth have met together in Chriſt, to make up a match betwixt them: a *ranſom is found,* a *propitiation is ſet forth;* why then, theſe oppoſite-like ſcriptures may meet together, and kiſs each other: *He will by no means clear the guilty,* without a ranſom, a propitiation. Well, is the ranſom found, and propitiation ſet forth? then he will juſtify the ungodly on that ground: *Deliver his ſoul from going down to the pit, I have found out a ranſom.* Now, he can juſtify the ſinner, and be juſt in ſo doing, while he draws him in to Chriſt by faith, Rom. iii. 25, 26.—Thus you ſee the reaſons of the meeting. In a word, they meet together upon a deſign to bring the greateſt good out of the greateſt evil; and the higheſt glory out of the deepeſt miſery, to the praiſe of all God's glorious perfections.

V. The *fifth* thing propoſed, was the *application,* in a few *inferences.* Is it ſo, that in the ſalvation of ſinners by Jeſus Chriſt, the glorious attributes and perfections of God do thus harmoniouſly conſpire, and embrace each other? Then hence we may ſee,

1. What a *dreadful evil* SIN is, which ſets all the attributes of God, as it were, in oppoſition to one another, and puts all the world into confuſion, and every thing out of order; it ſets heaven and earth, and all things in them at variance, one againſt another: to think light of ſin, is to think light of this glorious meeting of divine attributes, that met together to break this rebellion, and take order with this horrid inſurrection againſt heaven. O! what a great matter is the ſalvation of a ſinner! ere that can take place, this grand meeting muſt be called; all the injured attributes of God muſt have an honourable reparation. Juſtice muſt be ſatisfied; Truth vindicated; Righteouſneſs cleared; and in order to all this, a Surety muſt be provided, even a God in our nature: the guilt muſt be imputed to him, and the iniquity of us all muſt be laid upon him; and then a bloody tragedy muſt be acted upon his ſoul and body, till he ſink to death under the weight of infinite wrath. But,

2. Hence ſee, what a *wonderful Perſon* our LORD JESUS CHRIST is, in whom ſo many wonders meet together. It is in him, that Mercy and Truth, Righteouſneſs and Peace, do meet together; here all the illuſtrious perfections of the divine nature do gloriouſly conſpire; here is the bright conſtellation of all the divine attributes ſhining forth in him; and every ſtar performs its revolution in that orb. Behold in him the bright glory and excellency of God's grace and love; a whole Trinity in concert, to perform each Perſon his own part, and each attribute its own work; and *Chriſt, the image of the inviſible God, ſet forth to be a*

GLORIOUS

GLORIOUS THEATRE, on which men and angels might see the splendour of the transaction: *He is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person:* here is the *great mystery of godliness, God manifested in the flesh*, and all his attributes meeting together and kissing each other in our IMMANUEL, *God-man.* There are two things meet in Christ, which should make him wonderful to us: the one is, all our *sins* meet together on him, that they may be *condemned*, according to that word, Isa. liii. 6. *The Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all;* (or, *made them to* MEET *on him.*) The other is, all the *attributes of God* meet in him, that they may be *glorified.* And indeed there is no saving or satisfying knowledge of any property of God, but what is to be had in Christ: to see God to be a merciful, just, true, righteous, good, and holy God is neither a saving, nor a satisfying sight; unless we see these attributes meeting in Christ for our salvation; and to see this, is to see the glory of God, in the face of Christ; here see the glory of divine Mercy! What is pardoning mercy? "It is God's free, gracious "acceptance of a sinner, upon satisfaction "made to his justice, in the blood of Jesus." Nor is any discovery of mercy, but as relating to the satisfaction of justice, consistent with the glory of God: mercy cannot be seen savingly, but as meeting with justice in Christ. Here also we see the glory of divine truth in the exact accomplishment of all his threatenings and promises: that original threatening and commination, whence all other threatenings flow, Gen. ii. 17. *In the day thou eatest, thou shalt surely die*, backed with a curse, *For cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them*, is in him accomplished fully, and the truth of God therein cleared to our salvation, while *he tasted death for us, and he was made a curse for us*: so that in every threatening his truth is made glorious. And as to the promises, *they are all Yea and Amen in Christ Jesus, to the glory of God by us*, 2 Cor. i. 20. And so of all the other attributes of God, they are made glorious, and exalted in Christ to our salvation. Hence, when Christ desired his Father to glorify his name, John xii. 28. to make his name, that is, his nature, properties, and perfections all glorious in the work of redemption, that he had in hand; he was instantly answered from heaven, *I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again:* I will give my attributes their utmost glory in thee.

3. Hence see the difference betwixt the *law* and the *gospel:* one great difference betwixt them lies in this, that in the law, the sinner that hath violated the same, may see Truth standing engaged against him, but no Mercy in company with Truth; and Righteousness in arms against him, but no Peace in company with Righteousness; *Justice without mercy, and war without peace to the sinner*, is the *motto* of the law; for therein Truth and Righteousness meet together, but Mercy and Peace are not at the meeting; and so the language of the law, to you that are out of Christ, and under the law, is, No mercy, no peace, but the wrath of God, the vengeance of God, the curse of God, upon you; and that so sure, as God is a God of truth and righteousness. There is the law. But in the gospel, Mercy and Peace come into the meeting, and make up a match betwixt all the opposite-like parties, to the highest glory of God, and the greatest happiness of the sinner; and they seal the match with a kiss of infinite complacency; so that the sum of the gospel is this, *Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other.*

4. Hence we may see what is the fountain-head, and foundation of all *true communion* and *fellowship* with God and man. This glorious meeting is the foundation of all other happy meetings: fellowship with God, and an happy meeting with him, is a stream that flows from this fountain. We could never have met with God, or got a kindly kiss, or embrace, in the arms of his favour and love, if this divine meeting and embracement had not made way for it. Fellowship with man, or the communion of saints, is a rivolet that flows from this spring. When saints meet together for prayer or praises, under the influence of the Spirit, and under a gale of heaven, when their hearts are fired with love to God, and to one another in him; what is this? It is just a live coal cast in among them, from the altar, Christ Jesus, where all the attributes of God meet together, and kiss each other; and hence true fellowship with God, and with the saints, are both declared to be in and through Christ Jesus; *That which we have heard and seen, declare we unto you, that ye may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ*, 1 John i. 3. The harmony of the attributes of God in Christ, is the fountain of all the harmony among the saints. The little harmony, that takes place among them in our day, and the rarity of holy fellowship-meetings, flows from the little faith of this heavenly divine meeting: for all the saints, that are under the lively views thereof, cannot but desire to meet together, and embrace each other harmoniously, in the arms of mutual love.

5. Hence see the *malignity* of the sin of *unbelief*, the great employment whereof is, to spoil the harmony of the divine perfections, and to do its utmost to dissolve that glorious meeting, and separate what God hath joined, saying, in effect, they have not met together, nor kissed each other. This we may discern in the unbelief, whether of secure or awakened sinners: See it in the unbelief of the secure sinner, who sets Truth and Righteousness out of the meeting, saying, *God is a merciful God, and I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of my own heart, adding drunkenness to thirst.* Thus they hope in God's mercy, and speak peace to themselves, while they never view the truth and righteousness of God, and how the credit thereof shall be salved, or the honour repaired: and hence, as faith is said to *set to the seal that God is true*, or, that he is a *God of truth*; so unbelief is said to make *God a liar:* to fancy that God will have mercy on their souls, without regarding the truth of his threatenings, is to make God a liar, and say, Mercy and Truth have not met together: to think that God will be at peace with them, while his Righteousness and Justice are not satisfied, is to make God a liar, and say, Righteousness and Peace have not met together. Thus the unbelief of the secure sinner puts Truth and Righteousness out of the meeting.—Again, on the other hand, the unbelief of the awakened sinner, puts Mercy and Peace out of the meeting,

ing, saying, O! he is a God of truth, and how shall he have mercy on the like of me! He is a God of awful justice and righteousness, and how will he be at peace with me? What is the language of this, but that Mercy and Peace have not met with Truth and Righteousness? Here is a making God a liar also, and separating what God hath in the gospel declared to be joined. Behold, then, the malignity of unbelief; it breaks the glorious meeting, and will not let them kiss one another. The presuming sinner will not let God have the glory of his truth and righteousness. The despairing sinner will not let God have the glory of his mercy and grace; both are in a concert with the devil to break the harmony of the meeting. But, O! may virtue come from that glorious meeting in Christ, to the poor sinful meeting in this house, for dashing our unbelief to pieces, that we may see Mercy and Truth met together, Righteousness and Peace kissing each other.

6. Hence see sure and noble ground, for the boldness and confidence of *faith* in Christ; *In whom we have boldness, and access with confidence by the faith of him*, Eph. iii. 12. Here is an answer to all the objections of unbelief and diffidence; the chief whereof lies here: O! says unbelief, may I, sinful guilty I, lay hold on the promise of mercy and peace in the gospel, when I see the great ordinance of the divine threatening hard charged with the truth and righteousness of God, and ready to be discharged against me, with thunder and lightening, saying, No mercy, no peace; *He that made thee will not have mercy upon thee: And there is no peace, says my God, to the wicked?* Mercy and peace in the promise then, says unbelief, cannot take place, with respect to me; for truth and righteousness, in the threatening, stand in the way, *like a flaming sword, to keep the way of the tree of life:* Nay, but says faith, Here the promise and the threatening have met together, and kissed each other in Christ; mercy in the promise, and justice in the threatening, have met and agreed in him; *In whom all the promises are Yea and Amen:* and in whom all the threatenings are fully executed, by drawing out his heart-blood. Thus then, *we have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us through the vail of his flesh: Therefore let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith*, Heb. x. 19, 20, 22. O! what ground for the boldness and assured confidence of faith, with particular application, notwithstanding of the threatening? The threatening hath nothing to say to me, saith faith, for Christ hath spoken with it already, and spoken it out of breath; he hath left it speechless and breathless, not a breathing of wrath in it towards me. The believer may have a million of doubts, while his unbelief keeps the chair; but let gallant faith come in, and take the room, it will dispel them all: let once unbelief break the harmony of this meeting of divine attributes in Christ, and then nothing but doubts of God's favour and mercy must ensue; but let faith view the harmony, and see them meeting and kissing each other; and then according to the measure of faith, such will be the measure of holy boldness, confidence, and persuasion of the favour, mercy, and good-will of God in Christ, with particular application to the person himself. Take away unbelief from faith, and then not a single doubt will remain behind: unbelief creates all the doubts that are in the believer; his faith hath no part in them. The general doubtsome faith of the Papists, is not faith, but unbelief; and therefore no wonder that our forefathers abjured it in our National Covenant. Behold the sure ground and firm bottom that faith stands upon, even the mutual meeting, and embracement among the divine perfections in Christ. If you break and separate the meeting by unbelief, then your confidence is broken, and your peace with God marred; but if you keep them together in your view, by faith in Christ, then you have boldness, confidence, and affiance on this ground; yea, then God in Christ, and you meet together, and kiss each other.

7. Hence see what is the *best mark* of a believer in Christ. For your trial and examination, try it just by this, What view have you got of this glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ, and of the attributes of God meeting and embracing each other in him? Have you seen the glory, and felt the virtue of this happy meeting?

(1.) Have you *seen the glory* of it? When once in a day, you had seen the attributes of God in arms against you, because of your sinful rebellion again God; and when you had seen the truth of God, pronouncing the sentence of the law, and his righteousness and justice ready to inflict the sentence, and execute the same with curses and vengeance, making you despair of mercy, and give up with all hope and expectation of peace with God, by the law of works; have you thereupon got a view of the harmonious meeting of these attributes of God, in Christ Jesus, as the Surety, the Sacrifice, the Ransom, the Propitiation, in whom the truth and veracity of God is accomplished, and the righteousness and justice of God is satisfied, and so mercy and peace vented gloriously, without detriment to any other excellency or perfection of God? Hath nothing satisfied your conscience, but the view of this meeting betwixt Mercy and Justice, in the death of Christ, and kissing each other in his mediation? Hath God and you met together this way, and made your heart joyfully to kiss and embrace this wonderful device, as worthy of God, and suitable to you? Have you seen this glory at this rate? Then in God's name, I pronounce you a believer in Christ: *For God, who commanded light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into your heart, to give you the light of the knowledge of his glory, in the face of Christ;* and Christ and you have met together, and kissed each other; whether it was in the day of first believing, when you fled to him for refuge, or in the day of after manifestation, when, upon the back of dismal hiding on God's part, or grievous backsliding on yours, the Lord drew aside the vail, and gave you a glance of his glory; whether it was by some word of grace, sweetly and powerfully coming in, and opening your understanding to see this harmonious meeting, or by some sweet droppings of the blood of sprinkling upon your conscience, by which blood, the meeting is cemented together. Have you seen this glory, whether in a secret corner, or public ordinance; whether at the market-cross of the gospel, where this glorious meeting is proclaimed, or at a communion-table, where it is sealed? It is all a matter, it was heaven begun.

(2.) Have

(2.) Have you *felt the virtue*, as well as ſeen the glory of this harmonious meeting of the divine attributes in Chriſt? 2 Cor. iii. 18. *Beholding as in a glaſs the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the ſame image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord.* Surely if you have ſeen this glory, you have felt ſomething of this virtue by changing you *from glory to glory*. It is true, many that have got a diſcovery of this glory of the Lord, can never think that they have felt the ſanctifying virtue thereof, and this keeps them down in the pit of diſcouragement: it is true, they that are not ſanctified, and made holy, they diſcover, that they never beheld this glory of the Lord: for this meeting of attributes, makes a meeting of graces, in the perſon that ſees it ſavingly. But you muſt remember, That this virtue will never be perfectly felt, till this glory be perfectly beheld in heaven, where *we ſhall be like him, becauſe we ſhall ſee him as he is.* And therefore, ſince you cannot judge and try yourſelf by a perfect ſanctification, try it by the beginnings of it; this transforming virtue, this ſanctifying virtue is preſent with you, though you cannot diſcern it. But that you may, through grace, diſcern ſomething of it, let me aſk you what makes you wreſtle in ſecret ſometimes againſt ſin, if it be not ſome ſanctifying virtue? What makes the prevalence of ſin to humble you to the duſt? What makes you lament your own unholineſs and impurity? What makes you long and groan for complete victory over, and freedom from ſin? What makes you glad of any victory over your corruption, when this glory ſhines? What makes your heart to riſe againſt ſin? and when ſin prevails, what makes you find yourſelf uneaſy, and out of your element, always till the Lord return, and until you get a new dip in the Jordan of the blood of the Lamb? You have no mercy on your luſts, and are at no peace with them, but ſtill crying, Vengeance upon them! Why, it is juſt the ſanctifying virtue, that flows from this view of the glory of God in Chriſt, in whom Mercy and Peace meet with Truth and Righteouſneſs. If you fall and ſtumble at any time, believer, is it not like the ſtumbling of a horſe, that makes you run the faſter? ſo as you get more good of one fall, than a natural man will get of a hundred duties, while it makes you always the more humble, and watchful, and circumſpect, and dependent. Why, by all this, it appears (whatever be the defect of your ſanctification) that having beheld the glory of God, you are *changed into the ſame image from glory to glory*; you have ſeen the glory, and felt the virtue of this harmonious meeting of divine attributes in Chriſt. But then again,

8. Hence, we may ſee ground of *terror* to all Chriſtleſs, unbelieving ſouls, that never have ſeen the glory, nor felt the virtue of this harmonious meeting, and live careleſs about either of theſe. What ſhall I ſay? *If our goſpel be hid, it is hid to them that are loſt, in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, leſt the light of the glorious goſpel of Chriſt, ſhould ſhine in to them,* 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. It may be, you are preſuming upon the mercy of God, while yet your eyes are blinded, that you do not ſee the truth of his threatenings ſtanding againſt you: and therefore, O blaſphemer! do you think, that he will be a God of mercy, and not a God of truth? Nay, his mercy will never be vented, unleſs the glory of his truth be ſalved. Perhaps you are ſpeaking peace to yourſelf, ſaying, *I ſhall have peace*, while yet your eyes are blinded, that you do not ſee how God's being at peace with a ſinner is conſiſtent with his righteouſneſs, in taking vengeance upon ſin. O then, blaſphemer and preſumer! do you think, that God will be a God of *peace*, and not a God of *righteouſneſs?* Know it, then, in the Lord's name, O ſinful unbelieving wretch, that as there is no mercy for you, to the diſcredit of God's truth; ſo no peace, to the diſhonour of his righteouſneſs. You expect mercy and peace ſeparate from truth and righteouſneſs; and therefore mercy and truth ſhall be ſeparate from you; and truth and righteouſneſs will meet with you in fury, and with a vengeance. Your falſe hope of mercy and peace, makes you merciful to your luſts, and at peace with your idols: but the truth and righteouſneſs of God, which you exclude from the meeting, will hide mercy and peace for ever from your eyes: Juſtice inſtead of mercy, war inſtead of peace, will enſue; for truth and righteouſneſs will execute judgment upon you, for the abuſe of mercy and peace; while through unbelief, you do not ſee, or approve their meeting together and kiſſing each other in Chriſt. While you are in this caſe, you cannot meet with God, though you may meet with his people at ordinances, or at a communion-table; yet God and you never met together: nay, you have other company; the devil and you meet together; and your luſts and you embrace each other; the world and you meet together, and its vanities and you do kiſs each other; the law and you have met together, and its curſe and you do embrace each other: but becauſe you do not ſee the terrible curſes and threatenings, that you are under, remember, that in a ſhort while, death and you will meet together, and its cold arms and you muſt embrace each other; and if this goſpel be ſtill hid to you, then after that, hell and you will meet together, and the flames of divine wrath and you will embrace each other to eternity; and the motto written upon the door of your hell, will be, *The vengeance of Truth and Righteouſneſs, for the abuſe of Mercy and Peace.* Let this word of terror ſink into your conſcience, O graceleſs, Chriſtleſs, unbelieving ſoul, that never ſaw the glory, nor felt the virtue of this bleſſed meeting; and Gallio-like, *care for none of theſe things.* But on the other hand,

9. Hence, from this doctrine, ſee ground of *comfort* to all believers in Chriſt, who have ſeen the glory, and felt the virtue of this harmonious meeting of divine attributes in Chriſt. This doctrine is as comfortable to you, as it is terrible to others. Can you ſay before God, that thoſe two marks are your experience? Then I can ſay, that all the comforts, that iſſue from that glorious meeting in Chriſt, belong to you; and God allows you *ſtrong conſolation, who have fled for refuge, to the hope ſet before you:* for that city of refuge, to which you have fled, is the centre of the meeting, and the triſting-place, where they kiſs one another harmoniouſly. Why, ſay you, *What concern have I in their meeting, and embracing each other?*

O be-

O believer, they met together for your sake, and kissed one another out of kindness to you: for there were no real jarring among them; but all the apparent jarring was about you; and how they should be glorified in your salvation: and when infinite wisdom found the ransom, and so the way, how they should all be glorified, in your eternal happiness, then they hugged each other in their arms, as it were, in a rapture of joy, for your sake; *His delights were with the sons of men*, Prov. viii. 31. It was not *one* attribute only, that had its delight, satisfaction, and glory; it is *delights*, in the plural number; for all the attributes of God had their delights: and whereabout was it? Why, the council of peace was concerning you; *For his delights were with the* SONS *of* MEN. And you having seen the glory of this device, and felt something of the virtue thereof, God and you have met together, and Christ and you have kissed each other: he hath embraced you, and you have embraced him; and that embracement is a pledge and earnest, that he and you will meet together in heaven, and embrace each other to eternity. This meeting and embracement is founded upon the harmonious meeting and embracement of the divine attributes in Christ: and therefore, it shall be sure, abiding, and everlasting; and all these attributes are engaged for your comfort and support: and this glory of the Lord, you shall for ever behold; for Christ, in whom all these glorious perfections meet together, hath prayed for it; *Father, I will, that these, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me*, John xvii. 24. Here then, believer, is ground of comfort to you, in every case. Comfort against *desertion:* is it long since Christ and you met together, and kissed each other? Behold, here is the reason; *He will never altogether leave you, nor forsake you;* but certainly meet with you, now and then, when he sees it fit; and give you the other kiss of his infinitely blessed lips, and embrace of his arms; till you come to the intimate, immediate embracements of his love in glory: why? because, *Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other.* So sure as Mercy and Truth are met together, as surely will the Lord meet with you.—Here is comfort against the *law*, when it comes in as a covenant upon your conscience; saying, *Pay what thou owest, or otherwise thou art cursed, and must go to hell:* and the law, speaking in the name of Truth and Righteousness, seems terrible. But you may soon answer by faith, and say. "O law, the "demand is just indeed, and agreeable to "Truth and Righteousness; but you mistake "the person; for Truth and Righteousness "have already met with Mercy and Peace, in "the person of Christ, my husband, who en- "dured all my hell, and became a curse for "me; and therefore, I have no ground to fear "the hell thou threatens, nor the curse thou "denounces, nor any liableness thereto."—Here is comfort against *Satan*, and his temptations; for this blessed meeting in Christ did concert his ruin, and the bruising of his head; *The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent*, Gen. iii. 15. *Satan shall be bruised under your feet shortly.*—Here is comfort against *church-divisions* and *commotions;* when neither ministers nor private Christians do meet together, or embrace one another with love and amity. Is this sad and afflicting to you? Here is a meeting, that may give you comfort in that case: for no member of that meeting will ever differ among themselves, or cast out with you.—Here is comfort against your *jarring with friends:* what do I know, but there is some here, that cannot get lived in peace with such a friend or relation; nor their Christian liberty enjoyed, because of their frowns; and perhaps, they are as aliens to you, not in speaking terms with you; you cannot meet together with them *cordially*, nor embrace one another *amicably:* but let this be your comfort, in that case; *Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other;* and you have got a kiss by the bye, and that is better than all the friends in the world.—Here is comfort against *public calamities*, that seem to be approaching, or personal trials, that may be coming upon you.—Here is a cordial, though *affliction* and you meet together; though in a little, *death* and you meet together; yet this meeting of divine attributes in Christ, your glorious Head, speaks comfort, and safety to you in every case: though you should die distracted, this meeting cannot be dissolved; and you having seen the glory, and felt the virtue thereof, shall be sure to enjoy the benefit of it to eternity; *Yea, surely goodness and mercy shall follow you, all the days of your life, and you shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.*

10. The last inference is, hence see the *duty* of all that hear and know that joyful sound: never was there a sweeter sound in heaven, or in earth: and what is the duty of all you that *hear* it? Surely the news of such a glorious, and harmonious meeting of the divine perfections, about the salvation of sinners, in and by Christ Jesus, should be joyfully received. Here is *the good tidings of great joy, unto all people*, Luke ii. 10. When Elizabeth the mother of John, and Mary the mother of Jesus our Lord, met together and saluted each other, *the babe leapt in Elizabeth's womb for joy.* Behold, here is yet a more wonderful meeting, and salutation among the jarring-like attributes and perfections of God; and surely if the babe of grace be in *your heart, it will leap for joy*, when you perceive such a blessed meeting and salutation. O! may it not bring our heart to our mouth, and make it flutter within us, when we hear of such a salutation as this, *Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have embraced each other.*—And again, What is your duty, believer, who not only hears, but *knows* this joyful sound? your duty is, not only to rejoice, in this matchless harmonious conjunction of divine attributes in Christ; but to examplify the same, by an harmonious conjunction of graces and holy virtues in you. Let Mercy and Truth meeting together, as divine attributes, in Christ, be examplified by Mercy and Truth meeting together, as divine virtues in you: let Righteousness and Peace kissing each other in him, be examplified by Righteousness and Peace kissing each other in you. Let the meeting of Mercy and Truth engage you to be merciful and true: *Merciful; because your heavenly Father is merciful:* and *true;* because *he desires truth in the inward parts.* Let the embraces of Righteousness and Peace engage you, to be righteous and peaceable; that is, to be students of Purity and Peace; for *the wisdom that is from above,*

above, is first pure, and then peaceable, James iii. 17. It is declared in the verse following our text, that it is the design of these perfections of God, *looking down harmoniously from heaven*, to make suitable graces *spring up from the earth: truth shall spring out of the earth, and righteousness shall look down from heaven.* When the Sun of righteousness, in whom all the excellencies of God do shine, looks down; then as the natural sun sheding its influences, makes fruit to spring up from the earth: so the Sun of righteousness looking down, and sheding abroad his influences, makes Truth, and all the rest of the fruits of the Spirit, to spring out of the earth, out of the heart, the soil where they are sown, in regeneration. O! does Mercy look down from heaven to you, in friendship with Truth? shall not this Mercy make you merciful to the bodies and souls of others, by doing them all the temporal and spiritual good that you can? And shall God manifest his Truth, in conjunction with Mercy towards you? and will you not be a friend to Truth, even to all the precious truths of his gospel? Shall not Truth, in opposition to hypocrisy, be your study, and Truth in opposition to error, be your concern? and this Truth, in conjunction with Mercy; for, when Truth is in any hazard, should not Mercy to your own soul, and the souls of others, make you zealous for it? and mercy to your children, and the generation that is to come after you, on whom we shew no mercy, if truth be not transmitted purely to them, as it was by our fore-fathers to us, at the expence of their blood; however now, the waters of the sanctuary are puddled?——Again, does Righteousness and Peace look down from heaven, kindly embracing each other in your behalf, believer? And shall not you be a student of Righteousness, in opposition to all unrighteous and unholy ways; and of Peace, in opposition to contention and discord: *As much as possible, follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.* Does God glorify his righteousness towards you? and will you study no righteousness in your conversation towards God and man? Does God speak peace to you, and will you be at war with him; and love to live in war with any of his? Shall that be the disposition of any, with whom God is at peace? *O tell it not in Gath!* Surely there is none here, that have tasted of this sweet peace of God; but they would desire to live at peace with all men; and particularly with all the saints. They would desire to see all the honest ministers of Scotland, meeting together more kindly than they do, and embracing each other. Some, indeed, are at this time reproached, as *enemies to peace in the church* *; but the matter is, Peace must not be studied separately from Righteousness, nor Mercy separately from Truth; but all as meeting, and embracing one another: for Mercy and Peace, without Truth and Righteousness, is a cruel conspiracy against God and man.

Now, certain things have past concerning the Truths of God, and the Righteousness of Christ in our day, which some think will stand infamous till the judgment of the great day; and this Truth and Righteousness, being the great ministerial trust, some chused rather to be reproached by the world, as enemies to Peace, than be challenged by God and their own conscience, as betrayers of the trust. However, O believer, study you through grace, to get a match made up between Mercy and Truth, Righteousness and Peace in you, seeing there can be no merciful Peace to the prejudice of righteous Truth: and study to get all these attributes of God, examplified in your heart and life; and the seal and impress thereof upon your soul; you being united to Christ, in whom all these glorious excellencies of God do meet together with harmonious embracements. *Out of Christ's fulness, do you receive, and grace for grace:* as the child receives member for member from the Father, and the paper letter for letter from the press: so beholding his glory, be you changed into the same image, by receiving mercy for mercy, truth for truth, righteousness for righteousness, and peace for peace; out of his fulness, do you receive grace for grace, holiness for holiness, and an holy virtue suitable to every holy perfection, that is in him; and all these harmoniously meeting together and kissing each other in you. Let no heavenly grace, or holy duty be excluded out of the meetings: let faith and repentance meet together; let love and new obedience kiss each other; let knowledge and practice meet together, and prayer and praises embrace each other; yea, let opposite-like graces meet harmoniously in you; let humility and boldness meet together; let godly sorrow and holy joy embrace each other. Here is the gospel-holiness we call you to, in a suitableness to these harmonious attributes of God in Christ. If the world call you *Antinomians* know it is *the will of God, that by well-doing, you put to silence the ignorance of foolish men*, 1 Pet. ii. 15. Let the mouth that reproaches the gospel, be stopt by the power of it in your walk. The world will surely reckon you the greatest stars, that give the greatest light: *Therefore let your light so shine before men, that others seeing your good works, may glorify God; even the works of Mercy and Truth, Righteousness and Peace*, hand in hand together; and thus, for the sake of the glory of God, the honour of Christ, and the credit of the gospel, let the world know, that you have seen the glory, and felt the virtue of these perfections of God, harmoniously meeting and embracing each other in Christ. Here is your duty and work, believer, in the wilderness; and now in all your shortcomings therein, still *look again to God's holy temple*, to Christ the meeting-place of these divine perfections. This is the mercy-seat, of which God says, Exod. xxv. 22. *There will I meet with thee, and commune with thee from between the cherubims:* and every new meeting with God there, will bring in new strength, for all your work and warfare in time, till God and you meet together, and embrace one another, in glory thro' eternity.

And now, believer, I know you would desire, that others should share of the same happiness with you; and therefore, pray, that a

* See the reason of this assigned, Serm. IV. page 70. at the foot.——The hearty friends to the doctrine of grace, in those days, were very unjustly accused with Antinomianism; and the strenuous supporters of the doctrine of free justification, through the imputed righteousness of Christ, without the works of the law, were injuriously calumniated as *enemies to holiness*, and as *disturbers of the peace of the church*.——This matter is further cleared up, in a note, about the middle of Serm. VIII.

ſhort concluding word may be bleſſed with power, to thouſands that hear me. O ye that are byſtanders and hearers only, in whatever corner of this houſe round about me, whether you be in my view or not, you are in God's view; and I have a word from him to you all: and as I have told you, what a terrible thing it is, to live and die in unbelief, with reſpect to this glorious device; ſo now I would tell you your duty, in this matter; and how you may ſhare of the bleſſings and benefits in time, and for ever; that flow from this glorious meeting and embracement; and it is by kiſſing the Son of God, in whom all the attributes of God do kiſs, and embrace each other; *Kiſs the Son, leſt he be angry, and ye periſh from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little: bleſſed are all they that truſt in him*, Pſal. ii. 12. Bleſſed are all they that kiſs and embrace him. Would you then ſhare of the grace and glory, that iſſue from this wonderful meeting, and ineffable embracement among the divine perfections, in Chriſt the Son of God? O then! come and kiſs the Son: O down, down with carnal thoughts! carnal kiſſing, carouſing, and cajolling; here, here is an object worthy of the moſt endeared embraces of the immortal ſoul. O come! and *kiſs the Son*, by believing in him, and applying the benefits of this glorious tranſaction, to yourſelf: and be who you will, if you kiſs and embrace the Son, you ſhall find theſe glorious attributes of God, kiſſing and embracing you, and hugging you in their arms, as a darling of heaven, and a favourite in the houſe of God. Are the attributes of God, embracing one another in Chriſt? O flee in to their embraces, by fleeing in to Chriſt: *Say not, Chriſt is in heaven, how ſhall I embrace him? For the word is nigh, even in your mouth, and in your heart*, Rom. x. 8. *q. d.* So near is he in this word, that you may kiſs him with your mouth, as it were, and embrace him in your heart: and to take in this word of grace, and Chriſt in it, is to embrace him. What do you ſay againſt Chriſt, man, woman? Are you afraid, that Truth and Righteouſneſs conſpire againſt you, and hinder Mercy and Peace from ever meeting with you, and embracing you? O no: *Fear not*; only believe, *That Mercy and Truth are met together, and that Righteouſneſs and Peace have kiſſed each other* in Chriſt. Truth will not ſtand in the way of Mercy; for they have kiſſed each other. He is indeed an infinitely juſt God, to take vengeance upon ſin: but juſtice will not hinder mercy from coming to you: only believe, that juſtice and mercy are reconciled in Chriſt, ſo as mercy can vent towards you, to the credit of juſtice. But, O! may ſuch a black-mouth'd ſinner as I, as black as hell and the devil, expect a kiſs of ſuch an infinitely fair Jeſus? Is that to be expected, that ſuch oppoſites ſhould meet in one another's arms? Yea, man, woman, allow me, a black ſinner like yourſelf, to be the happy meſſenger, to tell you in God's name, that be ye as black as you will, ſuch a meeting and embracing betwixt Chriſt and you, is more to be expected, than ever men or angels could have expected, that infinite juſtice and mercy ſhould have met together, and kiſſed each other in a God-man: and this unexpected meeting is the very ground, upon which your expectation of a meeting with, and embracement of God in Chriſt, is to be founded. O then, come and kiſs the Son: Why? but I cannot, ſay you; I think, I would gladly do it; but I cannot get near him, to kiſs and embrace him. Indeed this kindneſs muſt begin on his ſide; and therefore, O pray, that he would come, and meet you with a kiſs of infinite love. Say with the church, Song i. 2. *Let him kiſs me with the kiſſes of his mouth; for his love is better than wine.* If that be the language of your ſoul; O! I cannot embrace him; but my heart ſays, O let him come, and embrace me: and draw me out of the embracements of all my former lovers and luſts, that I may never kiſs any idol in the world again; but may live, and die in the arms, and embraces of the Son of God: Is that the language of your ſoul before the living God? Why, then the embracement betwixt Chriſt and you is begun, that ſhall never have an end; for it is a pledge, that he and you ſhall meet together in heaven, and embrace each other to eternity.

Now, though I hope, that this glorious meeting of divine perfections in Chriſt, hath put forth ſome virtue, to draw in ſome poor ſoul, to the match: yet I fear, that the moſt part are but ſtill as idle hearers and ſpectators, as if they were not concerned. But, O man, woman, young or old, unconcerned ſoul, be what you will, O yet, will you come, and ſee this great ſight? O come, and ſee the greateſt ſight, that ever was, or will be in heaven or earth, *A buſh burning, and not conſumed:* all the burning and ſhining attributes of God, meeting with infinite harmony, in the buſh of our nature; and yet, the buſh able *to bear the glory*, Zech. vi. 13. O come, and wonder! Here is the wonder of men and angels! For, this is a wonderful meeting to them. And the name of the meeting-place is juſtly called, WONDERFUL! O come, and partake; for the meeting is concerning your ſalvation, in Chriſt: *His delights were with the ſons of men.* O come, and ſing to the praiſe and glory of this wonderful harmonious embracement of divine perfections in Chriſt; eſpecially, you that partake; ſo as to ſee the glory, and feel the virtue thereof. O will you ſing with your hearts, and lips, and lives, ſaying, *Glory to God*, that his attributes have met together, and kiſſed each other in Chriſt; and that ever the like of me, got a kiſs by the bye? *Glory to God*, that there is no breaking of this meeting, nor parting of theſe embraces, by ſin, Satan, earth, or hell; but that they meet and embrace each other to eternity. And though you cannot mind to ſing all that hath been ſaid; yet I hope, the weakeſt memory may mind, to ſing the beſt note of all the ſermon, every day, ſaying, *Glory, glory, glory to God, that Mercy and Truth are met together, Righteouſneſs and Peace have kiſſed each other.*

SERMON

SERMON VIII.*

LAW-DEATH, GOSPEL-LIFE; or, the Death of *Legal Righteouſneſs*, the Life of *Goſpel Holineſs*.

GALAT. ii. 19.

I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.

A GODLY life is what we are all obliged to live, eſpecially if we have been at the Lord's table; but it is a myſtery that very few underſtand in their experience, if they will judge their experiences, by comparing them with this of Paul in our text, *I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.*

Our apoſtle, in this epiſtle, is vindicating himſelf from the baſe aſperſions caſt upon him by the falſe apoſtles; with reſpect to his *calling*, as if he had been no apoſtle; and with reſpect to his *doctrine*, as if it had been falſe and erroneous. From the beginning of this chapter, to ver. 11. he tells us what he did at Jeruſalem; how ſtrenuouſly he oppoſed the falſe brethren, that he might maintain the truth of the goſpel, which they ſought to overturn. From the 11th ver. to the 17th, the apoſtle tells us what he did at Antioch; how zealouſly he oppoſed and reproved even Peter himſelf, for his diſſimulation, in compelling the Gentiles to Judaize; giving thereby ſuch offence, that the Jews were confirmed in their Judaiſm, ver. 12th. *Other Jews diſſembled with him, and Barnabas alſo was carried away with their diſſimulation;* and hereby occaſion was given both to Jews and Gentiles, to deſert Chriſt, to deny grace, to return to the law, and ſeek juſtification by the works thereof. So that we may ſee, here, that great and good men may diſſemble, and do much hurt by their diſſimulation, both among miniſters and people. We have here a wonderful example of it in the greateſt of men, and ſuch as were pillars of the church; but it would ſeem that Peter and Barnabas, and other Jews here, did not ſee their fault and ſin, but thought they did right enough; but Paul ſaw it, ver. 14. *When I ſaw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the goſpel*, etc. This might ſeem a very bold and impudent attempt, for Paul, the youngeſt *of all the apoſtles*, (I mean, of whom Chriſt was *laſt ſeen, as of one born out of due time.)* for him to take upon him to accuſe and condemn Peter as well as Barnabas, and the Jews for their practical error, not *walking according to the truth of the goſpel.* But we ſee, that as people may have the goſpel, but not the truth of the goſpel; ſo theſe that have the truth of the goſpel, may be guilty of not walking according to the truth of it, even as Peter, Barnabas, and others here, whoſe diſſimulation did not conſiſt with the *truth of the goſpel*, which they preached, but tended to *eſtabliſh the law*, and ſo to overturn the goſpel. But God hath ſometimes very few witneſſes to ſtand up for the truth of the goſpel: here Paul was alone, Peter was againſt him; and Barnabas, his own intimate aſſociate, was drawn away with the diſſimulation; Jews and Gentiles were infected, and therefore Paul alone muſt fight againſt them all, for the cauſe of Chriſt, and the doctrine of the goſpel, which was endangered. *I ſaid unto Peter before them all*, etc. Not by teaching of any *erroneous doctrine* did Peter err, for that is a principle we maintain, that the apoſtles never erred in teaching, or in their doctrine delivered to the church; but his error was in *practice*, compelling the Gentiles to Judaize; whereby he gave them occaſion to think, that the obſervation of the law was neceſſary to juſtification: whereas he adds, *We that are Jews by nature*, ver. 15, 16. We apoſtles, might he ſay, though Jews by nature, yet we ſeek not juſtification by the works of the law; and therefore we ought not to drive the Gentiles to the obſervation of the law, that they may ſeek righteouſneſs and juſtification thereby. Why? becauſe, 1. We know that a man cannot be juſtified by the *works of the law*, but by the *faith of Chriſt*. 2. Becauſe therefore having renounced the law, in point of juſtification, we have embraced Chriſt by faith; that through him we may be juſtified. 3. Becauſe *by the deeds of the law no fleſh can be juſtified.*

Now, from ver. 17. and downward, the apoſtle returns to the Galatians; having told how he reproved Peter, and what he ſaid to him concerning juſtification without the works of the law, he now comes to ſhew this doctrine to be no wiſe oppoſite to the doctrine of ſanctification, but of abſolute neceſſity to true holineſs, ver. 17, 18. *q. d.* If we Jews, who lived formerly under the law, and now ſeek righteouſneſs in Chriſt alone, are thus accounted as ſinners, when we followed the law, it would ſeem that Chriſt did diſapprove the law, and approve ſin: *God forbid*, ſays the apoſtle; this he denies and rejects with abhorrence. To object thus, might he ſay, againſt the doctrine of free juſtification, were egregious blaſphemy againſt the Son of God, as if he were the miniſter of ſin, who came to deſtroy ſin, and to deſtroy the works of the devil; and by this goſpel which I preach, might he ſay, Chriſt

* This was the ſubſtance of *two diſcourſes*, the firſt whereof was delivered upon a thankſgiving-day, after the adminiſtration of the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper, at Carnock; the ſecond was an enlargement upon the ſame ſubject, after an occaſion of the ſame nature, at Orwel. The preciſe time when theſe diſcourſes were delivered, cannot be poſitively aſcertained; however, from ſome paſſages in the diſcourſes themſelves, it is probable they were preached ſome time in the year 1724. and the firſt edition being printed that year, ſeems to determine it.

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is held out as the *Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world;* not to take away righteousness, truly so called, unless it be that false vizard of legal self-righteousness, with which we formerly covered and masked ourselves: nay, he came to bring in *everlasting righteousness*, a true and perfect righteousness for justification; he came to make an *end of sin, by the sacrifice of himself*, and thereby to purchase the Spirit, as a Spirit of holiness and sanctification, to destroy the power of sin and corruption; and therefore it is a base calumny to say, that this gospel-doctrine does open the door to sin and licentiousness: this he proves by two arguments; 1. Because the faith of Christ does not destroy *itself*, ver. 18. *I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.* Sin is like an old house, which I have razed, and destroyed by my doctrine of free justification by faith, and not by the works of the law; for by this doctrine I preached freedom from sin through Christ; and therefore, if I should build up these old wastes of sin again, it is not Christ, but I that would be the sinner, or minister of sin; nay, I would be a madman, to build with one hand what I destroyed with the other. 2. Because liberty to sin is contrary to the very *scope of the gospel*, and to the design of this doctrine of justification by faith without the works of the law; *For, I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God*, ver. 19.

This is a very strange and wonderful text, that flesh and blood can hardly hear, without suspecting, that it favours too much of a *new scheme* of doctrine: and if it were not the divinely inspired words of the apostle, it would hardly escape being taxed as an Antinomian paradox. I remember, Luther upon the text says, "The false apostles taught, unless you "live to the law, you cannot live to God;" and therefore Paul here must be the most heretical of all heretics; his heresy is unheard-of heresy, reason and human wisdom cannot receive it, that if we will live to God, we must be dead wholly to the law: yet so it is here, he declares it of himself, and in the name of all believers in Christ, yea, as the very doctrine of faith, *I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.*

In which words you may notice two remarkably different things, *death* and *life;* mortification and vivification. 1. A wonderful DEATH; *I through the law am* DEAD *to the law.* 2. A remarkable LIFE, proceeding out of that death; *That I might* LIVE *unto God.*

1st, You have a wonderful DEATH, or Paul's strange mortification; *I through the law am* DEAD *to the law:* and of this mortification we have here three things, 1. The general *nature* of it, it is called a *death; I am dead.* 2. The *object* of it, *the law.* 3. The *means* of it, *the law; I through the law am dead to the law*, all very odd things to carnal reason.

1. The general *nature* of it, it is called a DEATH; *I am* DEAD. There are several sorts of death commonly spoken of, *viz.* temporal, spiritual, and eternal; but this is none of them. Temporal death is a separation betwixt soul and body; but this death takes place where there is no such separation: Paul was thus alive, when he said here, *I am dead.* Spiritual death is a separation betwixt God and the soul; but this death is a mean of joining God and the soul together. Eternal death, is an eternal separation betwixt God and the soul; but the death here spoken of, makes way for eternal communion with God. This is a strange death, a strange mortification; especially if you consider,

2. The *object* of it, the LAW; *I am dead to the law;* not only the ceremonial law, but even the moral law itself, as under the form of a covenant of works, and as a condition of life. I renounce, might he say, the righteousness of the law, seeking no salvation in the works thereof; nay, in this respect it is dead to me, and I to it; it cannot save me, and I cannot expect salvation by it; nay, *I am dead to the law.* To be *dead to sin*, is a mortification that people may think they can easily understand; but the mystery of it, in being dead to sin, by this mean of being dead to the law, is what cannot be so well understood; for one would think, that to die to the law, were to live in sin: nay, says the apostle, it is quite otherwise; that I may die to sin, *I am dead to the law.*

3. You have the *means* of this death, which is as strange, namely, *the law; I through the law am dead to the law.* As to this *mean* of death to the law, *to wit*, THE LAW, I find some divines understand it a different law from the other; as if the apostle should say, "I by the "law of Christ, am freed from the law of "Moses; or, I by the law of faith am freed "from the law of works." But I incline to join with the current of sound divines, who understand both of the same law, *q. d. I am dead to the law,* THROUGH *the law:* the law hath taught me that I am a sinner, that cannot be justified by the law, which curses and condemns sinners: *By the law is the knowledge of sin;* and having thus by the law known myself to be a sinful guilty wretch, I am dead to all expectation of righteousness by the law. The law then, having thus killed me, and all my hope of life by it, hath been a blest mean of drawing me out of myself, and all my legal righteousness, to seek life and justification in Christ, and his righteousness received by faith. Thus you have a wonderful death here spoken of.

2dly, You have a remarkable LIFE proceeding out of that *death;* you may call it Paul's vivification, which was not peculiar to him, but is common to all believers: *That I might live unto God.* Where again you may notice three things.

1. The *general nature* of this vivification, it is called by the name of *life:* while a man is alive to the law, he continues dead; but whenever he is dead to the law, then he is alive; the breath of life is breathed into his nostrils, and he becomes a living soul: for the Spirit of God, the spirit of life enters into him.

2. The *object* of this life, or vivification, it is *God;* a living unto God, that is, a new life, a holy life, a divine life; a living to God, to God's honour, to God's glory. Before this, the man lived *to himself* as his *end*, as well as *from himself* as his *principle;* but now he lives from God as his principle, and to God as his end, which only is a holy life, and wherein true sanctification lies.

3. You have the *influence* that this death hath upon this life, or this mortification hath upon this vivification; or, the influence that justification by faith alone, and not by the deeds of the

the law, hath upon ſanctification of heart and life, or living to God, in the particle *that: I am dead to the law,* THAT *I might live unto God.* Now, might the apoſtle ſay, How falſly do you charge my doctrine, as opening a window to licentiouſneſs, while I in the name of all believers declare, that this doctrine of juſtification by faith alone, or our being dead to the law in point of juſtification, does open the door to true holineſs; for none can live unto God, till they be dead to the law. *I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.*

But I ſhall endeavour further to explain the words upon the following obſervation.

DOCT. *That to be dead to the law, in the point of juſtification, is neceſſary in order to our living unto God in point of ſanctification.* I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.

Now, upon this doctrine, I ſhall endeavour, through grace, to explain the ſeveral branches of the text; and the general method ſhall be,

I. To *clear* and *confirm* the doctrine.
II. To ſpeak of the *believer's* DEATH, or *mortification*, here intended; *I through the law am dead to the law.*
III. To ſpeak of the *believer's* LIFE, or *vivification*; his living unto God,
IV. Of the *neceſſity* of this death in order to this life; or the *influence* that our being dead to the law hath upon our living unto God.
V. Make ſome *application* of the ſubject in ſundry *uſes.*

I. To *clear* and *confirm* the doctrine; *At the mouth of two or three witneſſes, every word ſhall be eſtabliſhed.* But, to ſhew that we are not ſtraitened to find out witneſſes to atteſt the truth of this doctrine, I ſhall produce more than two or three.

The *firſt* witneſs that I cite, is that, Rom. vii. 4, 5, 6. where you ſee, that to be *dead to the law,* and *married to Chriſt,* is neceſſary in order to *living unto God, bringing forth fruit to him,* and *ſerving him in newneſs of ſpirit.*

The *ſecond* witneſs I cite, is very like to this, Iſa. liv. 1, 5. compared. *Sing, O barren, that did not bear.—For more are the children of the deſolate,* [Gentiles,] *than the children of the married wife:* Why? ver. 5. *Thy Maker is thy husband.* Being dead to the law, and divorced from it, and married to Chriſt, the barren woman becomes a fruitful bride. And, leſt you ſhould think I put a wrong gloſs upon this text, and miſtake the meaning of it, you may compare it with,

A *third* witneſs that I cite, whereby this very gloſs that I give it is confirmed, Gal. iv. 27. *For it is written, Rejoice thou barren that bearеſt not; break forth and cry, thou that travaileſt not: for the deſolate hath many more children than ſhe which hath an husband.* Now, we would conſider what is the ſubject here ſpoken of: the apoſtle is ſetting forth believers freedom from the law by the goſpel, or their juſtification by faith without the works of the law; and he confirms it by an allegory, ſhewing, that our liberty from the law was prefigured in the family of Abraham, that we are not *children of the bond-woman,* or bond-men to the law, but *children of the promiſe, as Iſaac:* And the apoſtle explains the prophet, and ſhews his allegory to be founded, not only on the former hiſtorical, but alſo on this prophetical ſcripture. The goſpel-church, including all believers among Jews and Gentiles, is called the *bride, the Lamb's wife:* and as this bride in general, being divorced from the law, and married to Chriſt, is a fruitful bride, bearing many children, many ſons and daughters to Chriſt, and more under the new diſpenſation of the covenant of grace, than under the old legal adminiſtration thereof before Chriſt's coming; ſo every particular believer, being dead to the law, and married to Chriſt, is, by this means, fruitful in bringing forth the *fruits of holineſs and righteouſneſs,* to the glory of God; as the apoſtle in proſecuting this diſcourſe, further ſhews, ver. 30. *Caſt out the bond-woman and her ſon.* Strange! that the law ſhould be called a *bond-woman*; and then, *Caſt out the bond-woman;* this was ſtrange language: nay, but in the caſe of juſtification, "Moſes and his "tables muſt give place to Chriſt," as Luther ſays: yea, he adds in this ſenſe, "I will ſay to "thee, O law, be gone; and if it will not be "gone, thruſt it out by force; *Caſt out the bond-*"*woman.*" Further, the apoſtle adds, chap. v. 1. *Stand faſt, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Chriſt hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.* Read alſo, ver. 4, 5, 6. where you ſee, that the believer, being free from the law, and having the ſpirit of life, and the ſpirit of faith, bringeth forth fruit to God; of which fruits of the Spirit of Chriſt, in oppoſition to the fruits of the fleſh, you read, ver. 16, 17. and downward.

The *fourth* witneſs that I cite, is, Col. ii. 13, 14. *You being dead in your ſins,—hath he quickened.* Now, by what means does this quickening, or being made alive to God, come about? It is by the *blotting out of the hand-writing—nailing it to his croſs;* intimating, that there is no living unto God, without being dead to the law, and having the law dead to us, by viewing it crucified with Chriſt, and nailed to his croſs.

The *fifth* witneſs is, Col. iii. 3, 4, 5. *For ye are dead,* [that is, dead to the law, as he had cleared before, and ſo dead to ſin, ſelf, and the world,] *and your life is hid with Chriſt in God; and when Chriſt, who is our life, ſhall appear, then ſhall ye alſo appear with him in glory. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth.* The believer is ſaid to be *dead with Chriſt,* ver. 20. of the preceeding chapter, and ſo dead to the law, which was *nailed to the croſs of Chriſt.* And ver. 1. of this chapter, the believer is ſaid to be *riſen with Chriſt,* and ſo he ſits together with Chriſt in heavenly places: but though his beſt part is above, even his glorious Head, whom he will follow; yet he hath members on earth, which he is called to mortify; which mortification of ſin is, you ſee, the native fruit of his being *dead with Chriſt,* and *riſen with him.*

The *ſixth* witneſs that I cite, is, Rom. iii. 28, 31. *We conclude that a man is juſtified by faith, without the deeds of the law,* and ſo he is *dead to the law.* Now, does this doctrine deſtroy our living to God? Nay, *Do we make void the law, through faith? God forbid; yea, we eſtabliſh the law:* we eſtabliſh it as a *covenant of works,* while we believe in Chriſt for righteouſneſs, to be imputed for our juſtification; and we eſtabliſh it as a *rule of life,* and holineſs, while we believe in Chriſt for ſtrength, to be imparted for our ſanctification; and ſo being dead to the law in point of juſtification, we live unto God in ſanctification.

The *ſeventh* witneſs that I cite, is, Rom. vi. 14.

Sin ſhall not have dominion over you; for you are not under the law, but under grace. Where you ſee, that a man's being *under grace*, and not *under the law*, is the very means by which he comes to be delivered, and freed from the *dominion of ſin*, and ſo lives unto God. Here is the privilege, deliverance from the dominion of ſin; and the means of it is, by the grace of God in Chriſt Jeſus, by which we are delivered from the law: for, as *the motions of ſin*, Rom. vii. 5. are ſaid to be *by the law*, ſo the law being dead to us, and we by grace, being married to another huſband, we bring forth fruit unto God; *The grace of God, that bringeth ſalvation, teaching us to deny ungodlineſs*, Tit. ii. 11. While the law hath power over a man, he cannot but be bringing forth *fruit unto death*, Rom. vii. 5. There was never yet an effectual courſe taken for the mortifying of ſin, but by the goſpel, and the grace of Chriſt; which yet ſome ignorantly think leads to licentiouſneſs, as they thought in Paul's days, Rom. vi. 15. Nay, while we are under the law, we are the ſervants of ſin; *But now being made free from ſin, and become ſervants to God, ye have your fruit unto holineſs, and the end everlaſting life*, ver. 22.

The *eighth* witneſs that I cite, is, Rom. viii. 2, 3. *For the law of the Spirit of life in Chriſt Jeſus, hath made me free from the law of ſin and death.* Why? how comes that about? ver. 3. *For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the fleſh, God ſending his own Son in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh, and for ſin condemned ſin in the fleſh.* Where ye ſee the quality of every believer; he is one that lives to God, and *walks not after the fleſh, but after the Spirit:* and now, what is the foundation of this? even freedom from the law, which through our weakneſs could not juſtify us; but our help was laid upon *One that is mighty*, who having come under the law, did, by a ſacrifice for ſin, *condemn ſin in the fleſh, that the righteouſneſs of the law might be fulfilled in us*, both in point of juſtification and ſanctification.

The *ninth* witneſs is, 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. *For the love of Chriſt conſtrains us,—that he died for all, that they which live, ſhould not henceforth live to themſelves, but to him that died for them.* There is true ſanctification, and living unto God; but how came it about? The means thereof is the death of Chriſt, which we have been celebrating in the ſacrament of the ſupper; this is both the means and the motive thereof. What ſtronger motive than this, to *live to him that died for us;* and by his death, *redeemed us from the law?* For we are *dead to the law by the body of Chriſt*, Rom. vii. 4.; that is, by the death of Chriſt, the ſacrifice of his human nature: and hence comes true ſpiritual life, or living to him.

The *tenth* witneſs that I cite, is, 1 Cor. xv. 56, 57. *The ſting of death is ſin, the ſtrength of ſin is the law:* where the law is called the *ſtrength of ſin*, not only becauſe *by the law is the knowledge of ſin*, and ſin would not have power to condemn us, but by virtue of the law which diſcharges ſin; but alſo becauſe ſin gets ſtrength from the law: *Sin taking occaſion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiſcence; for without the law ſin was dead*, Rom. vii. 8. Sin and corruption is ſo irritated by the law, that thereby the ſinner becomes to be more ſinful: which is not the fault of the law, for it prohibites, reproves, and condemns ſin; but the fault of corrupt nature, which is ſo intent in perpetrating evil, that the more any thing is forbidden, the more impetuouſly it follows after it; like a mad horſe, the more he is checked with the bridle, the more mad and furious is he. Now, *The ſtrength of ſin is the law; but thanks be to God, which gives us the victory, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord:* Victory over the law, which is the ſtrength of ſin; and ſo, being freed from the law, or dead to it, in this way I am freed from ſin, and put in caſe to live unto God.——Theſe are ten witneſſes, inſtead of twenty that might be adduced for the confirmation of this doctrine, *That to be dead to the law in point of juſtification, is neceſſary in order to our living unto God in point of ſanctification.* Receive this truth then in the love of it.

II. The *ſecond* thing propoſed was, to ſpeak of this ſtrange DEATH of the believer; *I through the law am dead to the law.* Now here four things are to be touched at, 1. What the *law is*, that the believer is dead to. 2. What it is *in the law*, that he is dead to. 3. What it is to be *dead* to the law. 4. The *means* of this, that through the law he is dead to the law.

1ſt, What the *law is*, that the believer is dead to. I know, I have need to be cautious what I ſay in this captious age, eſpecially upon ſuch a ſubject as this; but it is in the fear of God, to whom I am accountable, and without regard to any man, that I deſire to deliver the truths of the goſpel.——What is the law, to which Paul ſaid he was dead? I ſhall not trouble you with the ſeveral acceptations of the *law*, nor the diſtinctions of it into *judicial, ceremonial*, and *moral*. But here though the apoſtle ſpeaks ſometimes of the *ceremonial*, and ſometimes of the *moral* law in this epiſtle; yet in this text, I ſuppoſe, with the current of ſound divines, that he underſtands eſpecially the *moral* law, or the law of the ten commandments, conſidered under the form of a covenant of works. The law is to be taken two ways. 1. *Materially*, for its mere preceptive and directive part. Or, 2. The law may be taken *formally*, as it is a covenant, whether of works or grace. Now, the law, *materially* taken, is ſtill the ſame, whatever form it be caſt into, and it is the tranſcript of the divine image, after which man was created at firſt; ſo that, long before the law was written in tables of ſtone, it was written in the tables of man's heart; and man was obliged to give obedience to this law, as a creature to his Creator, though there never had been any covenant made with him; and this obligation to obedience is eternal, everlaſting, and unchangeable.—But this law was afterwards caſt into two different *forms*, namely, that of the *covenant of works*, and afterwards that of the *covenant of grace*. Now here, I ſay, it is meant of the law, or covenant of works; in which law there were three things, a *precept*, a *promiſe*, and a *penalty*. 1. The *precept*, which is perfect and perſonal obedience, by our own ſtrength, and in the old covenant-form; *Do*. 2. The *promiſe*, which is life eternal; *Do* and *Live*. 3. The *penalty*, which is death temporal, ſpiritual, and eternal; if you *Do* not, you ſhall *Die*, Gen. ii. 17. The covenant of works commands good, and forbids evil, with a promiſe of life in caſe of obedience, and a threatening of death in caſe of diſobedience: and ſo this law of works hath a twofold power; a power to juſtify, and a power

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to condemn; to juſtify, if we obey; and to condemn, if we diſobey. The command of the law, abſtractly and materially conſidered, is, as I ſaid, eternally binding upon all rational creatures, ſo long as they continue to be creatures, and God the Creator: but the command of the law, formally conſidered, or under the form of a covenant of works particularly, binds no longer than the form continues. Now, the commanding power of the law, as a covenant of works, is a power calling us to obey, (or injoining us to do) by our own ſtrength; to obey, as a condition of life; and to obey, under pain of damnation.

2*dly*, As to the *ſecond* thing here, what it is *in the law*, the believer is dead to. Here it muſt be obſerved, That it is only the *believer* that is dead to the law, all others are alive to it; and the believer's being dead to the law, imports, that he is *wholly ſet free* from it; or, as the words of our *Confeſſion* bear, "They are not "under the law as a covenant of works, to "be thereby either juſtified or condemned." Thus they are dead to the law. The law is compared, in our text, to a hard and cruel maſter, and we compared to ſlaves, and bondmen, who, as long as they are alive, are under dominion, and at the command of their maſters; but when they are dead, they are free from that bondage, and their maſters have no more to do with them. Here then, to be dead to the law, is to be free from the *dominion* and *power* of the law. Now, I think the power of the law may be conſidered, either as accidental, or eſſential. It hath an *accidental* power or ſtrength; for example, by reaſon of our ſinful, corrupt, and depraved ſtate, even an irritating power, whereby, as an occaſion, it provokes, and ſtirs up the corruption of the heart in the unregenerate, Rom. vii. 8. From this the believer is free, ſo far as he is dead to the law.—But next, There is a power that the law hath, that may be called *eſſential* to it, as a covenant of works; and that is, a juſtifying and condemning power, as I ſaid before; a power to juſtify the obedient, and a power to condemn the diſobedient: now believers are dead to the law, ſo as they are not under it, to be juſtified or condemned thereby; they are wholly, and altogether free from the law, as it is a covenant of life and death, upon doing, or not doing.

But, for the further clearing of this, I told you upon that queſtion, What law is here meant? That in the law, as a covenant of works, there are three things. 1. The *precept* of obedience. 2. The *promiſe* of life. 3. The *threatening* or *penalty* of death; all which the believer is dead to.

1. The *precept* of obedience, as a condition of life, is one part of the covenant of works; *Do and live;* or, *If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments:* this the believer is delivered from, and ſo dead to the precepts of the law, as a covenant, or condition of life. Take heed to what I ſay here; I ſay not, that the believer is delivered from the precept of the law *ſimply*, but as a *condition of life:* for the *command* of perfect obedience, is not the covenant of works; nay, man was obliged to perfect obedience, and is eternally bound to obey the law, though there had never been a covenant: but the *form* of the precept, or command in the covenant of works, is perfect obedience, as a condition of life. Now, it is the *commanding power* of the law, as a covenant of works, that the believer is free from; and it hath no commanding power, but in this ſtrain, namely, to command perfect obedience as the condition of life; and, under pain of the curſe, Obey, and thou ſhalt live; otherwiſe thou ſhalt die. Now, the *ground* of the believer's freedom from the precept of the law, as a covenant of works, or condition of life, is juſt *Chriſt's perfect obedience* to the law, in his room, in his ſtead, which is the true and proper condition of our eternal life and happineſs: *By the obedience of one, ſhall many be made righteous:—that as ſin hath reigned unto death, even ſo grace might reign through righteouſneſs, unto eternal life, by Jeſus Chriſt our Lord*, Rom. v. 19, 20. There is an eternal truth in this, that life is not to be obtained, unleſs all be done that the law requires, *Do this and live;* and that is ſtill true, *If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.* They muſt be kept by us, or our Surety: now the Surety's obedience being imputed to the believer, as the condition of eternal life, the believer is not obliged to obedience to the law as a condition of life: the precept of the law properly is, *Do;* but the precept of the law, as a covenant of works, is under this conditional form, *Do, and Live.* Now, if any ſay then, the believer is delivered from obligation to do, or to obey the law, I deny that; for this *Do* is eternally binding; but the precept of the law, as a covenant of works, is not ſimply *Do*, but *Do, and Live:* and this conditional form, which is properly the precept and command of the covenant of works, he is indeed delivered from; for Chriſt, as Surety, came under the law, as a covenant of works, or as it ſtood in this conditional *Do, and Live:* for he yielded perfect obedience to it, to procure life by it; and ſo the believer is wholly delivered from obedience to it; that is, to obtain life by it, or to procure everlaſting life by his obedience. The precept, thus formed as the condition of life, by virtue of the annexation of the promiſe of life to the obedience of it, is the precept of the covenant of works; and from this precept he is freed, and ſo is dead to the law in reſpect of the precept of it, in and through Jeſus Chriſt his Surety.

2. The *promiſe* of life is another thing in the covenant of works; and this runs in the ſame line with the former, being ſo connected with it. The promiſe of life in the law, or covenant of works, was juſt the promiſe of eternal life, upon condition of perfect obedience: now, the believer's freedom from the law, in this reſpect, flows from his freedom from it in the former reſpect: for, if he be freed from the *Do*, or obedience, as required in that old covenant-form, then he is not to expect eternal life, as it is promiſed in that covenant; nay, the law is diveſted of its promiſe of life to the believer: that is to ſay, his obedience to the law hath not the promiſe of eternal life, as the legal ground and title upon which he is to obtain it: he holds his title to eternal life in Jeſus Chriſt, his Surety, in whom he hath a perfect obedience, to which eternal life is promiſed; and which is now the alone ſure ground upon which it is to be procured. The believer's own obedience to the law, or his goſpel-obedience, and conformity to the law, wrought in him, and done by him, through the

the help of the Spirit of grace; even this obedience of his, I say, hath not the legal promise of eternal life, as if it were the legal condition of his obtaining eternal life: no, his gospel-obedience hath indeed a gospel-promise, connecting it with eternal life, as it is an evidence of his union to Christ, *in whom all the promises are Yea and Amen;* and as it is a walking in the way to heaven, without which none shall ever come to the end; *For without holiness it is impossible to see God.* But the legal promise of eternal life made to obedience, and which makes our personal obedience to be the cause and matter of our justification, and as the proper condition of salvation and eternal life, this is the promise of the law, or covenant of works; and this promise it is now wholly divested of, as to the believer in Jesus Christ, who hath taken his law-room, and yielded that perfect obedience, to which the promise of eternal life is now made: and the reason why I say, the promise of eternal life is *now* made to Christ's perfect obedience in our room and stead, is, Because the law, or covenant of works, made no promise of life properly, but to man's own personal obedience; it made no mention of a surety: but now, in sovereign mercy, this law-rigour is abated, and the Surety is accepted, to whose obedience life is promised.

3. The *threatening* of death, in case of disobedience, is another thing in the covenant of works; death, and wrath, and the curse, is the penalty of the law: death is the reward of sin and disobedience to the law; *In the day thou sinnest thou shalt die;* and this the believer is also freed from by the death of Christ, who died for our sins: the law saith, *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law, to do them;* but the gospel saith, *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us,* Gal. iii. 10, 13. As the law then to the believer is divested of its promise of life, so as it cannot justify him for his obedience; so it is divested of its threatening of death, and cannot condemn him for his disobedience to it as a covenant, that covenant-form of it being done away in Christ Jesus, with respect to the believer. I think some will, perhaps object, saying, That the believer is delivered from the *curse* of the law, we understand; but still we cannot fathom how he is dead to the *command* of the law: that he is dead to the *condemning* power of the law, is plain; but, how is he dead to the *preceptive, mandatory, commanding* power of the law? To which it might be replied, He is dead to, and delivered from the *preceptive* part of the law, not *materially*, but *formally*; for the command of it *materially*, is, *Do*, or yield obedience; this he can never be delivered from, so long as he is a creature, and God his Creator: but the command of it *formally*, or under the form of the covenant of works, is; *Do, and Live; Do*, by your own strength; *Do*, as the condition of your eternal life; and *Do* under the pain of eternal death and damation: this, I say, which is the commanding part of the law, *formally* considered, as it is a covenant of works, he is wholly and altogether delivered from. To preach the mandatory part of the law, as a *covenant of works*, is to preach the moral law, not merely as a *rule* of life, but as the *condition* of life eternal; in which sense the believer is not at all bound to acknowledge it: and to say, that the believer is delivered from the law, that is, only from the *curse* of the law, would make some very strange glosses upon many scriptures: for example, Gal. iii. 10. *As many as are of the works of the law, are under the curse;* the meaning of it then would be, As many as are under the curse, are under the curse. It must therefore be meant of the *precept* of the law; As many as are under the precept, are under the penalty thereof. The believer then is dead to, and delivered from the law in its commanding and condemning power, and that in, and through Christ. And I am not afraid, nor ashamed to say it, in the words of the famous doctor Owen, "That the whole "power and sanction of the first covenant was "conferred upon Christ, and in him fulfilled "and ended." And I think I say no more than what the apostle, a greater than he, saith, Rom. x. 4. *Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.*—Thus you see what it is in the law, the believer is dead to, more generally.

3dly, The *third* thing here proposed was, What it is to be *dead* to the law, more particularly as it comes under the notion of death. And here, 1. I shall shew the *import* of this death. 2. Some of the *qualities* of it.

(1.) To shew the *import* of this death. The notion of death may here help us to the import: for,

1. As in death there is no *relation* takes place; it dissolves the relation betwixt master and servant, husband and wife, Job iii. 19. *The servant is freed from his master:* so here, the man being dead to the law, the relation betwixt him and it is dissolved, Rom. vii. 1,—4. He is now married to Christ, and divorced from the law: while the man is alive to the law, the relation stands; *For I testify to every one that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law*, Gal. v. 3.

2. In death there is no *care* or *thoughtfulness*; Eccl. ix. 10. *There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou goest;* intimating to us, that in death there is no care, nor thoughtfulness, nor concern about doing any thing: so the man that is dead to the law, he hath no more care, nor concern about the works of the law in point of JUSTIFICATION, than a dead corps about the work in which it was occupied while living: while the man is alive to the law, all his care and concern is about the works of the law; *Do, and Live.*

3. In death there is no *hope*; *The land of the living is the land of hope*, Eccl. ix. 4. Even so the man that is dead to the law, he hath no hope nor expectation from the law, or from his obedience thereto. The man that is alive to the law, he hath hope, that God will pardon him, and pity him; why? because he does so and so; he is a good neighbour, he wrongs no-body, he is just in his dealings, and careful in his duties, and *touching the righteousness of the law, he is blameless:* he hath a good heart towards God, and he hath a good life too; and therefore he hopes to be justified and saved of God, for Christ's sake: for he hath learned, it may be, to make so much use of Christ, as to think he cannot be saved without him; but still his hope and expectation is founded upon the law. But now, the man dead to the law, he

hath

hath no hope from the law; nay, he despairs of salvation by the deeds of the law: as he sees he cannot do any thing, without grace and strength from above, so even when he does any thing by the help of grace, he sees it so lame and imperfect, that God cannot justify or save him, to the honour and credit of his justice, unless he hath a perfect righteousness. He hath no hope by the law.

4. In death there is no *toil*, no turbulant passion nor affection: natural death puts an end to natural affections, which take place in man's life-time; such as the weary pursuit of what we love, and the wearisome flight from what we hate, or fear: there is no such thing in the grave; *There the weary are at rest*, Job iii. 19. They that are alive to the law, and *find the life of their hands, they weary themselves in the greatness of their way*, as it is expressed, Isa. lvii. 10. Many a weary night and day they may have in pursuing after their lovers, in establishing their darling self-righteousness. The law gives them a wearisome task, to make brick without affording straw; and leads them with heavy burdens of curses, in case the task be not performed. But when a man is dead to the law, then *the weary are at rest:* Christ is the rest; *Come to me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* Then the man gets rest to his conscience, in the blood and righteousness of Christ, the end of the law: rest to his passions and affections; he rests from his fears, legal fears of hell, and wrath threatened in the law: the believer indeed may be filled with them, but so far as he is dead to the law, so far is he at rest from these legal slavish fears. He rests from his love and delight; the law affords its votaries much pleasure, sometimes in the performance of their duty in a legal way: but now the believer takes no delight in that way of justification; he is out of conceit with himself, and his duties, because they are vile; yea, though they were not so vile as they are, but perfect, yet he is out of conceit with that way of life, and beholding the glory of the new covenant and way of salvation, joins issue with Job, chap. ix. 15, 21. *Whom, though I were righteous, yet would I not answer, but I would make supplication to my judge; though I were perfect, yet would I not know my soul, I would despise my life.* In a word, he rests from his legal griefs and sorrows, because he rests from his legal labours. As it is said of the dead in Christ, in another sense, Rev. xiv. 13. *Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, they rest from their labours, and their works follow them;* so I may say in this case, Blessed are the dead which die to the law, they rest from their labours, their toilsome, troublesome, wearisome, legal works, and yet their works do follow them: they are now *created in Christ Jesus unto good works.* But,

5. In death there is no *sense:* a dead man does not see, nor hear, nor taste, nor smell, nor exert any natural sense; so they that are dead to it, they do not now *see* the lightenings of Sinai all in a flame, as formerly they did; they do not *hear* the thunders thereof; they do not *smell* the sulphure of the burning mountain; they do not *feel* the terror of vindictive vengeance, the tempest that surrounded the mount; they do not *taste* the gall, the bitterness of the wrath threatened in the law; the bitterness of death is over with them, so far as they see that Christ drank the gall for them; yea, so far they are dead to the law, they are dead to all Sinai wrath: for, *They are not come to the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of the trumpet, and the voice of words,*—but *they are come to mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God*, Heb. xii. 18,—24. But what? Have the godly no sense of law-wrath? Yea, so far as they are legal, and under the law (for they are never wholly freed from a legal temper while here) the dead ghost of the law may rise up and fright them; but so far as they are dead to the law, it is not law-wrath, but fatherly-wrath that affects them. Indeed, through unbelief, they may fear hell; but they cannot do so by faith, seeing there is no foundation for either that faith or fear, in the Bible, that a believer shall be cast into hell, since *there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.*

6. In death there is no *motion;* vital motion ceases when death takes place: thus, so far as a man is dead to the law, so far the motions of sin are killed; for, *the motions of sin are by the law*, Rom. vii. 5. By the law occasionally and accidentally men running the more into sin, by how much the more they are forbidden to commit sin. Hence Musculus compares the law, in this respect, to a chaste matron in a brothel-house, which by her good advice does prove an occasion to some impudent whores to be more bold, and impudent in their impiety; *Sin taking occasion by the law*, or commandment, saith the apostle, *wrought in me all manner of concupiscence.* But now, so far as a man is dead to the law, so far are the motions of sin killed, and his soul quickened to live unto God. Of which more afterwards.

(2.) To shew some of the *qualities* of this death to the law.

1. It is an *universal* death: I do not mean that it is common to all the children of men, though it be a common death to the children of God, and to every one of them; yet it is a rare death among the children of men: *The whole world lies in wickedness, and are dead in sins and trespasses;* few are dead in this sense: but what I mean by its being *universal*, is, that the man that is dead to the law in point of *justification;* he is dead to *every part* of the law in its old covenant-form, to the *precept* of it, to the *penalty* of it, so as he is not to be justified by the one, nor condemned by the other. He is dead to *every legal form* of the law; his gospel obedience thereto, is no part of his righteousness for justification before God; if he should endeavour to make his gospel-obedience to the law, as a rule of life, in the hand of a Mediator, any part of his righteousness for justification, he so far turns the covenant of grace, and the duties required therein, into a covenant of works, and he seeks to live unto that, to which he is, and should be dead. It is true, the form of the law in the gospel-covenant does not require obedience for justification; but yet this corrupt nature is prone to turn to the old byass, and abuse the proper form of it, by turning of the rule of *obedience* into a rule of *acceptance.* If a man make faith itself an act, or any act or fruit of it, the matter of his justification, he turns it to a covenant of works: the believer is dead to faith itself in this respect; yea, faith renounces it-

ſelf, and all things elſe, but the righteouſneſs of Chriſt for juſtification. In this ſenſe, he is dead to repentance, love, and other graces; he is dead to every obedience to the law, as a covenant of works; to his natural legal obedience before his converſion; and to his ſpiritual goſpel obedience after converſion: which, though it be a righteouſneſs that God works, and is the Author of; yet, becauſe it is the believer that is the ſubject, and made the actor thereof, it is called his own righteouſneſs, or conformity to the law: all which he renounced in the matter of juſtification, deſiring *to be found in Chriſt, not having his own righteouſneſs, that is after the law, but the righteouſneſs which is of God by faith*, Phil. iii. 9. So that I ſay, it is an *univerſal* death.

2. It is a *lingering* death. It is not eaſy to get the law killed: ſomething of a legal diſpoſition remains even in the believer while he is in this world: many a ſtroak does ſelf, and ſelf-righteouſneſs get, but ſtill it revives again. If he were wholly dead to the law, he would be wholly dead to ſin; but ſo far as the law lives, ſo far ſin lives. They that think they know the goſpel well enough, bewray their ignorance; no man can be too evangelical; it will take all his life-time to get a legal temper deſtroyed. Though the believer be delivered wholly from the law, in its commanding and condemning power and authority, or in its rightful power that it hath over all that are under it; yet he is not delivered wholly from its uſurped power, which takes place many times upon him, while here, through remaining unbelief.

3. It is a *painful* death; it is like the cutting off the right-hand, and plucking out the right-eye: The man hath no inclination to part with the law. It is as natural for him to expect God's favour upon his *doing* ſo and ſo, and to expect life and ſalvation by his own obedience, or doing as well as he can, as it is natural for him to draw his breath; *If we do our beſt, God will accept of us*, that is the natural language of every one, who is wedded to the *Do and Live* of the firſt covenant. And, O what a pain is it to be brought off from that way! To die to the law, is moſt unnatural, ſtrange doctrine; and legal pangs, and pains of conviction, and humiliation muſt be borne, before a right thought about dying to the law can be brought forth.

4. It is a *pleaſant* death; it is *painful* at firſt, but *pleaſant* at laſt: O how pleaſant is it, to ſee ſelf abaſed, and grace exalted; ſelf-righteouſneſs cried down, and Chriſt's righteouſneſs cried up in the ſoul! *Wiſdom's ways are pleaſantneſs*; and this way particularly, wherein *no fleſh does glory in his preſence*; but *he that glorieth, glorieth in the Lord: he rejoiceth in Chriſt Jeſus, and hath no confidence in the fleſh*: he doth *joy in God, through Jeſus Chriſt, by whom he receives the atonement; and grace reigning through righteouſneſs, to eternal life by Jeſus Chriſt our Lord*, Rom. v. 11, 21. This death is a pleaſant parting, when the man is brought to a parting with all his own rags for a glorious robe, Iſa. lxiv. 6. lxi. 10. and xlv. 24.

5. It is an *honourable* death: to be dead to the law, is a death that brings honour to God, to Chriſt, to the law, and to the believer. It brings honour to God's *holineſs*, which is now ſatisfied by Chriſt's doing; and honour to God's *juſtice*, which is now ſatisfied by Chriſt's dying.—It brings honour to *Chriſt*; for now the man values the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, as being indeed *the righteouſneſs of God*, and a full, ſufficient, perfect righteouſneſs.—It brings honour to the *law*, when, inſtead of our imperfect obedience, we bring it to an obedience better than men or angels in their beſt eſtate could give it, even the Lawgiver's obedience; which indeed doth *magnify the law, and make it honourable*.—It brings honour alſo to the *believer* himſelf: he is honoured and beautified with a law-biding righteouſneſs, truly meritorious, and every way glorious: *This is the honour of all the ſaints*.

6. It is a *profitable* death: it is a happy death, and a holy death; profitable both for happineſs and holineſs; profitable both for juſtification and ſanctification. Our legal righteouſneſs is unprofitable; *I will declare thy righteouſneſs, and thy works; for they ſhall not profit thee*, Iſa. lvii. 12. It is unprofitable for juſtification; for, *by the deeds of the law ſhall no fleſh living be juſtified*: it is unprofitable for ſanctification; for his filthy rags do rather pollute him than purify him.—But the righteouſneſs of Chriſt is profitable every way: they are *happy* that have it; for, they are *juſtified from all things, from which they could not be juſtified by the law of Moſes*: they are *holy* that have it; as will appear in the ſequel of our diſcourſe. Being dead to the law, is the way to live unto God.

4*thly*, The *fourth* thing here propoſed, is the *means* of this death; *I* THROUGH *the* LAW *am dead to the law*: the mean of death to the law, is the law. But then a *queſtion* may be moved, How can this be, ſeeing the law is the *cauſe* of *no good thing* in us, and is *the miniſtration of death, and condemnation?* 2 Cor. iii. 7, 8, 9. In *anſwer* to which, we may obſerve, That though the law is not the *cauſe* of this death to the law, and ſo death to ſin; yet it is an *occaſion* thereof, for it accuſes, terrifies, and condemns us, and therefore occaſions and urgeth us to flee to Chriſt, who is the true cauſe that we die to the law, and to ſin: as the needle goes before, and draws the thread which ſews the cloth; ſo the needle of the law goes before, and makes way for the grace of the goſpel, that it may follow after, and take place in the heart. To be *dead to the law*, and *married to Chriſt*, is all one in ſcripture ſenſe. Now, to *be* DEAD *to the law*, by *the* LAW, is by means of the law, to be led to Chriſt for juſtification, by faith in him, without the deeds of the law; *The law was our ſchoolmaſter to lead us to Chriſt, that we might be juſtified by faith*, Gal. iii. 24.; where the law may be taken either for the *ceremonial* or *moral* law. If we take it for the *ceremonial* law, then it is true that the *ceremonial* law pointed out Chriſt to us truly: but then the ceremonial law was goſpel, in the ſubſtance of it, though vailed over with types and ſhadows, which were to continue till the body was come: but if we take it for the *moral* law, then it brings us to Chriſt only occaſionally; for to bring us to Chriſt, is no proper work of the law, only it is the occaſion thereof, inſomuch as it forces us from itſelf, and makes us to ſee that by it there is no hope of life; ſo it curſes all ſinners, and gives hope of life to none: it is the goſpel only that ſhews us the ſalvation to be had in Chriſt. Now, the law, by the ſeverity of it, is an occaſion to us of ſeeking life, where it is to be found: like

a child

a child, knowing the tenderneſs of his father's love, and finding the ſchool-maſter to be very ſevere and ſharp, he runs from the ſeverity of the maſter, to hide himſelf under his father's wings; yet not by his maſter's teaching, but his ſeverity is the occaſion of it: even ſo it is through the law, and its ſeverity, that the believer is dead to the law: it is then by a law-work, in ſome meaſure, a work of legal conviction and humiliation, that a man comes to be dead to the law.

Here I will name to you a few pieces of *law-work*, which are the occaſion of the man's being *dead to the law*, when the Spirit of God makes uſe of the law for that end.

1. Through the law a man gets the conviction of the *holineſs of God*, and of the holineſs, ſpirituality, and extent of the law itſelf; the Spirit of God enlightens the mind, to ſee the conformity of the command unto the will of God, and to the holy nature of God; this is called the *coming of the commandment*, Rom. vii. 9. *For I was alive without the law once:* I thought I was holy enough, I found the life of my hand, while I was *touching the righteouſneſs of the law, blameleſs; but when the commandment came, ſin revived, and I died.* When I ſaw the holineſs and ſpirituality of God's law, ſin revived, and I died; I ſaw that I was a ſinner indeed, and I died to the law, and to all conceit of my own works, and obedience to the law. This conviction makes a man have a doctrinal approbation of the law as *holy, juſt*, and *good;* holy, in its precepts; juſt, in its threatenings; and good, in its promiſes: I conſent to the law, that it is good. By this conviction, a man ſees not only the holineſs and ſpirituality, but the *extent* of the law; *Thy commandment is exceeding broad;* it is extended to all my thoughts, words, and actions; to all my affections, deſigns, deſires, and inclinations. Now, when a man ſees this, it kills his confidence, and makes him ſee he hath no righteouſneſs conformable to the law.

2. Through the law, the man gets the conviction of *ſin; By the law is the knowledge of ſin*, Rom. iii. 20. Conviction of ſin is the conſciouſneſs of our tranſgreſſing of this holy law. This conviction makes a man ſee ſin in its *nature*, that it is *the tranſgreſſion of the law*, 1 John iii. 4. and ſo a contrariety to the holy nature and will of God. This conviction makes a man ſee the *kinds* of ſin: it may be, the Spirit of God begins with ſome actual, grievous ſin; *actual* ſin is the ſwerving of our actions, either in thought, word, or deed, from the law of God, either by omiſſion or commiſſion. From thence the conviction goes to *original* ſin, letting the man ſee, that not only is his nature deſtitute of all righteouſneſs, and conformity to the law, but that it is wholly corrupt, that he is juſt a hell of ſin and enmity againſt God; and from thence the Spirit of God by the law, convinces the man of the *originating* ſin, even of Adam's ſin, and ſays to him, as it is, Iſa. xliii. 27. *Thy firſt father hath ſinned*, and thou in him. —This conviction makes a man ſee alſo the *aggravations* of ſin, how much light, and how many mercies he hath ſinned againſt: and alſo the *power* and dominion of ſin, what a ſlave he is thereto, and that the law is ſo far from freeing him therefrom, that it but exaſperates corruption, and ſo is *the ſtrength of ſin.* Now, when the man comes thus to ſee ſin in its nature, kinds, aggravations, and dominion, what can more tend to kill his conceit of righteouſneſs by the law?

3. Through the law the man gets the conviction of *guilt* as well as ſin, that he is bound over to puniſhment according to the law; for guilt is properly an obligation to puniſhment. As by the precept of the law, the man comes to get the knowledge of the intrinſical evil of ſin in its nature; ſo by the penalty of the law, he comes to get the knowledge of the conſequential evil of ſin, as binding him over to hell, death, and damnation; that the curſe of God, the wrath of God, the vengeance of God is the retinue and train of attendants that accompany ſin: and ſo the man is put in fear of hell and damnation. It may be, when he goes to bed, he ſhall never riſe again; when he goes out, he thinks he ſhall never come in again; he is afraid his meat choke him, or the houſe fall above his head, or the earth open and ſwallow him up: ſenſe of wrath haunts him like a ghoſt; the man is put in priſon, and *concluded under ſin*, Gal. iii. 22. Sin is the priſon, the ſinner is the priſoner, God is the Judge, and the curſe of the law is the bond by which the priſoner is tied neck and heel; and from this priſon there is no eſcape, without the mercy of God in Chriſt; who can command this priſoner to come forth? The law cannot do it; it is *weak through the fleſh;* man cannot do it, he is by *nature without ſtrength:* only he, whom God hath given to be a *covenant to the people*, can ſay to the priſoner, *Go forth*, Iſa. xlix. 6, 9. Now, when the man is thus convinced of guilt and wrath by the law, this hath a tendency to make him *dead to the law*, and to kill his confidence in any legal righteouſneſs of his own. O! is there any poor priſoner here, that finds himſelf ſhut up in priſon, under the power of ſin, and under the guilt of ſin, and wrath of God? O! let this give you ſome comfort for the preſent, till God looſe your bands, that this is the way God is taking to make you dead to the law, that you may live to God.

4. Through the law, a man gets the conviction of God's *equity* and *righteouſneſs*, though he ſhould puniſh, and execute law-vengeance; and ſo is made to juſtify God, though he ſhould ſend him to hell. I do not ſay, that the ſinner is made content to be damned; no: that, in ſome reſpect, were to be content to be an enemy to God, and to ſin againſt him for ever; for, the ſtate of the damned includes everlaſting enmity and ſin, and ſo it can never be the thing he is made content with; but the man is brought to a conviction of God's equity and righteouſneſs, though he ſhould ſend him to hell, as an everlaſting puniſhment. "To juſtify God, ſays an eminent divine, is to acknowledge on the one hand, that he does no wrong to the ſinner in the execution of the curſe; and, on the other hand, that he does no wrong to himſelf, or to his own juſtice, when he executes the judgment threatened againſt ſin, but that he does that which is right." O, ſays the ſinner, in this caſe, God does me no wrong, though he ſhould deſtroy me; and he does not wrong his own juſtice, but is a juſt God in ſo doing: yea, I cannot ſee how the credit of his juſtice ſhould be ſalved, and how he ſhould be glorified in his juſtice, if he did not execute judgment upon me, either in myſelf, or in a ſurety for me, becauſe

becauſe I have offended ſuch an infinitely glorious Being; *Againſt thee, thee only have I ſinned, —that thou mighteſt be juſtified when thou ſpeakeſt; and clear when thou judgeſt*, Pſal. li. 4. *Is God unrighteous, that takes vengeance? God forbid*, Rom. iii. 5, 6. The offence done againſt the greateſt of Beings, deſerves the greateſt of puniſhments, even the eternal deſtruction of the creature. It is true, God delights not in the death of a ſinner; *As I live, I have no pleaſure in the death of a ſinner*, Ezek. xviii. 32.; that is, as it is a deſtruction of the creature, though he delights in it, as it is the execution of juſtice; even ſo, the ſinner convinced by the law, though he cannot take pleaſure in this, to think of being deſtroyed, yet there is ſome ſecret kind of juſtifying that which God takes pleaſure in, namely, the execution of juſtice. O how fit is it, that God's juſtice be glorified! And, how juſt is God, in executing infinite judgment upon ſuch an infinite evil as ſin is! And indeed the ſinner would not ſee ſalvation to be free, if he did not ſee damnation to be juſt; but the ſight of this, in the glaſs of the law, and in the light of the Spirit, tends, in a manner, to reconcile the man with the device of ſalvation through Chriſt, whoſe bloody ſacrifice gives juſtice full ſatisfaction. He is now content that God's juſtice be glorified by a ſatisfaction more glorious than that which the damned in hell can give; and ſo it tends to make him dead to the law, and to all other legal pennances, and ſham ſatisfactions, which thoſe, who are ignorant of God's equity and righteouſneſs, are ready fooliſhly to invent.

5. Through the law a man gets the conviction of his own *inexcuſeableneſs*, which is that effect of a legal work of the Spirit, whereby the ſoul is left without excuſe of, or defence for itſelf; *Whatſoever things the law ſaith, it ſaith to them that are under it, that every mouth may be ſtopt, and all the world may become guilty before God*, Rom. iii. 19. Now, the whole ſoul of the man cries out, *Guilty, guilty;* his fig-leaves of excuſes are blown away; his former ſhifts, and cavils, in defence of himſelf, do now evaniſh: he hath not a word to ſpeak in favours of himſelf. What ſaid he formerly? Why, it may be, his heart ſaid, if not his mouth, O I hope there will be no fear of me, Adam's ſin was not mine; original ſin is what I could not help, it came with me to the world; as for my actual ſins, I ſee others guilty of greater; as for my omiſſion of duties, and commiſſion of treſpaſſes, I ſee none but have their faults; and God is a merciful God, and I hope he will not be ſo unjuſt as to damn his own creatures.—Theſe, and the like, ſhifts and excuſes formerly took place; but now he becomes ſpeechleſs; his mouth is ſtopt. They ſee they will but deceive themſelves by theſe miſerable ſhifts, and that they are guilty, guilty, and ſinful wretches, blacker than the very devil, and have not a mouth to open for themſelves; and ſo they die to all conceit of themſelves, and their own righteouſneſs.

6. Through the law the man comes thus to get a conviction of his *abſolute need of the goſpel*, or of the SAVIOUR revealed thereby; being convinced of his ſinful and miſerable ſtate by nature, and humbled under the ſerious conſideration and view of his ſin and miſery, fearing the wrath of God due to him for ſin, beholding the equity of God, though he ſhould caſt him into hell; having his mouth ſtopt, and deſpairing of getting out of this condition, by his own power, or the help of any other creature; he is now convinced of the need of a Saviour: O I periſh, I periſh for ever, unleſs the Law-giver provide a law-biding righteouſneſs for me! Now, the ſoul is ready to cry out, not in Rachel's ſenſe, *Give me child-en, or elſe I die*; but in her phraſe, *O give me Chriſt, or elſe I die; give me a Surety, or elſe I die.* Now, he is content to be for ever indebted to the righteouſneſs of another: and thus the law is the occaſion of bringing a man to Chriſt. And ſo you ſee how it is, that *through the law, they are dead to the law, that they may live unto God.*

III. The *third* thing is to ſpeak of the *believer's* LIFE, which is the fruit of this death; it is a *living unto God*. And now, in ſpeaking hereto, I would, 1. Enquire what *kind* of life it is? 2. What are the *ſcriptural deſignations* of it? 3. What is imported in its being called a *living* in general? 4 What is imported in its being called a *living unto* GOD in particular?

1ſt, What *kind* of life is it that the believer hath in conſequence of his *being dead to the law?* And,

1. It is not a *natural* life, either in a phyſical or moral ſenſe. Natural life, in a *phyſical* ſenſe, is that which we received from Adam by generation; and it is the function of natural faculties, in living, moving, uſing of ſenſe and reaſon; that is a life that is common to all men, who yet may be dead: neither is it a natural life in a *moral* ſenſe, ſuch as heathens may have; the heathens may have common notions of God, and of good and evil, ſo as to render them inexcuſable in their unnatural immoralities, Rom. i. 19, 20. They have a book of nature, both *internal*, in the remainders of the law in their heart, ſo as they *do by nature the things contained in the law*, Rom. ii. 14, 15. and *external*, in God's works of creation and general providence; *The heavens declare the glory of the Lord, and the firmament ſheweth his handy-work*, Pſal. xix. 1. Now, this natural life cannot be the *living to God* here ſpoken of, becauſe this natural life flows only from a natural ſtate, which is a ſtate of death: by nature we are dead, legally dead under condemnation; ſpiritually dead in ſins, wholly corrupt, and the tree being bad, the fruit muſt be bad alſo; a filthy fountain can bring forth nothing but filthy ſtreams.—This natural life does proceed from natural *principles*, and theſe are corrupt; ſuch as the *deſires of the fleſh and of the mind*; *the luſts of the fleſh, the luſt of the eye, and the pride of life.* At beſt their natural life flows from ſelf-love, or love to its own honour, praiſes, profits, or pleaſures: all nature's works are ſelfiſh, however heroic they may be. This natural life is directed by a natural *rule*, ſuch as the light of nature inward, or outward, accompanied with the counſels and examples of naturaliſts; neither does it ever come up to that ſame rule of nature's light, which therefore does condemn them as guilty. This natural life hath only natural *deſigns*, and *ends*; the natural man acts from *ſelf* as his principle, to *ſelf* as his end, aſcribing the glory of all his actions thereunto: thus Herod gave not God the glory of his fine oration, but took the praiſe to himſelf; but he was immediately ſmitten of an angel, and eaten up of worms.—This

natural

natural way of living, it is in a natural *manner*, after the *courſe of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air*, Eph. ii. 2. which is nothing but a *walking in the luſts of the fleſh, fulfilling the deſires of the fleſh and of the mind:* yea, in this natural life, nothing of Chriſt, or of his goſpel, is either in the ſtate, practice, rule, end, or manner of it; nay, they are *without Chriſt, being aliens from the commonwealth of Iſrael, and ſtrangers to the covenants of promiſe; having no hope, and without God*, [or ATHEISTS] *in the world*, Eph. ii. 12.

2. It is not a *legal* life, either of Jewiſh conformity to the ceremonial law, or of perfect conformity to the moral law: It is not that legal life of Jewiſh *conformity* to the *ceremonial law*, or according to the Old Teſtament diſpenſation; for that ceremonial law is abrogated in Chriſt, the ſubſtance of all the old ſhadows; and ſo that Jewiſh life is unprofitable, and vain; yea, it is damnable, and prohibited under the higheſt penalties, Col. iii. 20, 21. And therefore ſays the apoſtle, Gal. v. 2. *If ye be circumciſed*, [or live according to the ceremonial law, or any other law of works, ſo as to expect juſtification thereby,] *Chriſt ſhall profit you nothing.* Neither is this *living to God* that *perfect life of conformity* to the *moral law*, according to the old covenant of works, which required perfect, perſonal, and perpetual obedience, as the condition of life; and threatened death upon the leaſt failure: I ſay, it is not this life either; for man hath become guilty, and forfeited life, and incurred death by Adam's firſt tranſgreſſion; *By one man ſin entered into the world, and death by ſin; and ſo death paſſed upon all men, for that all have ſinned*, Rom. v. 12. Thus we are for ever incapable of that life, which Adam was capable of before the fall. It is alſo impracticable, becauſe man is by nature *without ſtrength*, Rom. v. 6. We have no ſtrength to give that obedience which the covenant of works requires, becauſe we muſt be redeemed from the curſe thereof, and reſtored to the righteouſneſs thereof, before we can be capable to do what it requires. And though Adam's ſin and tranſgreſſion were not imputed to us, as indeed it undoubtedly is, yet ſeeing every adult perſon at leaſt hath *ſinned after the ſimilitude of Adam's tranſgreſſion;* for *no man liveth and ſinneth not;* therefore he can never perform the perfect obedience therein required; and *by the deeds of the law no fleſh can be juſtified.* Beſides, there is no article of the covenant of works, that provided for a remedy in caſe of a breach; but all that the covenant of works doth, is, to promiſe life to perfect obedience in man's own ſtrength, and threatens death in caſe of failure, and ſo leaves the tranſgreſſor thereof under its curſe.—In a word, the life according to that covenant cannot be the life here meant, becauſe that covenant ſpeaks nothing of Chriſt, or of his goſpel, by whom, and by which, only we can now come to this living unto God; and becauſe this living unto God preſuppoſes a being dead to the law, or dead to that covenant, otherwiſe we can never live unto God.

3. It is not a *phariſaical* life of external, legal, but imperfect conformity to the law, and thereby endeavouring to eſtabliſh a righteouſneſs of our own, as the Jews, Rom. ix. 31, 32. and Rom. x. 3. Many reckon an outward moral converſation to be this living unto God, whether in performing the natural duties of civility and moral honeſty, or in an external performance of religious duties, ſuch as prayer, praiſe, reading, hearing, and waiting upon divine worſhip. The church of Laodicea was ſelf-conceited; they thought they *were rich and increaſed with goods;* but, behold the teſtificate that Chriſt gave them, that they were *neither cold nor hot*, ſuch as God would *ſpew out of his mouth;* yea, that they were *wretched, miſerable, blind, and naked:* that is all the teſtimony that he gave them, who looked upon themſelves as rich in legal righteouſneſs, and good works. This phariſaical life may be accompanied with a glorious profeſſion; they may profeſs ſoundneſs in the faith, and diſown all theſe legal and unſound principles, which others may have as their ſtated opinion; they may profeſs that righteouſneſs and juſtification is not by the works of the law, but by the faith of Chriſt, or by the works of Chriſt received by faith alone; they may have a ſound head, but no *ſound heart*, nor a *good conſcience*, nor *faith unfeigned;* for *the end of the commandment is love*, proceeding from theſe, 1 Tim. i. 5. People may be like the toad, that hath a precious ſtone in his head, but hath his belly full of poiſon; they may have a head full of knowledge, and a heart full of enmity; a filthy mud-wall may be garniſhed with fine arras; a rotten ſepulchre may be whitened: they may have much of the matter, and external form of godlineſs, and yet want the power, and internal form thereof; *a name to live, and be dead.* Yea, this phariſaical life may be accompanied with many excellent gifts, and common graces, and high attainments (as well as all viſible church-privileges) as we find ſome apoſtates may have, Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6. Their *underſtanding* may be ſo far enlightened, that they may attain to ſtrange diſcoveries of Chriſt. Balaam was called a *man whoſe eyes were opened*, and that *ſaw the viſions of the Almighty*, Num. xxiv. 2, 3, 4, 15. Their *wills* may be ſo far renewed, as to have a great many good purpoſes, like theſe who reſolved to *ſerve the Lord with all their heart*, Deut. v. 27, 29. Joſh. xxiv. 18, 21. They may be *almoſt perſuaded to be Chriſtians.*—Their *affections* may be greatly raiſed, and enlarged; they may be raiſed to *ſome ſorrow for ſin*, like Judas, and like Eſau, who *ſought the bleſſing with tears;* to *ſome joy*, like the ſtony-ground hearers, who *received the word with joy* and pleaſure, yet had no root; to *ſome delight*, like the Jews, of whom it is ſaid, Iſa. lviii. 2. That *they ſought him daily, and delighted to know his ways;* yea, to *ſome fear* and *reverence*, like theſe enemies that are ſaid to *ſubmit themſelves*, Pſal. lxvi. 3. and even to *ſome extraordinary raptures*, like theſe who are ſaid to *taſte of the heavenly gift*, and to be *partakers of the Holy Ghoſt.* On all which accounts their *life* and converſation may be changed in part. Thus many, *Through the knowledge of God, and of Chriſt, have eſcaped the pollutions of the world*, 2 Pet. ii. 20, 21, 22. The common gifts and graces of the Spirit may warm, ſmooth, and waſh their outward converſation; all this will not amount to this living unto God in the text. Well, what kind of life then is this? We reply,

4. It is a *ſpiritual* life, being the action, motion, and gracious ſaving operation of the Spirit of God in us, *cauſing us to walk in his ſtatutes*, Ezek. xxxvi. 27. It is the life of a ſpiritual man. It is impoſſible for one to have a godly life, whatever to the world he may ſeem to have,

have, till he be a godly perſon, or in a ſpiritual ſtate. A man muſt have a ſtate of union to Chriſt, by the faith of God's operation, ſo that being married with this Huſband, he may *bring forth fruit unto God.* The branch of the old Adam cannot bear good fruit; it is only the true branch, planted in Chriſt by the ſpirit of faith, that bears good fruit, John xv. 4, 5. A man muſt be in a ſtate of *reconciliation* with God, juſtified, pardoned, and indemnified, before God accept of any ſervice off his hand; for *two cannot walk together*, or live together, *unleſs they be agreed.* God accepts no action from an enemy, but his returning to him by faith in Chriſt, and then begins all perſonal acceptance. Men muſt be in a ſtate of *adoption*, before it is poſſible that they can be *followers of God as dear children*; in a ſtate of *renovation*, renewed by the Holy Ghoſt in the ſpirit of our mind. The godly man, that is in caſe for a godly life, is juſt a new creation; even *the workmanſhip of God, created in Chriſt Jeſus unto good works, which God before ordained that he ſhould walk in them.* If the heart be not right with God, a man cannot have a right life, or live unto God.——But I ſhall go on to enquire,

2dly, Into the *ſcriptural deſignations* of this life. To give all the names that it comes under in ſcripture, were too large a taſk: I ſhall only ſingle out ſome of the moſt notable names it gets in ſcripture. It is ſometimes deſigned from GOD, ſometimes from CHRIST, ſometimes from the SPIRIT, and ſometimes from theſe names that import the other ſpecial *qualities* and *properties* of it.

1. Sometimes it is deſigned from GOD; and it is called the *life of God*, Eph. iv. 18. from which all natural men are alienated: this is a wonderful name that it gets, the *life of God*; who can tell what this life of God is? God lives in himſelf, and the believer lives in God; *His life is hid with Chriſt in God*, Col. iii. 3. The beſt we can ſay of it, is, that it begins in grace, and ends in glory; and is wholly of God, and in him.

2. Sometimes it is deſigned from CHRIST; and ſo it is called a *living by faith on the Son of God*, Gal. ii. 20. immediately following our text; where, when the apoſtle would explain what he underſtands by his *living unto God*, he ſays, *Nevertheleſs I live, yet not I, but Chriſt liveth in me.* Chriſt, might he ſay, is the ALPHA and OMEGA of my life, the beginning and the end of it; the author and finiſher of it; Chriſt is the principle of my life, from whom I live; Chriſt is the end of my life, to whom I live; Chriſt is the pattern of my life, according to whoſe example I live; Chriſt is the giver of my life, the maintainer of my life, the reſtorer of my life; after decays, *he reſtores my ſoul*, and makes me to *walk in the paths of righteouſneſs, for his name's ſake:* Chriſt is the food of my life; I would die, if he did not feed me with his fleſh and blood, which is living bread and water to me: Chriſt is the medicine of my life; it is by renewed touches of the hem of his garment, and renewed applications to him, that my ſoul is healed; for, there is *healing under the wings of this Sun of righteouſneſs:* Chriſt is the ALL of my life; *For to me to live is Chriſt*; he is my light, my ſtrength, my righteouſneſs. It is the glory of the believer to acknowledge Chriſt the ALPHA and the OMEGA, and the ALL of his ſpiritual life.

3. Sometimes it is deſigned from the SPIRIT, and ſo it is called a *living in the Spirit*; Gal v. 25. *If we live in the Spirit, let us alſo walk in the Spirit.* It is a living in the *light* and *leading* of the Spirit; *Thy Spirit is good: lead me to the land of uprightneſs.*—It is a living in the *graces* and *fruits* of the Spirit, which are deſcribed, Gal. v. 22. and a bringing forth theſe fruits of the Spirit.—It is a living in the *ſtrength* and *power* of the Spirit, which is therefore called a law; *The law of the Spirit of life, in Chriſt Jeſus, hath made me free from the law of ſin and death.* The power of the Spirit hath the *force* of a law within the man, inſomuch that when he walks in the Spirit, he does not *fulfil the luſts of the fleſh*: he ſets the power of the Spirit againſt the power of ſin.—It is a living in the *comforts* of the Spirit, and joys of the Holy Ghoſt; and when he thus lives, the joy of the Lord is his ſtrength.—It is a walking in the *liberty* of the Spirit; and, *Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.* When a man hath this life, then he hath liberty to hear, read, pray, believe, mourn; and liberty to ſerve the Lord; *Truly I am thy ſervant, thou haſt looſed my bonds.*——In a word, it is a living in the *love* of the Spirit, and in a conſtant dependence on the Spirit.

4. Sometimes it is deſigned from theſe names that import other ſpecial *qualities* and *properties* of it. And here I might bring in a multitude of ſcriptures. It is called a *holy* life; *Be ye holy as I am holy.*—It is called a *humble* life; *Walk humbly with thy God.*—It is deſigned a *heavenly* life; *Our converſation is in heaven.* The man is heavenly in his thoughts, and *ſpiritually-minded*: heavenly in his ſpeech, deſiring to edify theſe that are about him; heavenly in his affections, which are *ſet upon things above*; his deſire and delight being ſet upon heavenly things: heavenly in his hope; *Looking for that bleſſed hope, and glorious appearing of the great God*: heavenly in his trade, trading daily to the heavenly country by faith, prayer, and drawing bills of exchange upon Chriſt, as it were, for all that he ſtands in need of.—It is called an *upright* life; *No good thing will he withhold from him that walketh uprightly.*—It is denominated a *well-ordered* life; *To him that orders his converſation aright, will I ſhew the ſalvation of God.*—It is called a *circumſpect* life; *See that ye walk circumſpectly.*—It is called a *goſpel* life; *Let your converſation be as it becometh the goſpel*; that is, as it becomes a goſpel-ſtate, goſpel-principles, goſpel-rules, goſpel-patterns, goſpel-motives, and goſpel-ends; and, under the influence of goſpel-grace, *Adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour.*——But, omitting all theſe, I only inſtance in one ſcripture, wherein this *living unto God* is deſcribed, in ſuch a manner, as includes all other properties of it; yea, and comprehends all the duties of obedience we are called to; *The grace of God that bringeth ſalvation, hath appeared to all men, teaching us, that denying ungodlineſs, and worldly luſts, we ſhould live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent world*, Tit. ii. 11, 12.; where you ſee, this living unto God comprehends all theſe duties of *piety* towards God, *ſobriety* towards ourſelves, and *righteouſneſs* towards our neighbour, which we are obliged to by the law, as a rule of life and holineſs; and all under the influence of the grace of God, revealed in the goſpel, teaching us theſe things efficaciouſly: for the law teacheth them only *preceptively*; but it is the goſpel that teacheth them

them *effectively; working in us both to will, and to do.* O that we knew this life more than we do!

3*dly*, The *third* thing here, was, What is imported in its being called a *life* in general? Indeed this living to God, is the only life that deſerves the name of life. In *vegetative* life, the trees of the field do excel men; for, from little plants, they turn to ſtately oaks.—In *ſenſitive* life, the beaſts of the field do excel man, for they go beyond him in theſe natural faculties; as the dog in ſmelling, the eagle in ſeeing, the hare in hearing, and other creatures in other ſenſes.—In *rational* life, many heathen philoſophers may excel the Chriſtian. So that it is not the *vegetative* life, whereby plants excel us; nor the *ſenſitive* life, whereby beaſts excel us; nor the *rational* life, which reprobates have as well as we; but the SPIRITUAL *divine life*, that deſerves the name; without which, our life is but a death. However, this ſpiritual life, or living to God, may be called life, becauſe it hath all theſe things in it ſpiritually, which natural life hath in it naturally; as,

1. Life hath *motion* in it; and ſo here, this ſpiritual life imports motion; where-ever the Spirit of life comes, there is a *motion among the dry bones.* Now, there are ſome *duties* he moves in, ſuch as prayer; *Behold he prayeth*, who never prayed to purpoſe before: he moves in the duties of hearing, reading, examination, and mortification.—Now, there are ſome *graces* that move in him; *faith* begins to move, ſaying, *I believe, Lord, help my unbelief: Hope* begins to move, *He is begotten to a new and lively hope: Love* begins to move, may be in ſighs and groans, for want of love. Now he moves, and the *term* he moves *from*, is, ſin, Satan, the world, ſelf, ſelf-righteouſneſs; and the *term* he moves *to*, is, God and Chriſt, and heaven, and heavenly things. So far as this divine life takes place, ſo far all the faculties of the ſoul move towards God; the underſtanding, to ſee him; the will, to ſerve him; the affections, to embrace him: and all the members of the body move towards God; the eye is lift up to heaven in prayer and ſupplication; the ear is open to receive inſtruction; the mouth enlarged to ſing his praiſes; the tongue will be no more the trumpeter of idle communication; the hand and heart will be inſtruments of devotion; the knees will be bowed to the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; the feet will delight to carry the man to the houſe of the Lord: all is in motion for God, ſo far as this life takes place. You may here ſee, by the way, whether you have or want this life, which is a living to God. Though I ſee an image lively repreſenting a man, having eyes, ears, mouth, noſe, hands, feet, yet I know it hath no life in it, becauſe it hath no motion; ſo, if we ſee a profeſſor without a ſuitable practice, we may ſay he is an idol, he is no Chriſtian, but the image of a Chriſtian. It is true, a hypocrite may have all theſe external motions, like a painted puppy, that may, by ſome engine, be made to dance, and move up and down, but from no vital principle of life.

2. Life hath *breath* in it; James ii. 26. *The body without* BREATH *is dead*, as it may be rendered; ſo in this life there is breath: if a man's breath be held in a little while, the perſon cannot live; ſo the believer would die, if he had not breath in a ſpiritual ſenſe. What is the air he breathes in? It is juſt the Spirit of God; *Awake, O north-wind; come, thou ſouth; blow upon my garden, that the ſpices thereof may flow out.* What is the breath that is put within him? It is the Spirit of God: the Holy Ghoſt is that to the believer, that breath is to the body; yea, that the ſoul is to the body, God breathed into Adam the breath of life; and he breathes on the believer, ſaying, *Receive ye the Holy Ghoſt: I will put my Spirit within you.* What lungs does he breathe with? It is faith; we receive the promiſe of the Spirit of faith. And what things does he breathe after? Indeed the earthly man breathes after earthly things, ſaying, *Who will ſhew us any good?* But the heavenly man breatheth after heavenly things; *Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon me.* Many perſons have a ſtinking breath; it hath the ſmell of earth; yea, the ſmell of hell: ſome breathe out blaſphemies and oaths; ſome breathe out cruelty and wrath: but the man that hath this life, and lives unto God, his breath is a ſweet breath; ſo far as he lives unto God, his breath ſmells of heaven, and of God, and of Chriſt. But,

3. Life hath uſually *growth*; even ſo this life is a growing life; *this well of water ſprings up to everlaſting life.* Let a painter draw the figure of grapes never ſo artificially, yet they may be ſeen and diſcerned from natural grapes, becauſe they grow not: thus the painted hypocrite may look well, but never grows. A man that hath this divine life, is uſually growing; if not upwardly in holineſs, yet downwardly in humility; if not ſenſibly in outward fruitfulneſs, yet inſenſibly in inward ſighs and ſobs, becauſe of his unfruitfulneſs; and in pantings of ſoul towards perfection: *He that hath clean hands, waxeth ſtronger and ſtronger.* Indeed a winter-time, or ſeaſon of languiſhing, may put the believer far back, and interrupt the growth; but a ſummer-reviving will make up all again.

4. Life hath *appetite* and *ſenſe*; even ſo this life imports ſpiritual *appetite* and ſpiritual *ſenſe*: there is appetite after ſpiritual food. Many pamper their bodies and ſtarve their ſouls; but he that thus lives, he hath a *hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs*; and *like new-born babes, deſire the ſincere milk of the word, that he may grow thereby.* The doctrine of the goſpel is his life; for, a *man liveth not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.* He hath an appetite after theſe words of grace, and *draws water with joy, out of theſe wells of ſalvation.* Many are the ſecret longings and pantings of the living ſoul, after the living God, who is his life: and as life ſeeks its own preſervation continually, ſo does the living ſoul in the living God, in whom only his life is hid.——There is *ſenſe* alſo; here life is ſenſible of whatſoever is an enemy to it, and reſiſts it; the more life, the more ſenſe; and the more ſenſe, the more reſiſtance: even ſo they that live this life unto God, they feel corruption, and they fight againſt it; *For the Spirit luſts againſt the fleſh, and the fleſh againſt the Spirit*: they groan under the weight of corruption, which they feel, and reckon themſelves wretched on the account thereof; *O wretched man that I am! who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death?* They that have no feeling of ſin, no fighting againſt it, do not look like theſe that have

have this life.—They who have ſpiritual ſenſes, at leaſt who have them exerciſed, they have the *ſeeing eye;* they ſee the evil of ſin; they ſee the beauty of holineſs; they ſee the glory of God, in the face of Jeſus Chriſt; they ſee God in his ordinances; they ſee an internal glory in the external adminiſtration of ordinances, which others not ſeeing, they think very little of theſe things: alſo they ſee God in his providences; in his judgments, they ſee a juſt God; and in mercies, they ſee a merciful God; and themſelves *leſs than the leaſt of all his mercies.*—They have the *hearing ear;* they hear the voice of God in the word, and rod: They *ſmell* the ſavour of his name, which is as *ointment poured forth:* They taſte his goodneſs, and feel his power.——And thus you ſee what may be imported in its being called a *life* in general.

4*thly*, The *fourth* thing was, What is imported in its being called a *living unto God*: what is this *living unto God?* I have ſaid ſeveral things about it already; but this *living unto God*, more particularly, may import theſe four things following,

1. The believer's *living unto God*, imports, his living *ſuitably to the relations* that God ſtands in to him, and he unto God, as being his God in Chriſt Jeſus; and ſo it is a living to him as our *Redeemer*, both by price and power; as theſe that *are not our own, but bought with a price;* and therefore *glorifying the Lord in our ſouls and bodies which are his.*—It is a living to God as our *Head:* God, in Chriſt, is the believer's Head; and ſo to live to him as our Head, is to leave as members of ſuch a Head, drawing ſpiritual virtue, light, life, and comfort from him as the Head.—It is a living to God as our *Husband; Thy Maker is thy husband:* and ſo to live to him in this relation, is to live reverently, lovingly, affectionately, with ſubmiſſion and ſubjection to our Huſband, as becomes the ſpouſe of ſuch a glorious Huſband.—It is a living to God as our heavenly *Father*, depending on him as children on their father; *Wilt thou not from this time call me, My Father, thou art the guide of my youth?* Jer. iii. 4.—It is a living to God as our *Judge, Law-giver*, and *King;* and ſo it is a living as theſe that are accountable to, and as we ſhall anſwer at the tribunal of this impartial *Judge:* it is a ſitting at the feet, and receiving the law from the mouth of this righteous *Law-giver:* and it is a yielding the tribute of praiſe, obedience, and ſubjection to this almighty *King.*—In a word, it is a living to God as the *object* of our *worſhip* and *adoration;* loving him as the *Lord our God, with all our heart, ſoul, mind, and ſtrength.*——Thus, I ſay, to live to God, is to live ſuitably to all theſe relations he ſtands in to us.

2. The believer's *living unto God*, imports, his living *ſuitably* to theſe *privileges* and *favours* that he receives from God. Hath he enlightened us in the knowledge of himſelf? Then, to live to him, is to *walk as children of light*, and not as thoſe that are yet in darkneſs and ignorance.—Hath he *called* us effectually? Then, to live to him, is to *walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called.*—Hath he given us *grace?* Then, to live to him, is to live, not as graceleſs, but as gracious perſons; not as thoſe that are in a ſtate of nature, but in a ſtate of grace.—Hath he *pardoned* our ſins, *juſtified* our perſons, and brought us into *peace* with himſelf? Then, to live to him, is to *ſtand faſt in the liberty wherewith he hath made us free.*—Hath he *renewed* and *ſanctified* us? Then, to live to him, is to live as renewed, and ſanctified perſons, whoſe luſts are mortified, and whoſe ſouls are transformed into the image of God.—Hath he poured in the promiſe into our hearts by the Spirit? Then, to live to him ſuitably thereto, is, having *theſe promiſes, to cleanſe ourſelves from all filthineſs of the fleſh, and of the ſpirit, perfecting holineſs in the fear of God.*—Hath he made us *heirs* of glory? Then, to live to him, is to live as candidates for heaven; as *pilgrims and ſtrangers, abſtaining from fleſhly luſts;* travelling to the other world, having our affections and converſation in heaven.

3. The believer's *living unto God*, imports, his living in *communion with him*, and *comfortable enjoyment of him:* In *communion with him;* in the contemplation of him; *ſanctifying the Lord in our hearts:* in a conſtant affection to him; *having his love ſhed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghoſt:* and in a conſtant dependence on him; receiving all from him by faith, and returning all to him in duty and gratitude.—It is a living in the *comfortable enjoyment of him*, as all our portion and happineſs, all our ſalvation and deſire; renouncing all things in heaven and earth as our portion, but a God in Chriſt alone, ſaying, *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none in all the earth that I deſire beſides thee.*

4. The believer's *living unto God*, imports, his living in *conformity to God;* and indeed, ſo far as we enjoy God, ſo far will we be conform to him. As it will be in *glory, we ſhall be like him*, for, *we ſhall ſee him as he is;* ſo it is in *grace* here: the more the ſoul ſees and enjoys him, the more is he like unto him; *Beholding his glory, we are changed into the ſame image, from glory to glory.* And ſo this *living unto God*, it is a living in conformity to God's *nature;* being *holy as he is holy; perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect.* Is he a perfect God? Then, to live to him, is to *go on to perfection*, Heb. vi. 1.—It is a living in conformity to his *way of living:* God's way of living is a holy, juſt, good, faithful, merciful way; having a general good-will to all, and a ſpecial good-will to ſome: and ſo ought our ways to be.—It is a living in conformity to God's *ends:* God's great end, that he ſets before himſelf, is the glory of his name, the honour of his Son, the advancement of Chriſt's kingdom, the ruin of *Satan*'s kingdom, and in all, the praiſe of his rich and free grace: and ſurely we live to God, when we have theſe ends alſo which are God's ends.—It is a living in conformity to his *law*, as a *rule*, which is the tranſcript of his communicable nature, for our practice; *If ye love me, keep my commandments:* we do not love him, if we do not ſo. They then that live to him, they do, from love as well as conſcience, obey him.——Theſe things might be greatly inlarged: however, thus you ſee, in ſhort, what it is to live unto God. We are telling, and you are hearing, what this life is; but, O that we could live this life, as well as ſpeak and hear of it! Look to the Lord, that he may make you know it to your experience. It is called a *living to God*, 1. Becauſe it hath the *Spirit* of God for the *principle* of it. 2. Becauſe it hath the *word* of God for the *rule* of it. 3. Becauſe it hath the *love* of God for the *motive* of it. And, 4. Becauſe it hath the *glory* of God for the ultimate *end* of it.

IV. The

IV. The *fourth* thing propoſed was, to ſhew the INFLUENCE that this being *dead to the law*, hath upon *living to God*; or the NECESSITY of this *death*, in order to this *life*. Here I might ſhew, 1. That it is neceſſary. 2. Whence it is neceſſary.

1ſt, That it is *neceſſary* that we die to the law, in point of juſtification, before we can live to God in point of ſanctification: beſides what was ſaid upon the *firſt* head, for the confirmation of the doctrine, theſe following conſiderations, or remarks, may diſcover the *neceſſity* of being *dead to the law*, in order to our *living to God*.

1. *Remark*, That a man that is under the law, can *perform no holy act*; he may do ſome things that are *materially* good, but nothing can he do that is *formally* good, or holy; and his work, inſtead of ſanctifying him, does ſtill more and more pollute him; *To the pure all things are pure; but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving, is nothing pure; but even their mind and conſcience is defiled*, Tit. i. 15. He then that is alive to the law, and under the covenant of works, his works can never make him holy, but rather more and more unholy.

2. *Remark*, The man that is under the law, hath *no promiſe of holineſs* or *ſanctification by that law*. The law only promiſes life, upon perfect obedience, in our own perſon; and if true ſanctification may be in one that is under the covenant of works, then we muſt change the articles of the covenant, and promiſes of the covenant of grace, and make ſanctification no promiſe of it: we muſt blot out theſe promiſes, *I will put a new Spirit within you*, and, *I will write my law in your hearts*; and all other promiſes of the like nature, muſt be razed out of the covenant of grace: if one under the covenant of works may attain to ſanctification by his own works, there is no need of this promiſe.

3. *Remark*, That the man that is under the law, hath *no principle of holineſs*. The grand principle of true holineſs, is the Spirit dwelling in the man: now, how does one receive the Spirit of ſanctification? *Is it by the works of the law? No; but by the hearing of faith*, Gal. iii. 2. It is the doctrine of grace, not of works, that makes us partake of this Spirit. It is the new teſtament, or new covenant, that is the *manifeſtation of the Spirit*, 2 Cor. iii. 6. Thereby the Spirit is miniſtred, or conveyed to us, but not by the law. It is the *goſpel* that calls us *effectually to ſanctification*, 2 Theſſ. ii. 13, 14. We received the *promiſe of the Spirit through faith*, and not by the *works of the law*, Gal. iii. 14.

4. *Remark*, That the man that is under the law, is *without Chriſt*, in whom ſanctification only is to be found: they that are ſaints, are *ſaints in Chriſt Jeſus*, as the apoſtle deſigns them; and *ſanctified in Chriſt*: and our implantation into Chriſt, is only from grace, and not from the works of the law; and ſo is our ſanctification only from grace, and only in Chriſt, who *gave himſelf for his church, that he might ſanctify it*, Eph. v. 25.

5. *Remark*, The man that is under the law, is *without ſtrength*, and cannot perform obedience to the law: *the law is weak through the fleſh*, and cannot juſtify him, neither can it ſanctify him. In order to ſanctification, a new creation is neceſſary: the clean heart muſt be created; and the man created unto good works: creating power muſt be put forth; and creation is a work of God. We muſt therefore make a God of our works, and deify them, and endow them with a creating power, if we think, by the works of the law, to be ſanctified; or aſcribe ſuch efficacy to them, as to work true ſanctification in us. No man, then, that is under the law, or covenant of works, by giving himſelf to all holy duties and actions, and exerciſing himſelf in them, can come to attain true holineſs, or to be truly ſanctified.

6. *Remark*, That the man that is under the *power of the law*, is under the *power of ſin*. Whence is it, that the believer is freed from the power and dominion of ſin? It is becauſe he is *under grace*, and not *under the law*, Rom. vi. 14. Shewing us, that theſe that are under the law, are under the power and dominion of ſin. How ſo? Even upon the account of all the reaſons already aſſigned; and not only ſo, but becauſe *the law is the ſtrength of ſin*, 1 Cor. xv. 56. Particularly as it irritates corruption, ſtrengthening and ſtirring it up; *Sin taking occaſion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiſcence*. Sin, by occaſion of the reſiſting command, brake out the more fiercely. Hence the law is only the occaſion, and ſin dwelling in us the cauſe; as the ſhining of the ſun is the occaſion, why a dung-hill ſends forth its filthy ſavour, it is the corruption and putrification therein that is the cauſe; ſo here, the light of the law ſhining, and diſcovering ſin and duty, is the occaſion of ſin's irritation and increaſe, but corruption itſelf is the cauſe. Well, ſo it is, that a man being under the law, is under the power of ſin: how then can he live unto God, while under the law? or, how can ſanctification take place while he is alive to the law, or not dead thereto?—Theſe things may make it evident, I think, that it is neceſſary that a man be dead to the law, and brought from under it, before he can have true ſanctification, or live unto God.

2dly, Whence it is neceſſary, that a man be dead to the law in point of juſtification, in order to his living to God in point of ſanctification: Theſe particulars already mentioned, afford ſo many reaſons of the neceſſity thereof: yet ſome things more may be ſaid, for the further clearing of this point, namely, The *influence*, that *dying to the law*, hath upon our *living unto God*. Here two queſtions occur, 1. What influence *living* TO *the law*, hath upon a man's *living* IN *ſin*. 2. What influence a man's *dying* TO *the law*, hath upon his *dying* TO *ſin*, and *living* UNTO *God*.

(1.) What influence a man's *living* TO *the law*, or being alive to the law, hath upon his *living* IN *ſin*. This is a ſtrange doctrine, ſome may think; but it is as true as ſtrange, that the law, and our works of obedience to the law, while we are under it, is the cauſe of deſtruction, inſtead of ſalvation, Rom. ix. 31, 32. There you ſee it deſtroyed the whole Jewiſh nation; *Iſrael miſſed righteouſneſs, becauſe they ſought it by the works of the law*. Now, a man's being alive to the law, hath influence upon his living in ſin, and ſo upon his deſtruction, in the following ways,

1. Becauſe hereby he becomes *hardened in ſin* and *ſecurity*, while he thinks he hath ſome good work to bear him out, Prov. vii. 14. What made the filthy whore there, impudent and hardened

hardened in her sins? Why? *I have peace-offerings with me; this day I have paid my vows.* Thus the Pharisees, for a pretence, made long prayers; and hereupon were hardened in their sinful courses, fearless of wrath: why? I have done so and so.

2. Hereby they are *kept from Christ*, who only *saves from sin.* The works of the law step in betwixt them and Christ, and the man takes Christ's bargain off his hand, promising the same that Christ promised, even obedience to the law: *I delight to do thy will*, says Christ; nay, I will do it myself, says the man that is under the law: he makes himself his own saviour. What! will not God accept of my good and honest endeavours? This is what he sets up on Christ's throne; and if Christ be pulled down from his throne, will it be sufficient that we set up an honest prince in his room? They have some things to say for themselves, which, they hope, will bring them off before God. Thus they reject Christ, *the Lamb of God, which takes away the sins of the world;* and how can they but live unto sin, whatever they may think of themselves?

3. Hereby their *pride* and *boasting* is fostered, Rom. iv. 4. *To him that worketh, is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt:* and the man expects his due for his work which he glories in; for, *boasting is not excluded by the law of works*, Rom. iii. 27. and therefore the man is loath to part with his own righteousness, which is by the law: because of his pride, he will not stoop to live upon another, while he can shift for himself. Self-love will not suffer a man to think the worst of himself, so long as he is alive to the law: nay, I hope I have a good heart to God, and I will do something that will please God; and so it is no little thing will bring him to *submit to the righteousness of God*, Rom. x. 3. Thus the law fosters his pride, and sure the proud man was never a holy man. But,

4. Hereby sin is *strengthened* and *encreased*, as I said before: the *motions of sin are by the law*, Rom. vii. 5. *The law entered, that sin might abound*, Rom. v. 20. Not only as to the knowledge of it, which is by the law, but as to the actual out-breaking of it from the heart; like a river being bounded and dammed up by the law, it swells and breaks out the more violently. The wicked nature of man, being reproved, swells and rises like a snake brought to the fire.

5. Hereby the man becomes *desperate;* for the law says, There is no hope without a perfect obedience; and the man having wearied himself in doing nothing answerable to what the law requires, comes at last, perhaps, to see there is no hope, and so he dies in despair; I mean, he dies in sin, saying, There is no hope; and therefore after idols I will go: he flies away from God as Adam did.

6. Hereby he becomes *slavish* also; the fear, torment, and wrath, which the law brings along with it, when the penalty of it is seen, weakens the man's hands; and these lying like heavy loads upon the soul, it is thereby fettered and bound in prison, hence said to be *held in the law; that being dead wherein we were held*, says the apostle. The man is held, and shut up in the prison of the law, and so out of case for service while his bands are not loosed; or at best his service is *slavish*, and not *free:* the law holds him in prison, he cannot serve God freely. The free Spirit of the gospel is what the world cannot receive, while under the law.—Thus you may see what influence *living to the law* may have upon men's *living in sin*, so as they cannot *live unto God.*

(2.) What influence a man's *dying* TO *the law* hath upon his *living* UNTO *God*, or upon holiness and sanctification? To this we reply, It hath especially a twofold influence, both a *physical* and *moral* influence. And,

[1.] It hath a *physical* influence upon a man's sanctification, in regard that a man that is dead to the law, is *married to Christ*, Rom. vii. 4.; and so necessarily the man must be holy, being disjoined from the law, and joined to the Lord Jesus, who hath satisfied the precept of the law by his death: and in him, not only have they thus a full discharge of all the demands and commands of the law; but also, by the implantation and inhabitation of his Spirit, are created to a conformity to the image of God; and they cannot but live unto God. For,

1. In Christ they have *life:* though, while under the law, they were *dead in sin and trespasses;* now, in Christ, *they have life, and have it more abundantly:* they are quickened by virtue of their union to this everlasting Head; *because he lives, they live also.* A dead person can produce no living action, but Christ is the life of his people: *He that hath the Son hath life;* and then, and never till then, is he in case for spiritual action and living unto God: *He that hath not the Son of God, hath not life.* Vain men fancy within themselves, that they have not lost their life, and so they think they can do something that will please God, and profit themselves for justification and sanctification, even before ever they think of coming to Christ; but we may as well expect, that a dead corps will rise of itself, and do the natural actions of life, as to expect that you should rise, and act spiritually, before you be in Christ. The natural conscience indeed may be roused a little, and prevailed with to set about this and that duty; but there is no living unto God, till you get Christ: in him the believer hath life, even in his Head; as a man cannot live without his head; but, being joined to this new head, and disjoined from the law, he cannot but live.

2. In Christ, his new Head and Husband, he hath *light* as well as *life:* as you know, the eye is in the head, so the believer's eye is in Christ his light, whereby he sees sin and duty; sees to work, so as he may live to God. The man that is under the law, he is in the dark, and cannot see to work the works of holiness, which is a living unto God. He is blinded with self-conceit; he sees not the vanity of his old covenant obedience; and he sees not the way of the new covenant gospel-obedience, till he get the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ, who is *the light of the world; a light to lighten the Gentiles:* by whose light the believer sees how to walk in a way well-pleasing to God.

3. In Christ, his new Head, he hath *strength:* the man that is under the law, joined to it as his head, he hath no *strength* for his work, and the law gives him none; and so he cannot live to God: but the believer can say, *In the Lord have I righteousness and strength:* where-

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as others have no ſtrength to produce ſpiritual actions; ſin domineers over them, and they have no ability to ſhake off the yoke of ſin, their ſtrength being but weakneſs. The believer hath ſtrength in his head; *all things are poſſible to them that believe: they can do all things through Chriſt ſtrengthening them: they can overleap a wall, and break bows of ſteel in pieces.* O believer! *be ſtrong in the grace that is in Chriſt.* O it is ſtrange, the grace that is in him, is in thee; as the life that is in the heart, is in the toe, the foot, the utmoſt members! There is a communication of vital ſtrength and influences from the heart and head to all the members: the believer's grace is in Chriſt; and the grace that is in Chriſt is in the believer. Here is a myſtery to the world, but yet this myſtery lies wrapt up in that word, *Be ſtrong in the grace that is in Chriſt Jeſus.* If the grace that is in Chriſt, were not in the believer alſo, according to the meaſure of the communication, how could he be ſtrong in the grace that is in Chriſt? *My grace ſhall be ſufficient for thee, and my ſtrength ſhall be perfect in thy weakneſs.*

4. In Chriſt, his new Head, he hath *liberty:* under the law the man is under bondage, and ſevere bondage to the command of perfect obedience, upon pain of death and damnation; and ſo under bondage to the curſe of the law, and fear of God's everlaſting wrath; and thereby he can do nothing; he hath neither heart nor hand to ſerve God; he is bound neck and heel: but in Chriſt he hath *liberty; If the Son make you free, you are free indeed:* free from ſervice; *Truly I am thy ſervant, thou haſt looſed my bands.* Now, he *walks at liberty;* yea, *runs the way of God's commandments, when he doth enlarge his heart.* This is the glorious liberty of the children of God begun in time, whereby they are put in caſe to live unto God.—Now, he is at liberty to ſerve *chearfully*, being delivered from the hands of all his enemies, to *ſerve him without fear, in holineſs and righteouſneſs, before* God, *all the days of his life.*—Now he is at liberty to ſerve *ſpiritually;* the Spirit of Chriſt being put within him, and *cauſing him to walk in God's ſtatutes.* Now he is at liberty to ſerve *hopefully;* knowing that *his labour ſhall not be in vain in the Lord:* though, while under the law, his labour was but vain labour.—Now, he is at liberty to ſerve *acceptably;* being *accepted in the Beloved*, Eph. i. 6.; that is, not only for his ſake; for there is much more in it, he being our Head, and we members of his body; and he, as our Head, having performed perfect obedience to the *precept* of the law, and given complete ſatisfaction to the *penalty* of the law; the Head having done it, the whole body is reputed as having done it; and ſo we are accepted in him; his *doing* is ours, becauſe we are in him, as our Head, accepted in the Beloved; our perſons are accepted in him, and next our performances and duties. O what ſweet liberty is here! what a ſweet foundation for ſpiritual and acceptable ſervice and living unto God! But this leads me next to ſhew,

[2.] That it hath a *moral* influence upon ſanctification; a man's being dead to the law, diſjoined from it, and joined to Chriſt, hath not only a *phyſical*, but alſo a *moral* influence; in regard that hereby he is conſtrained ſweetly to live unto God; *The love of Chriſt conſtraineth us*, 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. If we have not love at the root of our actions, love to a God in Chriſt, we are but empty vines, that bring forth fruit to ourſelves; it is but *ſelf-love*, which is not fruit unto God, or living unto him. The *natural* way of man's thinking is, we ſhould ſerve God, that he may ſave us; but the *goſpel* way is, he ſaves us, that we may ſerve him. What made Paul ſay, *Being dead to the law, I live unto God?* Why? in the next verſe he enlarges on it, *I live to him, who loved me, and gave himſelf for me.* Be perſuaded, man, woman, of this; or elſe, as the Lord lives, you ſhall die in a deluſion; that if you have not love to God, you have not a ſpark of holineſs, though you ſhould pray all your days, and work never ſo hard: *I will circumciſe their hearts to love me*, is the promiſe; and this love is the heart and life of religious duties. Now, you cannot have love, unleſs you ſee ſomewhat more or leſs of his love to you: we are naturally enemies to God, though we cannot get one of a thouſand that will take with it: they think they have a love to God. God forbid, ſay they, that we ſhould be enemies; nay, but I tell you, in the name of God, whether you will hear it or not, that as you are enemies by nature, and born with a dagger of enmity in your heart and hand againſt God; ſo, till you get ſomewhat of the knowledge of God, as *in Chriſt reconciling the world to himſelf*, this enmity will never be killed. Now, I ſay, it is the believer in Chriſt, who, being dead to the law, and joined to the Lord, hath this love; and this love conſtrains him, ſo that he *brings forth fruit unto God, and lives unto him*, Rom. vii. 3.; being *dead to the law*, and *married to Chriſt*, he *brings forth fruit unto God.* The believer hath ſufficient encouragement to make him live unto God; he ſees Chriſt hath ſatisfied divine juſtice, fulfilled all the righteouſneſs of the law, that he hath done that which is impreſtible, or unperformable by us; and when by faith he beholds this, he is encouraged to ſerve God. Hence, ſays the pſalmiſt, *There is mercy with thee, that thou mayeſt be feared.* Might he not have ſaid, There is *majeſty* with thee, that thou mayeſt be feared? The matter is, the *majeſty* of God would put the ſinner to flee from God, as Adam did, when he heard his voice in the garden; but his *mercy* makes us fear and love him, ſerve and obey him; *Then they ſhall fear the Lord and his goodneſs*, ſays the prophet, Hoſ. iii. 5. If a man hath no faith at all of God's goodneſs, no hope of his favour in Chriſt, where is his purity and holineſs? Nay, it is *he that hath this hope, that purifies himſelf, as he is pure.* I know not what experience you have, Sirs, but ſome of us know, that when our ſouls are moſt comforted and enlarged with the faith of God's favour through Chriſt, and with the hope of his goodneſs, then we have moſt heart to duties; and when through unbelief we have harſh thoughts of God, as an angry judge, then we have no heart to duties and religious exerciſes: and I perſuade myſelf, this is the experience of the ſaints in all ages.

But that this moral influence, which dying to the law, or covenant of works, hath upon living to God, or holineſs and ſanctification, may be further evident: let us conſider, how the law to the believer, having now loſt its legal or old covenant-form, and being put into a goſpel-form, and changed from the law of works into a covenant of grace, or the law

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in the hand of Chriſt; how, I ſay, every part of it now conſtrains the believer to obedience and ſanctification, in a moſt loving manner. The goſpel-law, or the law of grace, that now he is under, is a chariot paved with love. The law, in the hand of Chriſt, hath now another face, even a ſmiling face, in all the commands, promiſes, threatenings, and in the whole form thereof.

(1.) The *commands* of the law, in the hand of Chriſt, have loſt their old covenant-form, and are full of love. The command of the law of works is, *Do, and Live*; but in the hand of Chriſt, it is, *Live, and Do:* the command of the law of works, is, *Do*, or elſe *be damned;* but the law in the hand of Chriſt is, I have delivered thee from hell, *therefore* DO: the command of the law of works is, *Do in thy own ſtrength;* but the law in the hand of Chriſt is, *I am thy ſtrength; My ſtrength ſhall be perfected in thy weakneſs*, therefore *Do*. The command is materially the ſame, but the *form* is different: the command of the law of works is, *Do perfectly*, that you may have eternal life; but now, in the hand of Chriſt, the form is, I have given thee eternal life in me, and by my doing; and therefore do as perfectly as you can, through my grace, till you come to a ſtate of perfection. The command, I ſay, is the ſame *materially;* for I do not join with theſe, who inſinuate, as if here leſs obedience were required than under the law of works: though leſs be accepted in theſe who have a perfect obedience in their Head, yet no leſs is required, though not in the old covenant-form. And as the command is *materially* the ſame, ſo the authority enjoining obedience is *originally* the ſame, yet vaſtly diſtinct; in that the command of the law is the command of God *out* of Chriſt, an abſolute God and judge; but now, under grace, it is the command of a God *in* Chriſt, a Father in him: and ſure I am, that the authority of a commanding God is not leſſened, or loſt, that the command is now in the hand of Chriſt: Chriſt is God, co-equal and co-eſſential with the Father; and as God's authority to judge is not loſt, or leſſened, in that *all judgment is committed to the Son;* ſo his authority to command, is not loſt or leſſened, in that the law is in the hand of Chriſt: nay, it is not leſſened, but it is ſweetened, and made amiable, lovely, and deſirable to the believer, conſtraining him to obedience, in that the law is in the hand of his Head, his Lord, and his God. The end that he hath in commanding, and that they ſhould have in obeying, is now diſtinct, and different from what took place under the law of works: the end that he hath in commanding, is not to lay a heavy yoke of duties on their necks, to be born by their own ſtrength; nor, though performed by his ſtrength, to be a righteouſneſs for their juſtification, or a condition of life; but only to ſhew his *holy nature*, that he will not have a lawleſs people; to ſhew his *great grace*, that condeſcends to ſeek our ſervice; to *grace* and *beautify* his people, their chief happineſs conſiſting in a conformity to his will; that his people may get *good*, which is neceſſarily joined to duties, and connected thereto by the promiſes; that he may have ſomething to *commend* his people for; and that he may, without a compliment, have ground to ſay, *Well done, good and faithful ſervants:* and that by them he may have matter of *condemnation* againſt the reſt of the world, who walk not in his commandments. In a word, he commands, that his ſovereignty may be kept up, and the ſenſe thereof, in the hearts of his people; and that, by his word of command, he may, as many times he doth, convey ſtrength to do what he calls to; and in caſe of ſhortcoming, to force them out of themſelves, under a ſenſe of weakneſs and ſinfulneſs, in to Jeſus Chriſt, *the end of the law*, for ſtrength to ſanctify, as well as for righteouſneſs to juſtify. For theſe, and ſuch like ends, does the Lord command.—And then the end that they ſhould have in obeying, is not to ſatisfy conſcience, nor to ſatisfy juſtice, to purchaſe heaven, or the like; but to glorify God, to edify our neighbour, and to teſtify our gratitude to God, and Chriſt, that hath delivered us from the law, as a covenant.

(2.) The *promiſes* of the law, in the hand of Chriſt, have loſt their old covenant-form, and are full of love. The *law of works* promiſes eternal life, as a reward of our doing, or obedience; and here the reward is a reward of *debt:* but the *law*, in the hand of Chriſt, promiſes a reward of *grace* to goſpel-obedience, eſpecially as it is an evidence of union to him, in whom all *the promiſes are Yea and Amen.* Eternal life was promiſed in the covenant of redemption to Chriſt, upon his perfect obedience, who paid that debt, when he came under the law of works for us; and now, eternal life being obtained to the believer in Chriſt, as the reward of Chriſt's obedience to the death, there is no other reward of debt that now takes place. Rewards of grace are now come in faſhion, and this encourages the believer to live unto God, that in the way of goſpel-obedience, there is a gracious promiſe of ſweet communion and fellowſhip with God; *He that loves me, and keeps my commandments; I will love him, and manifeſt myſelf to him, and my Father will love him*, John xiv. 21. Here there is a fatherly promiſe of God's favour and familiarity with him; yea, there is a promiſe of heaven itſelf, in the way of goſpel-obedience, and ſanctification: a right to heaven is purchaſed by the blood of Chriſt, and the believer is the young heir of glory; but his poſſeſſion of heaven is ſuſpended till he be fit for it; till he do ſome buſineſs for his Father, and *be made meet for the inheritance of the ſaints in light.* This is ſweet encouragement the believer hath, to live unto God.

(3.) The *threatenings* of the law, in the hand of Chriſt, have loſt their old covenant-form, quality, and nature, and are now turned to threatenings out of love: there is no ſuch threatening now to the believer, *If thou do not, thou ſhalt die.* The penalty of the law of works is condemnation and eternal death, which the believer hath no cauſe to fear, being *dead to the law*; no more than a living wife needs to fear the threatening of her dead huſband: *There is no condemnation to them that are in Chriſt. He that believes in him, ſhall never die.* Believers are under no threatening of eternal wrath, becauſe under grace. It is a high expreſſion that bleſſed Rutherford hath to this purpoſe, "The "goſpel, ſays he, forbids nothing under pain of "damnation to a juſtified believer, more than "to Jeſus Chriſt." Though the ſins of believers deſerve hell, and the intrinſic demerit of ſin is ſtill the ſame; [yea, I think the ſins of believers being againſt ſo much love, and ſo many mercies, they deſerve a thouſand hells, where

where others deſerve one;] yet, being *dead to the law*, he hath no vindictive wrath to fear, the blood of Chriſt having quenched the fire of God's wrath. Rom. v. 9. *While we were ſinners, Chriſt died for us; and much more now being juſtified by his blood, we are ſaved from wrath through him;* and ſure he is not to fear that which God calls him to believe he is ſaved from: his ſlaviſh fear, therefore, is from unbelief, and weakens his hands in duties. But now the law, in the hand of Chriſt, hath threatenings and puniſhments, but they are fatherly and loving; a ſhort view of them you may read, Pſal. lxxxix. 30,—35. *If his children forſake my law, and walk not in my judgments: if they break my ſtatutes, and keep not my commandments; then will I viſit their tranſgreſſion with the rod, and their iniquities with ſtripes; nevertheleſs my loving-kindneſs will I not utterly take from him, nor ſuffer my faithfulneſs to fail: my covenant will I not break.—Once have I ſworn by my holineſs, that I will not lie unto David;* q. d. Though I will not ſend them to hell, nor deprive them of heaven, no more than I will break my great oath to my eternal Son; yet, like a father, I will chaſtiſe them; I will correct them for their faults; I will ſqueeze them in the mortar of affliction, and preſs out the corrupt juice of old Adam that is in them; yea, I will hide my face; I will deny them that communion and fellowſhip with me that ſometimes they had, and give them terror inſtead of comfort, and bitterneſs inſtead of ſweetneſs. A filial fear of theſe fatherly chaſtiſements will do more to influence the believer to holineſs, and obedience, than all the unbelieving fears of hell and wrath can do: fear, leſt he want that ſweetneſs of God's preſence, which ſometimes he hath had, will make him ſay to his ſins and luſts, as the fig-tree in Jotham's parable, *Shall I leave my ſweetneſs, and be king over you?* O! ſhall I leave all the ſweetneſs that I have enjoyed with God, and take on with baſe luſts and idols! And hence, when the believer hath gone aſide and backſliden, what is it that brings him back to God? He finds the Lord breaking him many ways, and he reflects, through grace, upon this ſometimes, O! how am I deprived of theſe ſweet interviews that once I enjoyed! Therefore, *I will go and return to my firſt Husband, for then it was better with me than now.* Yea, his freedom from law-threatenings, and being only under fatherly correction, when he ſees this, it breaks his heart, and melts it more than all the fire of hell could do. The ſlaviſh fear of vindictive wrath diſcourages him, weakens his hands in duties, and makes him run away from God; but the filial fear of God's fatherly wrath, which is kindly, is a motive of love that encourages him to his duty. Which of theſe motives think you will work up the believer to moſt obedience? *viz.* This legal one, *O! my wrathful Judge will ſend me to hell, if I do ſo and ſo;* or this goſpel one; *O! my God and Father in Chriſt Jeſus will be angry at me, and deny me his love-tokens?* I ſuppoſe the former works upon enmity, and raiſes it, but this works upon love, and inflames it. But here a queſtion may be moved, Ought not the believer to live unto God, even without reſpect to the threatening of fatherly chaſtiſement and puniſhment? To this we anſwer, No doubt, the more perfect his obedience be, the better and the more like to the obedience of the ſaints in heaven, where no chaſtiſement is feared; but while he is here, he carries a body of ſin about him, and needs to be ſtirred up by fatherly correction. He ſhould indeed ſerve God purely out of love and reſpect to the command itſelf, and becauſe he commands it: but thus the matter ſtands, that as on the one hand, being perfect in his Head, Chriſt Jeſus, it is not his duty to have reſpect to what the law of works either promiſes, or threatens; ſo on the other hand, being imperfect in himſelf while here, it is his duty to have reſpect to what the law, in the hand of Chriſt, promiſes and threatens; which indeed is a loving reſpect, tending to advance holineſs.

(4.) The whole *form* of the law as a covenant of works, being thus altered, the law in the hand of Chriſt, is all love, all grace, and ſo influences the man to ſanctification. The man that is under the covenant of grace, he hath a principle of grace within him, ſtriving againſt ſin; he hath the Spirit of grace within him, cauſing him to walk in God's ſtatutes; he hath the promiſe of grace to be ſufficient for him: if ſin prevail, and pollute him, he hath daily acceſs to the fountain open for ſin and for uncleanneſs, to which he runs; if his backſlidings encreaſe, he hath Chriſt engaged by promiſe to heal his backſlidings: which, when he views by faith, it doth not encourage him to ſin, if he be in right exerciſe of his ſenſes, but draws him to his duty, like a cord of love, and brings him back to his kind Lord. In a word, being *dead to the law, he is married to Chriſt*, who is *like a green fir-tree*, from *whom all his fruit is found*.——Thus you ſee what *influence* a man's being *dead to the law*, hath upon his *living unto God*. And ſo much for the fourth head propoſed.

V. The *fifth* thing in the method, was the *application*, which we ſhall eſſay in an uſe of *information, examination, lamentation,* and *exhortation.*

Is it ſo, that being *dead to the law*, in point of *juſtification*, is *neceſſary*, in order to *living unto God* in point of *ſanctification?* Then for *information*, hence we may ſee,

1. That the doctrine of the goſpel is not a doctrine of *licentiouſneſs*, or *carnal liberty*, however it be reproached in the world: and if the preachers thereof, who would bring off people from the law of works, and from their ſelf-righteouſneſs, be reproached, as if they were enemies to holineſs, I will venture to ſay it with confidence, in a place where falſhood ſhould be an abomination, that it is a *vile ſlander:* for whatever ſinful weakneſs and imperfection may cleave to the preaching or practice of theſe, who deſire to publiſh this goſpel-doctrine, yet the Lord God of gods is witneſs; yea, the Lord God of gods knows, and all Iſrael may know, and all whoſe eyes God enlightens ſhall know, that this doctrine of *dying to the law, in point of juſtification*, is a *doctrine according to godlineſs*, and the very means of holineſs itſelf, and of living unto God: if this be *Antinomianiſm*, I am content to be called an *Antinomian* *. But, we ſee who are indeed *Antinomians*,

* The riſe and ground of this injurious accuſation may be ſeen, in ſome meaſure, accounted for, Serm. IV. page 70. Serm. VII. page 129. at the foot.——The Baxterian *legal ſcheme* of doctrine had, by this time, ſpread itſelf abroad, and diffuſed its dangerous and pernicious

Antinomians, and enemies to the law and holineſs; even all theſe who oppoſe this doctrine, whereby we give the law all the honour imaginable; *Do we make void the law through faith? God forbid; yea, we eſtabliſh the law:* as a *covenant* we eſtabliſh it, while we preach Chriſt as *our righteouſneſs* for *juſtification*; and as a *rule of holineſs* we eſtabliſh it, while we preach Chriſt as *our ſtrength* for *ſanctification* of heart and life: and they that do not thus honour the law, do but diſgrace and diſhonour it, and are truly *Antinomians*, *i. e.* enemies to the law. And if this be called a *new ſcheme* of doctrine by way of reproach, though I confeſs it is a *new covenant ſcheme*, in oppoſition to that of the *old*, yet I will grant to no man that it is *new* otherwiſe; ſeeing it is not only as old as Paul here, but as old as the firſt publication of the covenant of grace in paradiſe; ſo that we ſee where it is, that the reproach of a *new ſcheme* ſhould be lodged. I would have reproachers to mind what Paul ſays of this doctrine of his, Gal. i. 8. *If we, or an angel from heaven preach another goſpel, let him be accurſed.* Here is the doom of ſuch as preach another goſpel, which yet, ſays the apoſtle, is not another; but there are ſome that trouble the Lord's people, and would pervert the goſpel of Chriſt. To be *dead to the law*, is not to turn a looſe *Antinomian*; it is to *live unto God.*

2. Hence ſee the reaſon why the *devil* oppoſes the *doctrine of grace* ſo much, and cares not though the law, as a *covenant*, be never ſo much preached up, becauſe it is the goſpel-doctrine that tends only to true godlineſs, while the law and legal doctrine tends to keep men ſtrangers to the life of God. The devil cares not how much you be in duties, providing you keep off from Chriſt, who is *the end of the law for righteouſneſs*; for then he knows you would be holy alſo: but he is an unholy devil; and therefore he oppoſes the goſpel, and its doctrine. The devil knows that he hath faſt hold of you, ſo long as you cleave to the law; but that he hath loſt you, if once you have laid hold on Chriſt: for, if once you get Chriſt for *juſtification*, as having fulfilled the righteouſneſs of the law *for you*, then you will alſo get him for *ſanctification*, to fulfil the righteouſneſs of the law *in you*. The devil knows, that though, in ſeeming holineſs, you ſhould be transformed to an angel of light, like himſelf, yet you ly under the heavy vengeance of God, and curſe of the law, and under the power of ſin too, ſo long as you are under the law. Therefore,

3. Hence ſee the reaſon why the moſt part of the world are *living to ſin, living to ſelf, living to the world, living to the devil;* Why? becauſe they are not *dead to the law.* They only that are dead to the law, do live unto God; and ſurely then, they that are alive to the law, and not dead to it, they are living to the devil. No man that is alive to the law, can be a holy man: nay, what is the reaſon of all the ungodlineſs and unrighteouſneſs, all the profanity and wickedneſs of the generation! Why? people are ſtrangers to Chriſt, and are ſtill under the power, the irritating power of the law, which is *the ſtrength of ſin.* The world is crying up *morality*, as if the preachers of Chriſt and his righteouſneſs were enemies to the moral law, as a rule of holineſs; and behold, in the righteous judgment of God, there was never a generation left to greater *immoralities* than the preſent; a juſt puniſhment of mens deſpiſing Chriſt, and his law-biding righteouſneſs, through the faith whereof only true holineſs, and conformity to the law can be attained. O when the believer comes to ſee by faith, that he hath nothing to do with the law as a covenant, this makes him delight in the law of God, as a rule of holineſs; when he ſees he hath not a farthing of debt to pay, either to the precept, or threatening of the law as a covenant, becauſe that debt was paid by Chriſt's obedience to the death, this makes him find himſelf under the moſt grateful obligations to ſerve the Lord, in obedience to his law, as a rule; yea, under greater obligation than ever Adam was in the ſtate of innocency: but the reſt of the world, that are utter ſtrangers to this freedom, they are in bondage to the law, and ſo in bondage to their luſts.

4. Hence we may ſee the neceſſity of a *law-work of conviction* and *humiliation*, and how much of it is neceſſary, even as much as will render the perſon *dead to the law*, that he may *live unto God.* So much conviction is neceſſary, as will unbottom the man from the covenant of works, and make him diſclaim his own righteouſneſs, and make him cry out, *Unclean, unclean; guilty, guilty;* that thus his ſelf-confidence may be killed, and he, *through the law, may be dead to the law*, and may come under the covert of the blood of the Lamb, under the covert of the righteouſneſs of Chriſt for juſtification; that, being *dead to the law, he may live unto God.* While men are without this law-work, rendering them dead to the law, they are at beſt but eſtabliſhing a righteouſneſs of their own, which will keep them out of heaven, as much as their

pernicious influence and direful effects, not only among the clergy in England, but had even crept into many of the pulpits in Scotland: This paved the way for exhibiting the charge of *Antinomianiſm* againſt all thoſe miniſters who adhered to and aſſiduouſly taught the *doctrine of grace;* eſpecially thoſe who maintained the *abſolute freedom of the covenant of grace;* the *unlimited grant that God had made of Chriſt, and ſalvation with him to mankind;* the *neceſſity of becoming dead to the law as a covenant*, and *of faith to apprehend and appropriate Chriſt, and his righteouſneſs for ſalvation.* And though the *Marrow of Modern Divinity* was deſigned to vindicate the *doctrine of grace*, in oppoſition to Antinomian and Neonomian extremes; yet they who befriended this book, eſpecially ſuch who appeared in defence thereof, when attacked and condemned by the Aſſembly, were accuſed with being *Antinomians*, enemies to the law and holineſs, friends to licentiouſneſs, and branded with introducing and venting *new ſchemes* of divinity. Though it is a notour fact, and well known to many, yet alive, that there were not greater friends, in the whole church, to *evangelical doctrine*, than thoſe who befriended the *Marrow Doctrine:* They were juſtly allowed to be firſt-rate Divines. It is true, indeed, they were enemies to *all previous legal qualifications, to be performed by us, in order to fit and qualify us for coming to, and cloſing with Chriſt.* And with reſpect to our worthy Author, it is obvious to every intelligent perſon, who either heard him preach, or have carefully peruſed his writings, that he had a peculiar talent in ſtating the difference between the law and the goſpel, and put a reſpectable honour upon, and paid a due regard to each of them; and that he conſtantly urged conformity to the law, as a rule of life; and aſſiduouſly inculcate the practice of holineſs.—— Any who incline to ſee the juſtneſs of theſe obſervations, and have a complete view of this affair, may attain it, by peruſing the Marrow itſelf, with attention, and carefully adverting to the judicious Mr. Boſton's notes upon it; and the Brethren's Anſwers to the Aſſembly's Queries; and an Act concerning the Doctrine of Grace, by the Aſſociate Preſbytery: In which Act, the Doctrine of Grace, as revealed in the holy Scriptures, and ſet forth in our Standards, is aſſerted and vindicated from the errors vented againſt it; the Marrow doctrine freed from the charge of Antinomianiſm, laid againſt it by the Aſſembly, and ſhewn to be founded on the Scriptures, conſiſtent with our Standards, and agreeable to the ſentiments of other approved Divines; and the Act of Aſſembly condemning the Marrow, evinced to be injurious to the Doctrine of Grace, contrary to many paſſages of Scripture, and diametrically oppoſite to our Standards.

ſins

ſins will do. And this makes the gate of heaven indeed to be a *ſtrait gate*, becauſe *many ſeek to enter in*, in a legal way, *and ſhall not be able*, Luke xiii. 24.; and this makes the way broad that leads unto hell, ſo broad, that it lets in all that are out of Chriſt, both the openly wicked, and the ſelf-righteous. There is but one way to heaven, and that is Chriſt: but there are many ways to hell; eſpecially theſe two; ſome walk in a more cleanly way of ſelf-righteouſneſs, and others in a more dirty way of open wickedneſs; but both meet together at the end of the way, and that is the centre of damnation. O what need, then, is there of a law-work, to convince the wicked of their ſins, and the ſelf-righteous of their need of a better righteouſneſs, that, being *dead to the law, they may live unto God.*

5. Hence we may ſee whence it is, that believers live ſo *little to God*, and are *ſo untender*, and *unholy:* it flows from this, that they are not *perfectly dead to the law*, nor *perfectly freed from it:* much of a legal ſpirit remains; and the more that takes place, the more unholy they are. Though they have ſhaken off, in converſion, the authority of the covenant of works as a prince, which is a great matter; yet they are many times under the authority thereof as an uſurper, and by reaſon of the old legal nature, which is but partly renewed in time: and hence the voice of the law ſpeaks many times in the believer's conſcience, and he is terrified at the voice of it; for it preſumes to curſe him, and to deſire him to do, or elſe be damned; and ſo it weakens his hands, and makes him think God is a hard maſter: whereas the voice of the goſpel in his conſcience, is the ſtill, calm voice, ſweetly intreating, and alluring the heart to its obedience, and conveying a ſecret ſtrength to obey, and making the ſoul delight in the Lord's way; *Draw me, we will run after thee*, Song i. 3. But what ſhould the believer do, when the law comes to charge him, and command him to obey upon pain of death, or to curſe him for his diſobedience? Why, he may even ſay in the words of Luther, who, upon the point of juſtification, was as ſound as any ſince his day; "O law, Chriſt is "my righteouſneſs, my treaſure, and my "work; I confeſs, O law, that I am neither "godly nor righteous, but yet this I am ſure "of, that he is godly and righteous for me." His obedience anſwered both the godlineſs required in the firſt table of the law, and the righteouſneſs required in the ſecond table. The believer may ſay to the law, O law, I am dead to thee, and married to another Huſband, even Jeſus Chriſt; and therefore, cannot bring forth any children, any fruit, any acts of obedience to thy threatening commands: but, behold, I run to my ſweet Huſband, who hath ſugared and ſweetened the law, with a goſpel-dreſs and form; which, giving ſtrength to obey, and ſhewing the believer's freedom from the wrath of God, "encourages the believer, "as our Confeſſion of Faith ſpeaks, being free "from the curſe of the moral law, and de-"livered from everlaſting damnation, to yield "obedience to God;" not out of ſlaviſh fear, but a child-like love, and a willing mind.

6. Hence ſee how it is, that *holineſs is neceſſary to ſalvation;* why, it is the very life of the juſtified man, being *dead to the law, to live unto God:* he is not holy that he may be juſtified, but juſtified that he may be holy. I do not here meddle with the queſtion, *Whether regeneration or juſtification be firſt in order of nature?* For I am ſpeaking mainly, not of habitual holineſs, or the firſt habit of grace, but of actual holineſs; whether internal in the exerciſe of grace, or external in the performance of duty. Thus holineſs, I ſay, is neceſſary to ſalvation, as being the native, neceſſary, and inſeparable fruit of juſtification, or dying to the law: it is the juſtified man's way of living, or walking towards heaven. They that turn the grace of God into wantonneſs, they pervert the right end of grace, which *teacheth us to deny ungodlineſs, and worldly luſts:* and they that give up with the law as a rule of holineſs, becauſe they are, or think they are delivered from the law, as a covenant of works, they pervert the very end of that freedom, which is, that they may *live unto God:* and no doubt, many among believers themſelves are in danger of this ſin: for I know no ſin, but a believer is liable to it, if he be left to himſelf; and becauſe many of them abuſe grace, therefore God keeps the law-ſpur at their ſide; for it is with many, as with dull lazy horſes, ſo long as the ſpur is in their ſide, they ride quickly; but when that is removed, they become dull and heavy, and are ready to ſtand ſtill: ſo, while the law exacted rigid obedience, and threatened damnation and hell, they were diligent, and durſt not neglect a duty; they were tender in their walk: but now, being delivered from this ſpur, that was daily pricking their ſides, and ſeeing that Chriſt hath ſatisfied the law, which now can neither juſtify, nor condemn them, they imagine they have no more to fear; and ſo they ſin the more, and live ſecurely, inſtead of *living ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly.* This is a *turning the grace of God into wantonneſs*, and a perverting of the very end of grace: and if any child of God here be guilty, remember, that your heavenly Father will not let you paſs unpuniſhed; though he pardon your ſins, yet he will *take vengeance on your inventions.* It is to prevent this wantonneſs in ſome, that the ſpur is kept long in their ſide; and they are kept many days and years, perhaps, under many legal ſhakings, fears, doubts, and tremblings, attaining to very little of any chearful goſpel-obedience; for the law cannot work that. And this leads me to another inference.

7. Hence, from this doctrine, we may ſee, that the law can neither *juſtify*, nor *ſanctify a ſinner:* it cannot *juſtify* him, for he muſt be *dead* to it in point of juſtification; it cannot *ſanctify* him, for he never *lives unto God*, till he be *dead to the law.* On the one hand, *By the deeds of the law, no fleſh living can be juſtified:* Why? Becauſe you are *dead in ſin by nature*, and can do nothing that the law requires, in the way that it requires it; and though you would do any thing, yet your doing is imperfect; but the law requires perfection: yea, though you could obey the law perfectly for the time to come, that will not make amends for former faults; there muſt be ſatisfaction: yea, ſuppoſe it were poſſible that you could do all this, and that from your cradle to your grave you never ſinned; and were as free from original ſin, and had as good a nature as ever Pelagius thought any had, and ſtrength to keep the law, and did actually keep it perfectly

fectly from your youth up; yet the law of works is broken in Adam; in him we all ſinned, and that one ſin is enough to damn the whole world, and would do ſo, if Chriſt did not redeem from the guilt thereof.—On the other hand, the law cannot *ſanctify* any, it works wrath; and *when the commandment comes, ſin revives:* it is *the miniſtration of death* every way, as I ſaid before. But here a queſtion may be moved, *If the law can neither juſtify nor ſanctify, what uſe is it for?* We may anſwer, It is for many noble uſes, both to the regenerate and unregenerate. To the *unregenerate*, it is of uſe to *convince him of ſin;* to *break up the fallow-ground of the heart;* to be *a ſchoolmaſter to lead to Chriſt*, by convincing him of his abſolute need of a Surety, and of his undone ſtate without Chriſt.—And to the *regenerate*, it is of uſe to make them highly eſteem Chriſt, whoſe righteouſneſs anſwers the law in its commands and threatenings both; and it ſerves to give him a daily conviction of ſin, that the man may more and more prize the pardon of ſin, and ſeek daily in to the Lord, for pardoning and ſanctifying grace: alſo to let him ſee the intrinſical demerit of ſin, while he ſees hell threatened againſt it in that covenant; and thereupon may fear to offend that God, who *is a conſuming fire*, but rather that he may *worſhip him with reverence and godly fear;* not with a ſlaviſh fear, that he ſhall be ſent to hell, which is impoſſible; that is not his duty; he may have the over-awing fear and apprehenſion of hell, but ſhould not have a ſlaviſh fear of it: this fear of it he ſhould not have, but the faith of it he ought to have, and many times needs to have it, to terrify him from ſin, which, of its own nature, leads to deſtruction; as a man that is bound with a great chain to a ſtake on the top of a high tower, though he cannot but know, that by reaſon of the chain, he is ſure enough; yet when he looks over the battlement, and ſees the dreadful precipice, it ſcars him from going near the edge of the battlement. It is certain, that believers, when they know not that they are under grace, may unwarrantably apply to themſelves the ſentence of the law; unwarrantably, I ſay, becauſe *there is no condemnation to them that are in Chriſt;* yet God may, for holy ends, ſuffer his conſcience to be troubled with the fear of condemnation, that being humbled, he may make the more uſe of Chriſt for righteouſneſs and ſtrength. In a word, the commands of the law, not formally as a covenant, but materially as a rule of life, ſerve to be an active directory for his walk; and *whoever walks according to this rule, peace be on them, and on all the Iſrael of God.*——Thus it is of manifold uſe, though it can neither juſtify nor ſanctify, which only the grace of the goſpel can do.

8. Hence ſee what a *myſtery to the world religion is*, and the *difference betwixt God's judgment and man's:* man thinks, to be *dead to the law*, is the way to *live in ſin;* but God's word tells us, That to be *dead to the law*, is the way to *live unto God.* Why? here is a myſtery, a holy riddle; and are we decrying holineſs, when we preach in this apoſtolical ſtrain? God forbid; nay, we declare unto you, in the name of God, that the way to be truly holy, is to quit with your falſe legal holineſs; the way to be truly righteous, is to quit your legal righteouſneſs; yea, I tell you, man, that even in point of ſanctification, *Except your righteouſneſs exceed the righteouſneſs of the Scribes and Phariſees, you ſhall not enter into the kingdom of God:* and you know, they made *long prayers*, they *faſted twice a week*, and *gave alms of all that they poſſeſt;* and ſome of them were, *touching the law, blameleſs*, and could ſay, *All theſe things have I done from my youth up;* and yet I ſay, Unleſs your holineſs exceed their holineſs, you ſhall never enter into the kingdom of God: and, till your unrighteous righteouſneſs, and unholy holineſs, be cried down in your heart, and the perfect righteouſneſs of Chriſt cried up, true holineſs you ſhall never have. Was Chriſt a friend to publicans and harlots? or, did he approve of their ſins, when he ſaid, to theſe Phariſees, *Publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God before you?* Mat. xxi. 31. O beware of ſuch blaſphemous thoughts of a holy Jeſus; nay, ſo far from that, that we may hence gather his abhorrence of their ſins; only he would give us to know, that if ſin keep them out of heaven, as much and more will ſelf-righteouſneſs keep out the Phariſee, who muſt be rid of his righteouſneſs, as well as his ſins, before he get there. O but religion is a myſtery! to be *dead to the law*, in order to *live unto God.*

9. Hence we may ſee the *miſerable ſtate of theſe that are alive*, and the *happy ſtate of theſe that are dead to the law.* Their ſtate is miſerable who are alive to the law; for, though they have a *name to live*, yet *they are dead;* legally dead, bound over to the wrath of God, and under the curſe of the law; ſpiritually dead in ſin, having no holineſs, no godlineſs, acceptable to God through Jeſus Chriſt. If they be any way awakened, and ſeeking life by the law, and the works thereof, what a madneſs is this *to ſeek the living among the dead?* or to ſeek help where it cannot be had? God hath laid all our help upon Chriſt; and it is impoſſible to find juſtification or ſanctification any where elſe.—But on the other hand, their ſtate is happy who are dead to the law; for though they be dead, yet they live; they live a life of juſtification, and a life of ſanctification thereupon; being *dead to the law, they live unto God.* O what a mercy is it, if God hath awakened your conſciences, convinced you of ſin and ſelf-righteouſneſs, and brought you off from the law! You ſee your extreme guilt, vileneſs, baſeneſs, and wickedneſs; and it may be are groaning under the ſenſe thereof: but God may have a glorious deſign in this, to bring you more and more off from the law, and from any confidence in the fleſh, that you may build upon a better foundation, and be married to a better huſband, even to Jeſus Chriſt, that *you may bring forth fruit unto God.*

10. Hence ſee the *malignity* of a *legal ſpirit:* if we muſt be *dead to the law*, that we may *live unto God;* then a legal ſpirit and temper muſt be a wicked and ungodly ſpirit: it is an *ignorant* ſpirit; if they were not *ignorant of God's righteouſneſs*, they would never *eſtabliſh a righteouſneſs of their own:* but they are ignorant of the perfection of his law, the terror of his juſtice, the ſeverity of his tribunal, and of their own natural weakneſs and wickedneſs, otherwiſe they would not dare to make any thing a ground of their acceptance with God, except the blood and righteouſneſs of his Son.

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It is a *proud* ſpirit, that will not let *grace* be exalted, but puts *ſelf* in the throne of Chriſt, and his righteouſneſs. It is a *filthy* and *abominable* ſpirit, and pollutes the man more and more; and God abhors it, as that which contradicts his moſt glorious plot. And it is a *damning* ſpirit, if it be not removed; *For the wicked ſhall be turned into hell:* and this man continues wicked ſtill, even under the pretence of holineſs; he is wicked and ungodly ſtill, for he lives to himſelf, but not to God; for it is only theſe that are *dead to the law*, who *live unto God.*

Uſe *ſecond*, Of *examination.* Try your *ſtate* then, man, woman: you ſhould try after, as well as before a communion: and there are two things you ſhould try here, 1. Whether you be *dead to the law* in point of *juſtification?* 2. Whether you be *living to the law*, or *living to God*, in point of *ſanctification?* Two as neceſſary points as are in all divinity, and ſuch as are of the utmoſt concern in time, and through eternity.

Firſt, Try whether you be *dead to the law* in point of *juſtification.* I might here give you marks of theſe that are *alive to the law*, and then marks of theſe that are *dead to the law*; but ſeeing theſe will coincide, I join them together. I ſhall not multiply evidences; but you may try by theſe following.

1. The man that is *dead to the law*, hath got a *ſight of himſelf* in the glaſs of the law, and of his *natural legal temper.* Some think they have a good heart to God, and they can do ſo and ſo; but the believer dead to the law, he ſees his heart the worſt piece in or about him; and that he cannot believe, he cannot repent, he cannot mortify ſin; corruption is like the giants of Anak. The man ſees he is vile, with Job: *Behold I am vile!* Vile in every duty; in praying, communicating; *Behold I am vile!* He ſees himſelf, and he ſees his own legal temper.—The man that is *alive to the law*, never ſees his *legal temper*, nor his ſtrong inclination to ſelf-righteouſneſs: the believer ſees and finds ſomething of this, even after he is made a goſpel-ſaint; but the Legaliſts never ſee it. What, ſay they, would you have us Papiſts? Bleſſed be God, we are better inſtructed; we have no merit, our righteouſneſs is rags: and yet, after all, there is a ſecret truſting in their own righteouſneſs. Hath it ever been one exerciſe to you, how to be rid of your ſins? and another, how to be rid of your righteouſneſs?

2. The man that is *dead to the law*, is *tired* and *wearied* out of it. Perhaps he hath been convinced of ſin; and thereupon falling to the law, to this and the other duty; O I deſerve hell, for my ſin is great: well, he endeavours to make a mends, and to find peace; and ſo he runs to prayer and preaching, thinking he will get peace; he repents, he reſolves; and wo to the man that finds all his peace there without going further.—But, behold, the man whom God ſhews mercy to, he goes on in theſe duties, but finds no peace, no reſt, no ſatisfaction; he is tired out of it: his ſoul ſinks with diſcouragement, and languiſhes and hangs down the head: and God thus unbottoms the man of himſelf.—Whereas, he that is *alive to the law*, he that takes up his reſt and comfort in his duty; he hath the fear of wrath to come, and then he runs to duty; the duty gives him eaſe; he is relieved; all is well: as a huſband comforts his diſtreſſed wife, ſo obedience to the law comforts him, and the law heals him: it is the law that throws him down, and it is the law that raiſes him up again. But the man that is *dead to the law*, though the law terrify, yet it is not the law that ſatisfies him again.

3. The man that is *dead to the law*, he knows what it is to *act from Chriſt, as his principle*; and *to him*, as his end: he knows what it is to perform duty from a borrowed ſtrength. The Legaliſt may indeed ſpeak ſoundly, and ſay, He can do nothing of himſelf without Chriſt; and yet he reads, prays, preaches, hears, communicates, and does all, as if he had the power in his own hand. Let a man have never ſuch an orthodox head, if he be not a believer in Chriſt, he is an Arminian and Pelagian all over: he knows not his own weakneſs; he looks not up for immediate influences. And as ſelf is his principle, ſo to ſelf he acts as his end: as he that is joined to Chriſt brings forth children, or fruit unto Chriſt; ſo he that is joined to the law, brings forth children to the law: he does duty, it may be, to huſh the clamours of conſcience, and give it eaſe; to keep himſelf out of hell, for he hath no will to be damned; and for the like ends.—The believer being *dead to the law*, cannot perform duty, but by borrowed ſtrength; he can do nothing till a gale of the Spirit come; he cannot bring forth children, till the Spirit of God beget them in his ſoul: no, no; every act of grace flows from a creating power: and when he acts, the love of Chriſt eſpecially, and deſire of communion and fellowſhip with God, conſtrains him; and the glory of God in Chriſt is his great end.

4. The believer, that is *dead to the law*, he hath *vilifying thoughts* of all he does: the Legaliſt over-values his duties; *Wherefore have we faſted, and thou haſt not ſeen? Wherefore have we prayed, and thou haſt not heard?* They challenge God as if he were unjuſt, for not giving them what they merit: *God, I thank thee*, ſaid the Phariſee, *I am not as other men:* it was like a proud boaſting of what he had done. But let the believer ſpend days and nights in prayer, and that with much liberty and inlargement, yet the iſſue of the work is, *O my righteouſneſs is filthy rags, a menſtruous cloth!* Wo to me, if I be not found in Chriſt, for my beſt duties deſerve damnation; I find my praying, my worſhipping, my communicating full of atheiſm, unbelief, formality, and hypocriſy.—The Legaliſt over-rates his duties: he thinks more of what he hath done, than of what Chriſt hath done; and more of his praying on earth than of Chriſt's pleading in heaven: he thinks more of his tears than of Chriſt's blood; he is proud of his humility, and never duly humbled.

5. The believer that is *dead to the law*, ſo far as he is dead thereto, his *complaints* and his *comforts* move in a *goſpel-channel.* The Legaliſt will complain more for want of holineſs, than for want of Chriſt: ſeeing he hath taken up with a ſelf-righteouſneſs, it is his all, it is his happineſs, it is his huſband, it is his God; and when it is wanting, he cannot but be troubled. But the language of the man dead to the law is, O for Chriſt! O for a day of power! O to be wrapt up in the covenant of grace,

grace, to get an omnipotent power, determining me to comply with the gospel-offer! His comforts move in a gospel-channel.—But the Legalist finds comfort in law-works, even in all his extremities in time: In the prospect of trouble, what comforts him? Even this, that he hath done many good duties; he wraps up himself in a garment of his own weaving. Upon challenges of conscience, what comforts him, and gives him peace? He even covers himself with the same robe. In the prospect of judgment, what comforts him, and gives him peace? Why, he hopes God will be merciful to him, because he hath had a good profession, and said many good prayers, and done many good duties. But, O sorry peacemaker. The only thing that gives a believer peace and ease, in these cases, is the law-biding righteousness of Christ, under which he desires to shroud himself: he flees to the blood of Christ, saying, O I am undone, unless my soul be wrapt up in the mantle of Christ's perfect righteousness; *I desire to be found in him:* upon this righteousness of Jesus do I venture my soul; I have no shift but this.—The Legalist, I said, comforts himself in all his extremities with the law, till the extremity come, and then he finds himself cheated, miserably deceived: and hence, O what a mercy is it, that the Lord drains a man of his legal comfort, that he may unhinge him off the law, and off his self-confidence! Oft-times, when God is bringing home his elect, he makes all the common work they had before to disappear. It may be they had a profession, were morally serious, they had zeal, prayed with life, heard with affection; but behold now, all the streams of common influences are dried up; the poor soul finds he cannot pray, he cannot shed a tear, though he should be cast into hell; yea, he cannot think a right thought, though it should bring him to heaven; nay, he finds his heart hardened like a devil, and his mind bemisted with the darkness of hell. Why? this is all in love to induce him to relinquish himself, abandon the law, as a covenant, and flee in unto and embrace the dear Son of God.

6. The believer that is *dead to the law*, is content to have his *righteousness tried*, and *compared with the perfect law*. As Christ is the *Lord his righteousness*, and this he knows is sufficient to answer all the demands and commands of the law, and he is not ashamed of this righteousness, but glories in it; so, as to the works of holiness, whatever shortcoming he is sensible of, yet he is content to be tried with the clearest light. Let omniscience descend, and make a critical search; *Search me, O God, and see if there be any wicked way in me; and lead me in the way everlasting.* I do not love to die with a lie in my right-hand; let all the inward corners of my heart be laid open before me: I am satisfied to know if I have a lawful husband, or not; if Christ be my husband, or not: he is content to be tried.—But the Legalist, the man that is *alive to the law*, a searching sermon is uneasy to him; a gospel-sermon he cannot abide; a narrow trial he cannot endure; he thinks that the minister is too impartial to cast us all to hell; he hath stolen goods, and therefore dreads the light. Yea,

7. The man that is *dead to the law* he hath got a *soul-humbling sight*, and *saving view* of the *glory of Christ's righteousness*, that made him quit with all his legal rags as lots and dung; even as the stars evanish out of sight when the sun arises. O hath Christ's glory ever shined into your heart, man, woman, and made you see thousands of worlds to be nothing to him; thousands of righteousnesses of men and angels, to be nothing to his? Have you seen an utter impossibility of obtaining God's favour by any righteousness of yours? and such a sure ground of obtaining God's favour here, that your soul hath been made to renounce all other ways of acceptance; and to see, admire, and rejoice in the glory of this way; and to approve it, as a device worthy of God, and suitable to you? And have you found rest here? It is good.—The legalist is a stranger to such saving views of the glory of Christ, and his righteousness; having never got *the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ.*

8. The man that is *dead to the law*, is in love with the *doctrine of the gospel; How beautiful upon the mountains, to them, are the feet of these that preach the glad tidings of peace!* Whereas he that is *alive to the law*, he always suspects the doctrine of the gospel, as if it were leading him away from the law, and away from holiness. Here is a mark that may well find out a pharisaic generation; they suspect the doctrine of Christ, and his righteousness, as if it were a doctrine tending to licentiousness, and opposition to the law; a sign they never felt the power of the gospel upon their hearts, otherwise they would feel the revelation of the righteousness of Christ, from faith to faith, to be *the power of God to their salvation*; they would find, that never are they so much disposed to holy duties, as when they are under the influences of the spirit of faith, discovering the glory of Christ, and his righteousness, to them. But an ignorant generation, that knows not the power and virtue of the gospel, still suspects it as contrary to the law: this was the false charge against Christ of old, and against Stephen, Acts vi. 18. and against Paul, from which therefore he many times vindicates himself. See Acts xviii. 13.

9. The man that is *dead to the law*, can, in some measure, put a difference betwixt *Christ* and a *frame:* whereas, he that is *alive to the law*, can never distinguish between Christ in duty, and a frame in duty. I suppose this is a hard question, *How shall we know the difference betwixt Christ in duty, and a frame in duty?* I will answer, in a word, The man that hath only a frame in duty, and not Christ in it, he is only pleased with his frame, his tears, his enlargements; he makes that his righteousness; he is content with that, and exalted with that; and now thinks all is well: but he that hath Christ in duty, and not a frame only, he is ready to cry, O I would have Christ! tears will not do the turn; my own heart hath deceived me a thousand times; I find my tears do not wash me, my frame does not sanctify me: this flowing of affection may be but a natural thing; it will not do; it is Christ I want; nothing but his blood can wash me: nothing but this blood can pacify his conscience; nothing but some views of Christ can give him solid quiet. A sweet frame may indeed be the chariot, in which Christ may ride towards the soul; but the gospel believer is not so much taken up with the chariot, as with the glorious King that rides in it.

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10. The man that is *dead to the law*, is *dead to ſin*: Sin hath not dominion over him; becauſe he is *not under the law, but under grace*. The views of Chriſt are of a transforming nature; *Beholding his glory, we are changed*. It is true, here the believer fears moſt of all, becauſe of his ſhortcoming in point of ſanctification, and mortification of ſin, becauſe he finds iniquity prevailing againſt him: and how is it true, that ſin hath not dominion over him, he not being *under the law, but under grace?* Why, ſin hath no righteous nor lawful dominion over believers; the firſt huſband is dead, and they are married to Chriſt the ſecond huſband; and therefore they are not debtors to the fleſh; though ſtill the fleſh craves them to obey it, yet it hath no juſt power ſo to do. Sin's juſt authority is exauctorated; and Chriſt, by ſatisfying the law, *which is the ſtrength of ſin*, hath *condemned ſin in the fleſh*. Sin hath a ſort of right to reign in wicked men, and theſe that are under the law; but none in the believer, who is delivered from the law, which is *the ſtrength of ſin*. Though it actually exerciſe authority, yet it is but an uſurped authority: as ſin hath no power nor authority to condemn the ſoul that is in Chriſt; ſo it hath no authority to reign; and *ſin ſhall never reign unto death* over them, Rom. v. 21. And the believer that hath caſt off the authority of ſin, as being no more his lawful king, may complain of its unjuſt oppreſſion, and plead with a righteous God, that the power of ſin may be more and more broken, and ſo it ſhall be.—But the *legaliſt*, that is *alive to the law*, in regard that he is both under the commanding and condemning power of the law; he is alſo under the commanding and condemning power of ſin. The law commands him, and he obeys it as his lord; and ſin commands him alſo, and he obeys it too, and makes his legal duties a plaiſter to cure his conſcience of his ſin: like Lewis XI. of France, who would ſwear a bloody oath, and for a pardon kiſs a crucifix; and ſwear again, and then kiſs it over again; and ſo runs the round. However, the believer is delivered from the power of the law, and the power of ſin too; having caſt off the law as a covenant, and finding nothing ſatisfy and ſtill his conſcience, but the blood and righteouſneſs of Chriſt, that ſatisfies divine juſtice; as in this way he finds reſt from the curſe of the law, ſo alſo ſome reſt from the rule and dominion of ſin: the faith of God's love in Chriſt, does purify his heart, and kill his natural enmity, inſomuch that he can atteſt, to his ſweet experience, that the faith of the love of God in Chriſt, is ſo far from leading him to licentiouſneſs of life, or encouraging lazineſs, that he finds it the hotteſt fire in the world, to melt his heart for ſin; and the ſtrongeſt cord in the world, to bind him to duty, while the love of God is ſhed abroad upon him.—Try by theſe things if you be *dead to the law*.——In a word, if you be dead to the law, then you will be *living unto God; I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God*. He is led ſweetly to the law as a rule of life.

But here it may be enquired, *How ſhall I know if I be living unto God?* This leads me to the other part of the examination.

Secondly, Try if you be *living unto God*. Having enlarged ſo much upon the preceeding head, and having offered ſeveral particulars upon this head already in the doctrinal part, which may be improved by way of trial; therefore I will offer you but theſe two marks of this.

1. If you be *living unto God*, then the *Spirit of God* will be the *chief principle* of your life; *The water that I ſhall give him, ſhall be in him a well of water ſpringing up to everlaſting life*, John iv. 14. The man hath not only the *water* within him, the graces of the Spirit; but the *well* itſelf, the Spirit himſelf dwelling in him. And as we know a ſpring-well, by ſeeing the water bullering and bubbling up; ſo a man may know he hath the Spirit, by the ſpringing and flowing out of this water now and then. None have a life unto God, but theſe that have the Spirit of Chriſt in them, cauſing them to *walk in his ſtatutes*; for, where the Spirit of life is, he is a Spirit of faith, and a Spirit of love; a Spirit of faith, leading the man to the *obedience of faith*; which ſets him to duty from the authority of God, and in a dependence upon Chriſt, both as his ſtrength for aſſiſtance, and as his righteouſneſs for acceptance, in the performance thereof: a Spirit of love, leading the man to the obedience of love; and this obedience makes a man ſerve like a ſon, and not like a ſlave; and makes the ſervice ſweet and pleaſant; *This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments, and his commandments are not grievous*, 1 John v. 3. This makes the believer's obedience, while he lives unto God, a myſtery to the world, that reckon it a burden to keep the Sabbath, a burden to wait on ordinances, a burden to perform duties: Why? on the other hand, when the believer is mounted up in the chariot of love, indeed it is a burden to him to leave off duty; it is a burden to him to leave ordinances; it is a burden to him to think of going back to the world again: Why? the matter is, he is about the obedience of love, which makes the commands of God not grievous, but delicious. Try your obedience, and living to God, by this principle of it, the Spirit of God as a Spirit of faith and love, leading to the obedience of faith and love.

2. If you be *living unto God*, then the *glory of God* will be the *chief end* of your life. But here a queſtion may be propounded, *How ſhall I know, if the glory of God be my chief end in my obedience?* Indeed it is a material queſtion. I will juſt offer a thought upon it. If the glory of God be the chief end of your life, then you will have a continual conflict with *ſelf*, and how to get ſelf-ends mortified. O! I ſee *ſelf* creeping in upon me, in all my preaching, praying, communicating; how ſhall I get this enemy killed? Here *the fleſh luſts againſt the Spirit, and the Spirit againſt the fleſh, and theſe two are contrary the one to the other*. The believer finds a war here againſt ſelf, as his greateſt enemy; and it is his joy, and the triumph of his heart, when he gets *ſelf* daſhed to the ground, and debaſed; when *the loftineſs thereof is brought down, and the Lord alone ſhall be exalted in him*.——The man that hath God's glory as his chief end, he can ſometimes trample even his *own happineſs under his feet*, in a manner, when it comes in competition with the glory of God and Chriſt: the glory of God is of more worth than ten thouſand heavens; and therefore the ſelf-denied believer, before the divine glory ſhould ſink, would venture his all, though he had a thouſand lives: *Blot me out of thy book*, ſays Moſes;

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Let me be accurſed, ſays Paul; and all was, that God might be glorified, that Chriſt might be magnified, and have a glorious name in the world. There were ſome things indeed extraordinary in that meaſure that Moſes and Paul attained to; but there may be ſomething like it, I think, though in a ſmaller meaſure, that believers may know in their experience: O! whatever ſhould become of me, let thy name be glorified; let Chriſt have a numerous train to praiſe him to eternity; let me decreaſe, and him increaſe; let him be exalted, though I ſhould be for ever abaſed: and if it might contribute to his mounting of the throne, let me be even the foot-ſtool on which he may aſcend.—The man prefers *Chriſt's public intereſt* before his *own private intereſt; If I forget thee, O Jeruſalem, let my right-hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth: if I prefer not Jeruſalem above my chief joy*, Pſal. cxxxvii. 5, 6. In a word, the man that lives to God, as his chief end, he *acts in duties*, becauſe God is thereby *honoured* and *glorified;* and he hates ſin in himſelf and others, becauſe God is thereby diſhonoured.

Finally, If you be *living unto God*, your *life*, your *obedience*, will be influenced by the *grace* of the *new covenant*, being dead to the law, or to the old covenant: But of this I have ſpoken at large, on the fourth general head.——Thus much for the *trial*.

The *third uſe* may be for *lamentation* over, together with *reproof* of, all legaliſts, both doctrinal and practical.

1ſt, As to the *doctrinal legaliſts*, we might bewail, and refute the *legal ſchemes* that take place in the world. I name theſe two.

1. The *Popiſh ſcheme*, denying the imputation of Chriſt's righteouſneſs. The imputed righteouſneſs of Chriſt is blaſphemed by the church of Rome; they call it *an affectitious, imaginary air; a putative righteouſneſs;* contrary to the very ſtrain of our apoſtle in his epiſtles. They talk of a twofold juſtification: Their *firſt* juſtification is that, whereby an unjuſtified man becomes juſtified, or a wicked man becomes godly; where they confound juſtification and ſanctification. The *ſecond* is that, whereby a man, already righteous, becomes more and more righteous, more and more holy. We know no juſtification, but one juſtification by faith, in the day of cloſing with Chriſt; laying hold upon the blood of Chriſt, *Whom God hath ſet forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteouſneſs for the remiſſion of ſins that are paſt, through the forbearance of God. To declare, I ſay, his righteouſneſs: that he might be juſt, and the juſtifier of him which believeth in Jeſus*, Rom. iii. 25, 26. It is a complete righteouſneſs, we have it all at once; and it is not within us, but without us: it is in Chriſt *inherently*, but in us *imputatively*. They tell us, that we are not juſtified by the works of the ceremonial law, but by the works of the moral law: they tell us, that we are not juſtified by perfect obedience, but by imperfect; and, by an *acceptilation*, it is looked on by God as perfect: and, in a word, they acquaint us, that we are juſtified, not meritoriouſly, and ſimply by works done in our own ſtrength, but by works acted and done by the ſtrength and aſſiſtance of the Spirit of God.——There is the *Popiſh ſcheme*.

2. The *Baxterian ſcheme* is alſo oppoſite to this goſpel doctrine: they tell us, that God hath made a *new law* with mankind; and *obedience* to that *new law*, and to its commands, is our righteouſneſs; and this obedience gives us a title to heaven, and gives us a title to Chriſt's blood, and to pardon: and the *act* of *faith* is our righteouſneſs, not as it *accepts* of Chriſt's righteouſneſs, but as it is an *obedience* to that *new law;* the very *act* and *work* of faith is, according to them, the *righteouſneſs itſelf:* and this faith takes in all kind of works, namely, repentance, love, obedience, and ten or twelve duties of that ſort; and all theſe together are our righteouſneſs for juſtification. "Really, "as one ſays upon this very head, if the apo- "ſtle Paul were alive, he would excommuni- "cate ſuch miniſters."

2dly, As to *practical legaliſts;* this generation is full of theſe. I know not a more reigning ſin among profeſſors: a goſpel-ſtrain is almoſt loſt, and a goſpel-method is almoſt forgotten. If we would go back to our reformers, we would ſee a goſpel-ſpirit among them; but now the *goſpel-ſcheme* is come under reproach, as if it were a *new ſcheme;* and ſome preach againſt it, write againſt it, reaſon againſt it, as if it were Antinomianiſm, and a going off from the law; as the Papiſts accuſed the Proteſtants of old: why? what is the matter? A helliſh, unholy, legal ſpirit reigns in the world. Now, in proſecuting of this uſe, and that we may ſee how much ground there is to lament over, and bewail a legal temper that takes place; I would here, 1. Shew ſome evidences of a legal ſpirit in the *ungodly* and unconverted. 2. Some evidences of a legal temper in *believers* themſelves. 3. Shew the *cauſe* of this legal temper that is in the world. 4. Shew the *evil* and *danger* of it.

[1.] Some evidences of a *legal temper*, that is natural to the *ungodly*, who having no new nature, have no goſpel-ſpirit at all. This may be evidenced in theſe four degrees of ſelf, and legal pride.

1. While man is juſt in the dead ſleep of *natural ſecurity*, having no ſight, nor ſenſe of his ſin, no conviction of, nor contrition for ſin; even then, which is ſtrange, he may imagine many times, that he is perfect, that he never breaks all the commandments of God, but keeps the whole law: the young Phariſee in the goſpel is an eminent inſtance hereof; our Lord gives him an account of the commands of the law, and he had the inſolent boldneſs to ſay to Chriſt, *All theſe things have I kept from my youth up:* and Paul, before his converſion, was ſtuffed with the ſame legal pride; *I was touching the law blameleſs.* What means he by that? Why, it is as if he had ſaid, I was ſuch a ſtanch Phariſee, and religious zealot, that, as I never thought I broke any of the ten commandments, ſo I thought I had kept the whole law. Wonderful arrogance and ignorance, to imagine that a man in his fallen ſtate can have a perfection, and keep the whole law! And yet the elect of God, before their converſion, have found that they have been filled with ſuch pride and inſolent thoughts, as you ſee in Paul: yea, and many think little leſs; though they ſay they are ſinners, yet they ſee not ſin, and fancy they are conformable to the law: they have a good heart, they wrong no body, they are juſt in their dealings, none can ſay, black

is their eye; and here is their righteouſneſs, being alive to the law.

2. Degree is, when men come to be *convinced of ſin* and *rebellion*, and of their *loſt ſtate*, by reaſon of their having trampled the divine authority under foot, offended his Majeſty, violated his law, provoked his anger; then, as if Chriſt were the moſt needleſs and uſeleſs thing in heaven or earth, they run to their repentance for an atonement, as Papiſts to their penances, and Pagans to their ſacrifices, to atone their offended deities; as if there were no Day's-man, no Mediator betwixt God and man, to make atonement: Chriſt the Propitiation is altogether ſlighted; they hope to make atonement, and pacify God, by repenting ſeriouſly, and lamenting bitterly; and ſo they fall to work, praying, faſting, mourning, confeſſing with an abſolute neglect of Chriſt; and, upon the back of all their legal fears, confeſſions, and bitter lamentations, their awakened conſciences are pleaſed and pacified. The ſtorm that was raiſed there, is turned to a calm; a falſe peace takes place, not founded upon Chriſt, or his atoning blood, but upon their confeſſions, tears, prayers, whereby they think to diſgorge and vomit up all the ſins of their life, and to ſave themſelves from them, and from the wrath that follows them. To this purpoſe was that ſaying of Auguſtine (it looks like a harſh ſaying, but had a good meaning) namely, "That repentance damns moe than ſins do." When people are under any fearful apprehenſion of the wrath to come upon them for their ſins, they flee to their repentance, inſtead of fleeing to Chriſt, and that effectually deſtroys and ruins them.

3. Degree is, when a man not only repents, but *amends*: he not only takes up reſolutions of amendment of life, but actually ſtudies obedience, reforms his way; he is at pains to get his life changed, but not to get his ſtate changed: he is not taken up to get a new heart, but would have the old heart made a little better; he thinks a little mends will do the buſineſs; and what is all this, but, as one ſays, *like the gilding of a rotten poſt*; the poſt is rotten within, but it is finely gilded over without? It is but like the whitening of a ſepulchre, that, however white it may be without, yet it is full of dead mens bones within: it is like the painting of a chimney without, that is all black and ſooty within: it is like the adorning of a dead corps with ſweet flowers. The man is dead in ſins and treſpaſſes, notwithſtanding all this.

4. Degree is beyond all this, *goſpel-light* hath ſhined *objectively* upon them, and they are more illuminated than to be pleaſed with this; why? they hear of Chriſt, and that there is no ſalvation, no juſtification without him; and therefore, they act faith upon him in a legal way; they believe in him, not by a ſaving faith, but a temporary faith. As believers do perform goſpel-obedience to the law, ſo unbelievers may have a legal faith of the goſpel, a legal faith upon Chriſt; believing in their own ſtrength; believing before ever he ſees his inability to believe; before ever he ſee his unwillingneſs to believe, before he be humbled under a ſenſe of his abſolute need of Chriſt; and before he ſees what right and warrant he hath from the word. However, he fancys he hath cloſed with Chriſt, laid hold on his covenant; and this is the moſt ſubtle part of ſelf-righteouſneſs; yet, after all, he is the old man, ſtill wedded to the law: and hence he hath no ſanctification, no new nature, no new principle of ſpiritual life, no living unto God.

[2.] Some evidences of a *legal temper* that remains in *believers* themſelves.

1. When their *comfort* is always up and down with their *frame*; if their frame be up, their comfort is up; if their frame be down, their comfort is down; if their frame be gone, their comfort is gone, their joy is withered: herein the legal ſpirit diſcovers itſelf. Whereas a goſpel-temper of ſoul would lead the man to rejoice, even when the changeable frame is gone, that the unchangeable covenant ſtill remains; and to ſay, *Though the fig-tree ſhould not bloſſom,—yet will I rejoice in the Lord.* Though grace be at a low ebb with me, yet the ocean of grace is in Chriſt; and herein I rejoice: though I be in darkneſs, yet will I rejoice that there is light in him; though I find nothing but deadneſs in me, yet will I rejoice that there is life in him; though I be empty, yet will I rejoice that there is fulneſs in him, and this is to be communicate in his time and way.

2. It is a *legal temper* in the believer, when his *aſſurance* is loſt by his *challenges*. It may be, the man attained ſome ſweet meaſure of aſſurance, but behold ſin prevails, conſcience challenges him, and hereupon he razes all; this is an evidence of a legal temper, contrary to that goſpel ſpirit which we may ſee acting in David, Pſal. lxv. 3. *Iniquity prevails againſt me*; it is againſt my heart, againſt my will, againſt my prayers, againſt my ſecret groans and wreſtlings, againſt my reſolutions, againſt my inclination they prevail: ſhall I raze the foundation of my faith upon this account? No: I flee to the blood of the Lamb of God, for cleanſing and purging both from the guilt and power of ſin; and therefore I will maintain my aſſurance and confidence in thee; *As for our tranſgreſſions, thou wilt purge them away.*

3. It is a *legal temper*, when *faith is marred*, either by *ſins* or *graces*; I mean, either by the prevalence of ſin, or the pride of grace. On the one hand, when the exerciſe of faith is marred by the prevalence of ſin; when their known ſenſe and feeling of out-breakings, either make a man ſtand a-back from Chriſt, or make him run away from him, by ſinking diſcouragement or ſecret deſpair: this evidences much legality. Are you convinced of ſin? Well then, you have the more need to come to Chriſt, and believe in him, and the leſs need to ſtay away from him. Peter had a prayer once, that looked like a ſet form of the devil's compoſing, *Lord, depart from me; for I am a ſinful man.* If it had run in a goſpel-form, he would rather ſaid, *Lord, come to me; for I am a ſinful man.* Yet many believers have learned Peter's form of prayer; Lord, I am ſuch a ſinful man, I dare not come to thee, nor believe that thou wilt come to me: Why? the more ſinful thou art, the more need thou haſt to come to him, and to employ him to come to you, and ſave you. —On the other hand, when the *exerciſe of faith* is marred by the pride of grace, this is a part of a legal temper: when believers truſt more to their graces than to Chriſt, the fountain of all grace; when they look more to the ſtrength of gracious habits, and truſt more to them, than to the grace that is in Chriſt, in which they

they are called to be ſtrong; *Be ſtrong in the grace that is in Chriſt:* As by poring on their ſins, they are many times led off from depending on Chriſt, from conſtant incomes of actual influences. And hence, when a believer is lively, he is ready to think, he will never be dead again; when he is ſpiritual, that he will never be carnal again; when he is up in the mount, that he will never be down in the valley again, ſaying, *By thy favour my mountain ſtands ſtrong;* he thinks it like mount Zion, that can never be ſhaken, and that he will never doubt again; but behold, *Thou didſt hide thy face, and I was troubled:* my good frame was changed to a bad one; of a ſudden my mount Zion was turned to a mount Sinai; all fears, all frowns, all darkneſs. Never hath a believer more need to act faith, and cloſe dependence on the Lord, than when his graces and frames are moſt lively, leſt ſelf-confidence creep in, and he confides more in created grace, than in the fountain; out of whoſe fulneſs he is to have *grace for grace.* Let your frame be never ſo good, your faith never ſo ſtrong, your grace never ſo lively, at any time, yet look up ſtill for new influences; for without momentary ſupplies and breathings from heaven, your gracious habits cannot act, and will not hold out a moment.

4. It is a *legal temper*, when *peace* is always marred by ſhort-comings; ſhort-comings in the exerciſe of grace, ſhort-comings in the mortification of ſin, ſhort-comings in holineſs; when they pore upon theſe ſhort-comings; upon the weakneſs of grace on the one hand, and the ſtrength of corruption on the other; upon ſuch a ſin and luſt that prevails, upon ſuch a plague and diſtemper that affects them; inſomuch that they cannot let in a word of comfort, they cannot hearken to the *joyful ſound of the goſpel;* like Iſrael, who hearkened not to Moſes, becauſe of the *anguiſh of their ſpirit:* they look inward to themſelves, and finding nothing there but failings, and infirmities, and plagues, inſtead of holineſs, their peace is wholly demoliſhed; becauſe they do not, at the ſame time, look upward to Chriſt, to his blood and righteouſneſs, and to his fulneſs: here is a legal temper.——So alſo, to the ſame purpoſe, when a man's peace and comfort reſts only and always upon his ſanctification, as if there were no other ground of joy, but a righteouſneſs inherent: ſurely, when the joy of ſanctification is greater than the joy of juſtification, it is an evidence of a legal temper; for the joy of juſtification is founded upon a law-biding righteouſneſs, the perfect obedience of the glorious Head, which is always the ſame unchangeable ground of joy to believers; whereas his ſanctification is imperfect here, and cannot afford ſuch peace and joy, as faith in a perfect obedience will give. The true circumciſion rejoice in Chriſt, and in what they have in him, more than in what they have from him. But behold, even the believer is ready to be taken up with his ſanctification, which is inherent, and ſo to be lifted up, when he attains to a good gale, a great meaſure of ſanctification; corruption may abuſe the privilege, and then he is proud and lifted up. It is true, communion with God is of a humbling nature, and natively makes a man humble, and lively, and watchful; but when the good frame is wearing off, and corruption beginning to work again, if this nick of time be not noticed, and the believer on his guard, a proud thought may enter in, were it even upon a Paul wrapt up to the third heavens; *Leſt I ſhould be exalted above meaſure, a meſſenger of Satan was ſent; a thorn in the fleſh.* O how does a legal temper run through every frame! When a man is dead and dull, then he is in danger of murmuring; and when he is active and lively, then he is in danger of ſwelling.

5. It is a *legal temper*, when a man's *expectation of ſucceſs* is built upon the *miniſter that preaches:* if the miniſter hath a weak gift, O they will not hear that man, at leaſt they expect little good of him: if another hath great gifts, and a taking way, O now they expect heaven will come down; way? this is an evidence of a *legal temper;* for a goſpel temper will expect nothing, but in a goſpel way; even by the powerful influences of the Spirit promiſed in the goſpel. The goſpel in any man's mouth is but a dead letter, without the Holy Ghoſt.

6. It is a *legal temper*, when the believer is under *exceſſive diſcouragements*, on whatever ground: it is an evidence he is too much under the law; for the law can give no encouragement, no ſettlement to the conſcience; it is only Chriſt can give reſt; *Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you reſt.* What is it that diſcourages a believer, when he is under this legal temper? Sometimes he is diſcouraged when he performs duty, and cannot find that preſence, that ſenſible help he would have: why then he is quite diſpirited. Indeed he hath ground of mourning, when the Lord is away; he ſhould be deeply humbled for the cauſes of it: but when he is ſo diſpirited, that he loſes his confidence, and is beaten quite away from his faith and hope, queſtions his ſtate, and gives way to ſlaviſh fear, that weakens his hands in duties, and draws his heart from duty, it is a token he is ſecretly hankering after the law; for the language of the heart of him is, O if I could pray with as much life, and hear with as much attention, and perform duty with as much vigour as I would be at! O then I would have a good hope; and ſo it is not Chriſt, ſo much as the law, the old huſband, that you deſire to place your hope upon, while you are under that legal frame: the apoſtle ſpeaks of ſome believers that *deſire to be under the law*, Gal. iv. 21. Sometimes their diſcouragements ariſe from this, that they dare not apply the promiſes; and why ſo? becauſe they think they are not for the like of them; ſuch a promiſe belongs to ſuch and ſuch a good perſon; it is for a holy man, but not for the like of me: what is this but a legal temper, apprehending, that if you had ſuch and ſuch a legal righteouſneſs, then God would be ſome way indebted to give you the promiſe! But, O is not grace to be glorified in this new and goſpel way! And therefore, the more of a goſpel ſpirit you have, the more chearfully will you embrace the promiſe, for this end, that *having theſe promiſes, you may cleanſe yourſelf*, by ſucking virtue from the breaſts of the promiſe.

7. It is an evidence of a *legal temper*, when they are *always ſtraitned in duty*. Sometimes they are diſcouraged, becauſe they are ſo ſtraitened in duty; and they are ſtraitened in duty, becauſe they are ſo legal in it. Their diſcouragement flows from their ſtraitening, and their

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ſtraitening flows from their legal ſpirit; for a goſpel ſpirit is a ſpirit of liberty. 1. When a believer is for ordinary ſtraitened, without life, without liberty, it is an evidence of a legal ſpirit; for, *Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty: The law of the ſpirit of life in Chriſt Jeſus makes* the man *free from the law of ſin and death.* Rom. viii. 2. When one is influenced by the covenant of grace, he runs in the way of God's commandments. Though you have once known what it was to run ſweetly in the Lord's way, yet if now you find a habitual indiſpoſition to duties and religious exerciſes to be a heavy yoke, a grievous burden, this indiſpoſition teſtifies againſt you, that though you have once known the goſpel of Chriſt, yet now you are hankering after the law. The Lord may indeed withdraw his preſence from his people, for neceſſary ends, even from the man that hath much of the goſpel-ſpirit; and ſuch a man, amidſt all his trials of that ſort, will triumph in Chriſt, and ſay, though I have little in hand, yet I have much in hope; whatever my own wants be, I have enough in Chriſt; however weak in myſelf, I am ſtrong in him; imperfect in myſelf, but complete in him. But when, for ordinary, the perſon does not find pleaſure in duty, hath little heart to it, and finds it not eaſy and light, but grievous; it is a token, that he is bearing the yoke of the law, or old covenant: For *Chriſt's yoke is eaſy and his burden is light;* but this law-yoke is heavy. The law, the firſt huſband, requires hard, and heavy things, and does not help the ſinner with ſtrength; but Chriſt, the new huſband, requires the ſame things, but he gives ſtrength to perform; and what he requires of us, he works in us; *I can do all things through Chriſt ſtrengthening me;* were it to overleap a wall, and fight armies of devils in my way.

8. It is a ſign of a *legal temper*, when a poor creature finds always diſcouragement, except when about religious duties; and finds no peace, when about any other work; but is ſtill racked, except when upon his knees, or going about ſome religious performance or other: it is a token of being knit and wedded too much to the firſt huſband; for the law drives hard, and craves hard: but Chriſt is very tender and gentle in his commands and demands; and a perſon, under the influences of grace, will find as much ſweetneſs, even when eating and drinking, and when he is about his lawful employment ſometimes, as when about religious exerciſes. Miſtake me not here; think not that Chriſt will indulge his people in the omiſſion of duty, that is not what I intend, God forbid; I know and am perſuaded, that the ſweeteſt hours that the believer hath, is when he enjoys communion with God in the ordinances and duties of his appointment: but yet, they that have much of a goſpel ſpirit can, with peace, and freedom of mind, go about other things as the work of Chriſt; though it be a piece of ſelf-denial to them, not to be always with him, they would notwithſtanding incline to be every minute with him, and are longing for uninterrupted communion and fellowſhip with him: yet the thing I ſay is, that their hearts are not diſheartened, nor their ſpirit diſpirited, when called to other things; and it ſavours much of a legal ſpirit, when the poor exerciſed creature can find no peace about their other lawful duties, unleſs they be ſtill about duties that are properly religious duties, ſuch as prayer, and reading, and hearing, and the like; for, in ſome ſenſe, other duties, ſuch as plowing and ſowing, and the like, may be turned to religious duties, by a ſpiritual minded man, and ſuch as have a goſpel ſpirit, while they carry a heavenly mind to their earthly work.

9. It is a ſign of too much of a *legal temper*, when a man is not *ſatisfied* with the *meaſure of grace* that the Lord allows him, but frets againſt heaven becauſe he hath not ſo much as others. Let none miſtake me here either: no man ought, in any different way, to be content with any meaſure of grace; we are ſtill to be going on to perfection; but when we grudge and repine, and are pained at the heart, and murmur againſt God, becauſe we have not this and that meaſure as others have, it is a ſymptom of hankering after the law. A goſpel ſpirit does not ſtrive with God, but meekly waits upon the Sovereign, who *will have mercy upon whom he will have mercy*, and diſpenſes freely of his gifts and graces as he pleaſeth.

10. It is a ſign of a *legal temper*, when a perſon is more taken up with the *gifts* of Chriſt, than with *Chriſt himſelf*; more taken up with any little thing they get from him, than with himſelf. When they get any ſenſible grace, any ſenſible good affections, melting of heart, melting of ſpirit; any inclination to what is good; any gifts, or graces, whether more common or ſpecial, they admire theſe, and are not ſo much taken up with Chriſt himſelf. But the perſon that is evangelical in his actings, by what he gets he is led to the giver; if this be ſweet, O he is infinitely ſweeter that ſent it: I embrace the token, and it draws out my heart the more after him, from whom it came.

11. It is a ſign of being too much under the influence of the law, when the believer is poſſeſſed with a *fretful ſpirit*, and is not content with any thing: for the goſpel ſweetens a man's frame of ſpirit. If the believer go to the law, he is conſtantly pained and wounded; and a diſeaſed perſon is always a repining perſon; and this fretfulneſs is a ſign, that they are not ſound at the bottom; but the goſpel is health to the heart, and medicine to all the fleſh. A goſpel ſpirit is a ſpirit of *faith*, a ſpirit of *love*, a ſpirit of *power*, and of a *ſound mind*, 2 Tim. i. 7. And hence, take a believer, when he is much under the influence of the grace of the goſpel, ten thouſand little difficulties, that ſometimes fret him and put him out of humour, will not move him then, when he is living near Chriſt, and under the influence of the covenant of grace; but when at other times every thing frets him, it is a ſign that the law hath the aſcendent, for *the law works wrath*, Rom. iv. 15.

12. It is a ſign of a *legal ſpirit*, when, upon the back of religious duties, the man hath *more freedom to ſin; Sin ſhall not have dominion over you; for you are not under the law, but under grace.* The laws irritates corruption, raiſes the devil, but cannot lay him; but the grace of God in Chriſt, *teaches to deny ungodlineſs, and worldly luſts.* This grace only keeps down the devil, and lays him low, as it were; yea, *bruiſes the ſerpent's head*, and *deſtroys the works of the devil.*

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When a man performs duty in a legal way, to quiet his conſcience; why, then, when conſcience is quieted with the duty, luſt gets a vent, like the whore, of which we read, Prov. vii. 14. *I have offered my peace-offerings, this day I have paid my vows; come, let us take our fill of love.* But when a man performs duty in a goſpel way, not merely to ſatisfy conſcience, or pacify the judge, but to glorify God, to honour Chriſt, which is the great goſpel end of performing duty; then this glory of God and Chriſt, that he hath in view, prompts him to deſire, by the means of duty, to get the better of God's enemies in the heart; and when he gets the victory, he deſires to purſue his enemies, even to the death.

Now, my dear friends, if there be any believer here, I am ſure ſome of theſe evidences, if not all, may find you out, to have too much of a *legal temper* about you. O believers, you who *have fled for refuge, to lay hold on the hope, ſet before you*, will you conſider what danger you are in from Chriſt's *rival*, the *law* as a covenant, your firſt huſband, and how much your following after that doth undo you? You, it may be, think, you are in hazard from carnal friends, or from the world; but you cannot underſtand how you can be in hazard from the law: but you may be in the greateſt hazard from that which you are leaſt afraid of. Paul tells the believers here, and elſewhere, to whom he writes, what hazard they were in, even from theſe that pretend to preach the goſpel, who were but miniſters of the old covenant, who preſſed, and knew nothing but to preſs people to yield obedience and ſubjection to their old huſband, the law; pretending to the greateſt holineſs and ſtrictneſs of life; and preſſing nothing but Do, do, do, and live. Nay, but ſays Paul, I, and all believers, have another way of living to God, and his glory, than by living on, or by the law as a covenant; *I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.* O believer, arm yourſelf againſt all proxies that the law makes uſe of; ſtudy the nature, fulneſs, and freedom of the new covenant; and pray much for the ſpirit of wiſdom and revelation in the knowlege of Chriſt, and his goſpel. I go on to

[3.] The *third* thing here propoſed, which was to ſhew the *cauſes* of this legal temper. Why is the world ſo ſet upon the law, as a *covenant*, and ſo little upon Chriſt, as the *Lord their righteouſneſs?* I ſum up all the reaſons into this one, which I ſhall draw out into ſome particulars; and it is *groſs ignorance, proud ignorance; For they being ignorant of God's righteouſneſs, and going about to eſtabliſh their own righteouſneſs, have not ſubmitted themſelves unto the righteouſneſs of God*, Rom. x. iii. The world is ignorant of God, ignorant of the law, ignorant of the goſpel, ignorant of Chriſt, and his righteouſneſs.

1. Ignorance of *God* is one cauſe of this legal temper. People are ignorant of the perfections of God; more particularly, they are ignorant of the holineſs of God: if men ſaw what an infinite holy God he is, and what an infinite hatred he bears towards the leaſt ſin, or violation of his law; if they knew that a proud thought were enough to damn a million of angels, and that a wandering thought is enough to damn a million of worlds, would they entertain a fancy of being juſtified and accepted upon the ground of any legal righteouſneſs of their own, whether natural or gracious? Nay, they would not imagine to be thus accepted, if they did not think that God is ſuch an one as themſelves.—They are ignorant alſo of the juſtice of God, and the righteouſneſs of that judge, who will by *no means clear the guilty;* and if it were not ſo, that they were ignorant of his juſtice, would any guilty ſinner hope to be cleared, and acquitted any other way, than upon the account of a ranſom of infinite value?—They are ignorant of the wiſdom of God, in the glorious plan of redemption, and contrivance of ſalvation by the righteouſneſs of another, even of the God-man Chriſt Jeſus.——Ignorance of theſe, and the like attributes and perfections of God, is the great cauſe of their being joined to the law, and alive to it.

2. Ignorance of the *law* is another cauſe of this legal temper and diſpoſition: and here,

(1.) They are ignorant of the *precept* of the law in the extent, ſpirituality, holineſs, and perfection thereof: the young man in the goſpel thought himſelf perfect; why? he did not know the law. Paul thought himſelf blameleſs, while he was alive to the law; men think it a narrow rule, condemning only ſome groſs enormities of life, and commanding only ſome outward materials of obedience; but they ſee not the *commandment to be exceeding broad:* hence they imagine, they can obſerve it perfectly well.

(2.) They are ignorant of the *penalty* of the law, the ſanction of it: they do not believe, that there is a curſe intailed upon every diſobedience; *Curſed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them.* Hence, they are fooliſhly fond of their own legal righteouſneſs, not knowing the ſeverity of the legal ſanction.

(3.) They are ignorant of the *end* of the law, even of God's end and deſign in giving it. God gave the law to Iſrael with fire and thunder: For what end? even to be a *ſchool-maſter to lead them to Chriſt*, Gal. iii. 24. *For Chriſt is the end of the law for righteouſneſs, to every one that believeth*, Rom. x. 4. But behold, ſo ignorant was Iſrael of the end of the law, that, like the legal ſpirit in our own day, they thought it was given for this end, that they might obey it as a condition of life, as it bore the image and repreſentation of a covenant of works; ſo they turned it directly to a covenant of works, ſaying, *All that the Lord hath commanded, we will do*, Exod. xix. 8. If it had been poſſible, or practicable, for them to have performed what they ignorantly promiſed, there would have been no need of Chriſt, or his righteouſneſs either: *We will* DO, ſay they; there is *obedience*: yea, *we will do* ALL *that the* LORD JEHOVAH *hath commanded us;* there is *exactly*, and *perpetually perfect obedience:* yea, WE *will do all;* WE ourſelves; there is *perfect perſonal obedience* reſolved upon: as if they had in their poſſeſſion, all the power and holineſs that Adam had in innocence. What ſays Joſhua to them, upon ſuch a proud, ignorant, and arrogant reſolution as this? Indeed, he tells them, it was ſimply impoſſible for them; *Ye cannot ſerve the Lord, for he is a holy God*, Joſh. xxiv. 19. He is a holy God, and you are a ſinful people; it is impoſſible for you to do what you ſay. The law was given them, to let them ſee their ut-

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ter insufficiency and inability; to let them see their sins, and desert because of sin; that, under the fear of divine wrath, they might be obliged to have recourse to the Saviour. But they being ignorant of this great end of the law, set up an obedience of their own.

3. Ignorance of the *gospel*, is another cause of this legal temper; and here ignorance discovers itself in manifold instances.

(1.) They are ignorant of the *promise* of the gospel; such as that, Isa. xlv. 24. *Surely, shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength.* Here is a sum of the gospel promise; a promise of Christ, and of faith in him: *Surely shall one say;* here is a promise of faith, and faith working out from the heart to the mouth; for, *With the heart men believe unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.* ONE *shall say;* What! no more but ONE? what a pity is it, that only *one* should say so? Indeed it intimates, that very few will be brought off from their legal temper: ONE *shall say*, not every one; well, but what will he say? *In the Lord have I righteousness and strength:* Righteousness, for justification; strength, for sanctification: righteousness, to make me happy; strength, to make me holy: righteousness, to give me a title to heaven; strength, to give me a meetness for heaven. *I* have all this, shall one say, by the appropriating act of faith; applying all to himself in particular, with assured confidence, according to the measure of faith: *I* have *righteousness and strength:* where hath he it? It is *in the* LORD I have it: I have it not in myself, nor in my own natural power; I have it not in my own free-will; I have it not in my walk and conversation; I have it not in my zeal or profession; I have it not in my religious duties or performances; I have it not in my heart or life; nay, certainly I have it not there; but, *Surely in the* LORD *have I righteousness and strength;* in the LORD *only:* men are ignorant of this.

(2.) They are ignorant of the *method* of the gospel, in the application of grace promised, particularly in the command of believing, which belongs to the dispensation of the gospel; wherein the law, in its commands and threatenings both, is used in a subserviency, to advance the ends of the gospel. Though the law doth not teach us to believe in Christ, yet he being revealed, it obliges us to believe in him: though the law reveals not a Saviour, yet the gospel revealing him, the law obliges us to come to him. But now this method of the gospel, and dispensation thereof, is not known in the world; hence come legal undertakings of it; men confounding the *command of believing*, with the *gospel to be believed;* the *duty* of *faith*, with the *object* of faith; and so turn the gospel to a new law, a new covenant of works; as if the act of believing were our righteousness for acceptance with God. Neither can they conceive the command of believing to be the *great command*, though God himself hath said, *This is his commandment, that ye believe in the name of his Son:* Nay, legalists cannot understand that; they think it is God's great command, that seeing they have sinned by breaking the law, they should repent by turning to it; seeing they have displeased God by their sins, they should please him by their repentance; seeing they have provoked him by their disobedience, they should pacify him with their obedience; seeing they have drawn down the curse by their transgressions, they should remove it by their reformation: They do not know that the great command is, *to believe on the Son of God.*

(3.) They are ignorant of the great *end* of the gospel, which is, to humble and abase the creature to the lowest; and to raise and exalt grace to the highest; that *No flesh should glory in God's presence*, but that *he that glorieth, should glory in the Lord: In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.* That is the great end and design of the gospel: but the base legal spirit is ignorant of that design.

(4.) They are ignorant of the *gospel covenant:* the doctrinal and practical confounding of the two covenants of works and grace, is the great reason of this legal temper. And here people discover ignorance of the condition of the covenant; they are ignorant of the condition of the covenant of grace and works: the *condition* of the covenant of *works*, was *personal* obedience; the MAN *himself that does these things, shall live in them:* and *perfect* obedience was required; a perfection of parts, a perfection of degrees, a perfection of duration. The *condition* of the covenant of *grace*, is *Christ's perfect obedience received by faith.* There is much ignorance of this, at the root of all the legality that takes place in the world. They are ignorant of the *form* of the covenant; how by the covenant of works we get strength within ourselves, and by ourselves we could obey it; how by the covenant of grace our strength is without us, as well as our righteousness; *In the Lord have I strength;* and, *we are to be strong in the Lord*, not in *ourselves*, but in the *Lord;* and, *in the power of his might;* to be strong in *grace*, not that grace that is in ourselves; but the grace that is in CHRIST JESUS.

4. Ignorance of *Christ* and his *righteousness*, is a great cause of men's establishing a legal righteousness; *For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.* Rom. x. 3. God was about to cast off a whole church, to reject them, and unchurch them; Why? What is the reason? because they were such a proud pack, they would rather be damned with their own righteousness, than saved by Christ's righteousness, or obliged and beholden to him for it. They would not *submit* to it; Why? because they are *ignorant* of it; they do not see the glory of it, as it is the righteousness of God; they do not see the necessity of it, because their own righteousness was reckoned sufficient; they do not see the fulness of it, as answering all the demands and commands of the law; they do not see the value of it, as sufficient to procure the favour of God, and purchase grace and glory; they do not see the acceptableness of it, as being the only righteousness with which God is well-pleased, and that thereby the law is magnified, and made honourable: they are ignorant of all this, and therefore they go about to *establish a righteousness of their own*, and *will not submit* to this. Their ignorance was a proud ignorance; and so it is with all by nature: we are filled with proud ignorance, and ignorant pride; tho' our power be gone, our pride remains.

[4.] The *fourth* thing here proposed, was, the *evil* and *danger* of a legal temper, and legal obedience; Why?

1. This legal way is very *unpleasant* work, it is a wearisom work; *What a wearineſs is it?* says the man. *He is wearied in the greatneſs of his way, and yet says he not, there is no hope*, Isa. lvii. 10. It is true, the law hath sometimes its influences of comfort to its votaries; and stony-ground hearers *may receive the word with joy*; and no doubt they may pray, and do other duties also with joy; but it is only a mood that soon evanishes, having no root in Christ. Can a dead man have pleasure in vital actions? can a heavy stone incline upwards? O but the legal soul is a miserable creature! The law drags him to duties, conscience presses him to work; saying, Fast, pray; pray, man; work for your life; repent, reform, as you would not be damned: But behold, he cannot, though they be good duties he is called to; and the legal covenant, the legal minister, the legal conscience of him cries, make brick, make brick, make brick; but behold, he hath no straw, no straw, no straw; nothing to make it of. He hath no strength, no grace, no communication; and so he tugs, he works, he sweats; but it is a heartless and unpleasant work.

2. Legal obedience is very unprofitable work, as well as unpleasant; *I will declare thy righteousneſs, and thy work; for they shall not profit thee*, Isa. lvii. 12. The self-righteous Pharisee may fast twice a week, give alms of all that he hath; he may make long prayers, many prayers; he may both preach and pray frequently and fervently; yea, the poor legalist may work at his secret devotion and family devotion; he may wait on ordinances, and frequent communions, and run the whole round of duties; and when he hath done this thirty, forty, fifty years, all the profit is, he gets hell for his pains; *To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices?* Isa. i. 2. All is unprofitable.

3. The legal obedience is very *carnal*, for it is a life wholly destitute of the Spirit; *This would I learn of you*, says *Paul*; if you would be doctors of the law, let me have a lesson from you, if you can give it; *Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?* Gal. iii. 2. Was it by the works of the law? I suppose not; nay, the Spirit is not received in that way: it is in and by the gospel of Christ. The legalist is destitute of the Spirit; whatever affectitious holiness he may have, or real holiness he may pretend to, he wants a sanctifying work, sealing work; *Sensual, not having the Spirit.*

4. Legal obedience *crosses the most glorious design of heaven*, particularly God's design in giving Christ, and Christ's design in coming to the world.

(1.) It crosses *God's great design*; What is that? It is even the exalting of his free grace: What is the great design of all the great works of God, *viz.* election, redemption, regeneration, providence? Why does he choose one, and reject others? Why does he choose a wicked Publican, and cast a righteous Pharisee to hell? Why does he redeem a poor ignorant, ill-natured man or woman from their miserable state, and let the rich and learned go to hell? Why does he regenerate an elect soul, after he hath been twenty, thirty years in the devil's service? and after they are regenerate, why does he in providence let them fall into straits, wants, sins, manifold temptations, troubles, affliction, desertion, and heavy complaints on these accounts? Why? All is to exalt free grace in the issue. But now the legalist crosses this design of God; he would have self exalted, his works exalted, instead of Christ, and free grace. He puts another righteousness in the room of the righteousness of Christ, and so takes the *dung* of his own righteousness, as Paul calls it, and casts it upon the face of free, rich, and sovereign grace, to cover, and hide, and darken it. O what a devilish design is this, in opposition to God's glorious design of making grace shine brightly!

(2.) It crosses *Christ's great design in coming to the world:* The grand intention of the Son of God, in coming from heaven, was, *To bring in an everlasting righteousness*, Dan. ix. 24. But behold, the legalist's design, in establishing his own righteousness, is, to make all Christ's labour to be lost labour; he endeavours to frustrate the very end of Christ's death, and makes it vain; *If righteousness come by the law, Christ is dead in vain*, Gal. ii. 21. Instead of Christ's everlasting righteousness, he sets up a righteousness that cannot last half a day, nor half an hour; nay, not a moment.

5. Legal obedience hath the evil of *blasphemy* in it. It reproaches the righteousness of Christ, as if it were not sufficient, as if his atonement were not perfect, as if his satisfaction were not full, as if his obedience were not perfect, unless it be patched up with the rags of the man's own righteousness. Is not Christ's righteousness perfect without their addition? O do not blaspheme the Son of God, and say in effect, his obedience was not a divine, perfect obedience; for thus you reproach his fulness and sufficiency.

6. Legal obedience issues in a *terrible disappointment*; the poor deluded man thinks, his prayers and duties, that he hath been performing for so many years, will make an excellent robe to cover him: I hope, says the man, I have something that will contribute to make me die in peace; I have something to make me stand in judgment, that others have not; for many a duty have I performed, many a prayer have I made, these twenty or thirty years; and many times have I prayed with very much warmness of affection, and liveliness of frame; and therefore I have a good hope, that God will be pleased, and all will be well with me. But, O what a fearful disappointment does the man meet with! Death comes; and if he die in the same legal dream, he goes down to the grave with a lie in his right-hand: *The hypocrite's hope is like the spider's web;* Why? What comes of it? The spider works it out of his own bowels; it is her house, it is her food, it is her fence; there she dwells, there she feeds, there she secures and shelters herself for awhile; but at the close of the day, or end of the week, the besom comes along, and sweeps her and her lodging, and all to the ground: Even so, the legalist, he works a web out of his own bowels, he wraps himself in this garment of his own spinning; here he dwells, here he works, here he feeds, here he shelters himself from all challenges, and apprehensions of danger; but behold, the besom of death and destruction comes, and sweeps him, and his refuge of lies down to the bottomless pit. If his eyes be open on a death-bed to see hell, to see the justice of God, to see the spirituality of the law,

law, the imperfection of his duties, the emptineſs of his performances, and the ſandy foundation he hath been building his faith upon, then his conſcience roars, his heart deſpairs; he hath no peace, no comfort; but finds himſelf miſerably diſappointed. If his eyes be not open; what then? why, he dies in a deluſion, as he lived, ſinks into the lake of fire; and in hell he opens his eyes, and finds himſelf eternally diſappointed.——O ſee then, what ground there is to lament over this legal temper, which is indeed a damnable temper, where it hath a full reign.

Uſe *fourth*, viz. Of *exhortation*, both to them that are *alive to the law*, and to them that are *dead to the law*, of whom the text eſpecially ſpeaks.

1*ſt*, To *unbelievers*, and all theſe that are *alive to the law*. O! for the Lord's ſake, take no reſt till you get out of that damnable ſtate! O conſider what you are doing, ſo long as you are not dead to the law: the beſt thing that you are doing, in that caſe, is, that you are building your reſidence about the old rotten walls of the covenant of works. Perhaps you think you are a good proteſtant, you are a good Chriſtian, you have a good heart, you perform good duties, you partake of good ordinances, and what evil ſhould you fear?

1. I aſſure you, that you are under the *curſe* of the law of works; *Curſed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law, to do them.* And while you are under the law, and ſeeking to eſtabliſh a law-righteouſneſs of your own, all the people of God are obliged to ſay, that God is in the right to curſe you; they are obliged to ſay *Amen*, to all the curſes of the Bible againſt you; *Curſed is he that confirmeth not all the words of this law; and all the people ſhall ſay*, AMEN, Deut. xxvii. 26. If you will take the old covenant of doing for life, and juſtification, then you muſt take it with a vengeance, unleſs you do perfectly, and do to purpoſe, which is impoſſible for you; *Curſed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law, to do them*: And all believers can ſay AMEN to it, in the words of Paul; *Let him that loves not our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, be* ANATHEMA MARAN-ATHA, [*i. e. accurſed until the Lord come.*] 1 Cor. xvi. 22. While you are under the law, no bleſſing belongs to you, but all divine curſes; if you will not get out of your legal righteouſneſs, and get under the goſpel-covert of the blood of Jeſus, nothing but terror belongs to you; and nothing but terrors and curſes can I preach to you: for, *As many as are of the works of the law, are under the curſe.*

2. I muſt tell you, as you are under the curſe of the law, ſo you are under the *command* of the law; *Do, and live.* Though by the goſpel-call, you are not obliged indeed to ſeek righteouſneſs in yourſelf, in order to life, but to ſeek it in Chriſt; yet, by your unbelief, you keep yourſelf under the command of the law; *If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandment;* keep it perfectly, or elſe vengeance ſhall overtake you. It is not your little endeavours that will ſatisfy the law; though you ſhould read, faſt, mourn, and ſhed tears of blood all your days, it will not avail, or be to any purpoſe, in ſatisfying the law's demands: if you will pay any duty to the law, as a covenant, *you are a debtor to fulfil the* WHOLE *law*, Gal. v. 3. The law is a chain that is linked together, and if you take one link of it, the weight of the whole chain will be upon you; and ſo, if you will do any thing in obedience to the law, that you may be thereby ſaved and juſtified, you are under bondage to the whole law; and bound to do every thing perfectly, that you may be juſtified. O the miſerable bondage that you are under! You will never be able to ſatisfy the law; and ſo you are *condemned already*: yea, let me tell you more, you are a wicked ungodly creature: whatever you ſeem to be to others, or think you are yourſelf; yet, being alive to the law, you are a ſtranger to the life of God; for, till you be dead to the law, you ſhall never live unto God: though you look like an angel of light for holineſs, yet, being alive to the law, you have no true holineſs nor godlineſs. Ye that are ſtill leaning to your works, then you will meet with a ſad diſappointment; for, *By the deeds of the law no fleſh living can be juſtified.* But there are others, who ſeem to be upon another extreme; they ſay, the law is now abrogated, and we are not to ſeek juſtification or ſalvation that way; and therefore we are careleſs about the law, or about any duty of obedience. Yea, but let me tell you your doom out of the law alſo; you are a deſperate ſinner: becauſe you cannot ſatisfy the curſe of the law, therefore you run away from the commands of the law, and run away to the devil, inſtead of running to Chriſt. But I will tell you, though the law cannot juſtify, or ſave you, yet it can condemn you: it hath power to condemn you, though it hath none to ſave you; and it will condemn, and does condemn you, and all that are out of Chriſt: and therefore, for every ſin that you are guilty of, you muſt anſwer; and every ſin is enough to damn you, by virtue of the law. O then, may this be a mean to move you all that are under the law, to ſeek in to Chriſt, *Who is the end of the law for righteouſneſs, to every one that believeth!* Come, poor, curſed, condemned, ungodly ſinner, if you would live unto God here, and live with him hereafter, come out from under the heavy yoke of the law; Chriſt hath a good and perfect law-biding righteouſneſs to give you, though you have nothing to bring to him, but ſin, and guilt, and miſery, and hell about you, yet come to him; and if you cannot come, O go to him, and tell him that you cannot come; and plead, that, by his omnipotent power, he may draw you; and if you do ſo in truth, it is one to a thouſand, if he does not meet you half way. O man, you cannot be ſaved, to the credit of God's holineſs, unleſs you join with Chriſt's righteouſneſs, which anſwers alſo the threatening of the law, and ſatisfies the juſtice of God. In this way, mercy can take vent, to the credit and honour of all God's perfections. O man, woman, are you for this way of it? O then ſay, Farewel to the law of works for ever: here is a more noble and glorious way. O bleſſed be God for ever, if that be the bargain betwixt Chriſt's righteouſneſs and your ſoul! O may the Lord draw you to it! But now,

2*dly*, To you that are *believers*, and have cloſed with Chriſt, and ſo are *dead to the law*: remember, you are not to live a lawleſs life for all that. My exhortation to you is, that, being *dead to the law*, you *live unto God*. Let me offer ſome *motives* and *directions*, and the rather that I have taken ſome pains to gather together,

and

and lay before you many things relative to a *legal temper*, for guarding you againſt the Neonomian *extreme*, on the one hand; let men beware leſt their carnal hearts abuſe this doctrine of grace to Antinomian *licentiouſneſs*, on the other hand. Sure I am, the goſpel-doctrine of itſelf hath no ſuch tendency: though an ignorant world may ſuſpect the doctrine of the goſpel, the doctrine of Chriſt's righteouſneſs, as if it were againſt a perſonal righteouſneſs or holineſs; I declare to you, in the name of JEHOVAH, that the contrary is true; and aſſure you, that you will never live according to the law, as a rule of holineſs, till you be dead to the law, as a covenant and condition of life. *He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.* If the light of the glorious goſpel, even the light of the *glory of God, in the face of Jeſus Chriſt*, did once *ſhine into your heart*, then, *beholding this glory of the Lord*, you would be *changed into the ſame image, from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord;* yea, to believe the goſpel ſavingly, is the way to fulfil perfectly. The true believer may be ſaid to fulfil the law, both as it is a covenant, and as it is a rule: As it is a *covenant*, he fulfils it perfectly and legally in his Head and Surety, in whom he hath perfect, everlaſting righteouſneſs: And as it is a *rule*, he fufils it perfectly alſo, with a perfection of parts here, and a perfection of degrees hereafter: and in both theſe reſpects may that word be explained, Rom. i. 3, 4. where the *righteouſneſs of the law* is ſaid to be *fulfilled in believers*, whoſe character is, that they *walk not after the fleſh, but after the Spirit.* Now, I would preſs you to this ſpiritual walk, this holy life, which is a living unto God; for, though your holineſs be not neceſſary *for your juſtification*, that is the damnable doctrine of Popery; though, I ſay, it be not neceſſary for your juſtification, becauſe you are dead to the law in point of juſtification; yet it is neceſſary, becauſe you are *dead to the law*, for this very end, that you may *live unto God* in point of *ſanctification*, and that you may be holy.

More particularly for *motives*, conſider the *neceſſity of holineſs*, in theſe following particulars.

1. It is neceſſary in reſpect of *God;* and here (to uſe the method of a great divine on this head) conſider how the will of God, the love of God, the glory of God, obliges you in particular, believer, to live unto God.

(1.) The ſovereign *will* of God obliges you to holineſs; *This is the will of God, even your ſanctification*, 1 Theſ. iv. 3. It is the will of God the *Father*, he hath ordained it; *We are his workmanſhip, created in Chriſt Jeſus unto good works, which God before had ordained that we ſhould walk therein.*—It is the will of God the *Son; I have ordained you that you ſhould bring forth fruit, and that it ſhould remain*, John xv. 16.—It is the will of God the *Holy Ghoſt*, whom we *grieve by our ſins*, if we do not ſtudy holineſs.

(2.) The *love* of God obliges you to holineſs; yea, this is the end of the electing love of the Father, the purchaſing love of the Son, and the operating love of the Holy Ghoſt. It is the peculiar end of the *electing* love of the Father, who hath *choſen us that we ſhould be holy, and unblameable before him in love*, Eph. i. 4. He hath *choſen us to ſalvation, through ſanctification of the Spirit.*—It is the peculiar end of the *purchaſing* love of the Son, *Who gave himſelf for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himſelf a peculiar people, zealous of good works*, Tit. ii. 14. *And who loved his church, and gave himſelf for it, that he might ſanctify and cleanſe it, by the waſhing of water, and preſent it to himſelf a glorious church, not having ſpot, nor wrinkle, nor any ſuch thing, but that it ſhould be holy, and without blemiſh*, Eph. v. 25, 26, 27.—It is alſo the peculiar end of the *operating* love of the Holy Ghoſt; his whole work in us, and for us, conſiſting in preparing us for, and enabling us to the duties of holineſs, and bringing forth the fruit thereof in us.——Believer, if you have any regard to the ſovereignty of God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt; any regard to the love of God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, it obliges you to holineſs of heart and life.

(3.) The *glory* of God obliges you to holineſs, and makes it neceſſary. Would you glorify the *Father?* then *let your light ſo ſhine before men, that they ſeeing your good works, may glorify God. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit.*—Would you glorify the *Son?* It is *the will of God*, that *all men honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.* And how is this done? even by believing in him, and obeying him; *Ye are friends*, ye evidence yourſelves to be ſo, *if ye do whatſoever I command you.*—Would you glorify the *Holy Ghoſt?* It is by ſtudying holineſs; for, we are *his temple;* and *holineſs becomes his houſe and temple for ever;* and he is diſhonoured when his temple is defiled.——Surely, believer, when I ſpeak to you, I cannot be ſuppoſed to ſpeak to one, that neither regards the ſovereign will, love, nor glory of God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt; though your holineſs ſhould all be loſt, and never regarded, which is impoſſible; yet here is reaſon enough for it.

2. Holineſs is neceſſary in reſpect of *yourſelves;* you are neceſſarily obliged to holineſs; your own honour and peace is concerned here: It is *gainful; Godlineſs is great gain, having the promiſe of this life, and that which is to come.* It is *pleaſant;* for, *Wiſdom's ways are pleaſantneſs, and all her paths are peace. There is no peace*, ſaith my God, *to the wicked;* but *the fruit of righteouſneſs is peace, and the effect of righteouſneſs, quietneſs and aſſurance for ever.* Yea, it is *honourable*, and the greateſt honour you can be advanced unto; to be holy, is to be like unto God.

3. Holineſs is neceſſary in reſpect of *others;* you are obliged to holineſs: it may tend to the conviction and converſion of others. On the one hand, it may tend to their *conviction*, and to ſtop their mouths, who are enemies of God, and that both here and hereafter. (1.) It may ſtop their mouths here in a preſent world, as you ſee, 1 Pet. ii. 15. *This is the will of God, that with well-doing, you may put to ſilence the ignorance of fooliſh men.* Ignorant fools may call you hypocrites; they may call you Antinomians, and enemies to the law: now, by *well-doing*, you give them an unanſwerable document, that though you be *dead to the law*, as a *covenant*, yet you put honour upon the law, as a *rule of holineſs;* and ſo make them aſhamed of their baſe calumny, according to that, 2 Pet. iii. 16. *Having a good conſcience, that whereas they ſpeak evil of you, as of evil-doers, they may be aſhamed that falſly accuſe your good converſation in Chriſt.* And, (2.) Holineſs in you, believer, may tend to ſtop the mouths of God's enemies hereafter, in the day of judgment: it is ſaid, *The ſaints ſhall judge the world*, not only as they will be aſſeſſors with the Son of God, and applaud him in all his judicial proceedings; but in regard their holi-

neſs

neſs and good works will tend to the confuſion, and conviction of the wicked. And indeed the good works of the ſaints will meet them one day, with a changed countenance, that they ſhall ſcarce know them: they ſee them now to be all black, defiled, and deformed; but they will then be brought forth beautiful and glorious, to the ſhame of the wicked, Mat. xxv. 34,—40.——On the other hand, your holineſs may tend to the *converſion* of others; *Having your converſation honeſt among the Gentiles, that whereas they ſpeak againſt you as evil-doers, they may, by your good works which they ſhall behold, glorify God in the day of viſitation*, 1 Pet. ii. 12. The holineſs of profeſſors hath ſometimes tended to the converſion of the profane, who, when the day of their gracious viſitation hath come, have glorified God upon that account, 1 Pet. iii. 1, 2.; and therefore ſays Paul; *This is a faithful ſaying, and theſe things I will that thou affirm conſtantly, that they which have believed in God, be careful to maintain good works; for theſe things are good, and profitable unto men*, Tit. iii. 18.

4. Holineſs is neceſſary in reſpect of your *ſtate*; you ſtand obliged to holineſs. Are you in a *juſtified* ſtate, accepted into friendſhip with a holy God, *Who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity?* Should you not evidence your juſtification by your ſanctification? Is it not neceſſary that you ſhould be holy, if you dwell in the preſence, walk in the ſight, and ly in the boſom of ſuch a holy God? Are you in a ſanctified ſtate? Wherefore was you regenerate? Wherefore got you a new heart, and a new nature, and a holy principle of grace, but that you ſhould be holy?—Are you in an *adopted* ſtate? Why ſo? but that you ſhould live like the children of God, and *be followers of God, as dear children?* O! was you not juſtified, adopted, and ſanctified for this end, that you might live unto God? If we be believers, what a ſhame is it for us, to live unſuitably to our ſtate, as many times we do? Is that all the thanks we give to God for his favours, that we ſhould trample his ſtatutes under our feet, diſhonour his name, break his laws, and grieve his Spirit? It does not become you; it is not like you, believer: he hath *loved you with an everlaſting love*, and *drawn you with loving-kindneſs*: will you act like a devil in enmity againſt him, becauſe he hath acted like a God of love towards you? O fy for ſhame, believer! *Tell it not in Gath, publiſh it not in the ſtreets of Aſkelon; leſt the daughters of the Philiſtines rejoice, leſt the daughters of the uncircumciſed triumph*, 2 Sam. i. 20.—Have we not the *hope of glory?* and ſhall we not, having this hope, *purify ourſelves even as he is pure?*—Are we *partakers of the precious promiſes?* Then, *Having theſe promiſes, dearly beloved, let us cleanſe ourſelves from all filthineſs of the fleſh and ſpirit, and perfect holineſs in the fear of the Lord.*—Are we *heirs of glory?* and ſhall we not ſeek to have our right and title unto glory cleared? Rev. xxii. 14. *Bleſſed are they that do his commandments that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates to the city*; that is, either that your right may be made evident, according to that word, *Ye are my friends, if ye do whatſoever I command you*; that is, you thus evidence yourſelves to be my friends: or, concerning this right, know that there is a right of *merit*, and a right of *meetneſs*, both neceſſary: a right of *merit*, believer, you have not in yourſelf, but in Chriſt; and that is eſtabliſhed in juſtification through the righteouſneſs of Chriſt: a right of *meetneſs* you muſt have in yourſelf from Chriſt, and that is in ſanctification and holineſs.—— What ſhall I ſay, Are you not *dead to the law*, that you may *live unto God?* Are you not to teſtify your gratitude towards him, that hath provided another law-righteouſneſs than your own? Are you not to difference yourſelf from the world, that are walking in the broad way to hell and damnation, and under the curſe of the law, and the wrath of God?—Are you not *delivered from the wrath to come*, and of all men in the world under the greateſt obligations to be holy? Should you not ſtudy to pleaſe that God that hath pitied you?—Hath he waſhed you in his blood? and ought you not, through his grace, to ſtudy, to let it be known to the world, that his blood hath a virtue to ſanctify you?—Yea, hath he not promiſed, *Sin ſhall not have dominion over you, becauſe ye are not under the law, but under grace?* ſhould ye not ſtudy, through his grace, to let it be ſeen, that his promiſe is verified in you?

5. Holineſs is neceſſary in reſpect of the *danger* you are in, if ye do not ſtudy holineſs. If you be a child of God, you are indeed freed from the curſe of the covenant of works, that penalty can never reach you; but, is it nothing to you, that your heavenly Father ſhould chaſtiſe you, hide his face from you, deny an anſwer to your prayers, hide your evidences of heaven from you, give you up to the tyranny of your luſts, and then take vengeance on your inventions.

6. Holineſs is neceſſary in reſpect of the *advantage* herein. You are obliged to holineſs; why? in this way you may come to live joyfully, and die comfortably: in this way your integrity may be ſupported, as it was with Job; in this way you may come to have ſweet communion with God, according to Chriſt's promiſe, John xiv. 21. *He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loves me;—and I will love him, and will manifeſt myſelf to him.* In this way you ſhall be fitted for ſerving him in your generation, 2 Tim. ii. 19. In this way you will have an evidence of your juſtification, 1 John iii. 9. In this way you ſhall bring down the bleſſing of God on every work of your hand, all that ye do ſhall proſper, Pſal. i. 4. Yea, in this way you ſhall become a public-good, a common-good, a bleſſing, and a benefit to all about you, both in communicating good to them with whom you converſe, and in diverting judgments from theſe that are about you, as ten righteous men would have preſerved Sodom: O what a Sodom is the preſent generation! And as it is like Sodom and Gomorrah, and perhaps a thouſand times worſe, in reſpect of ſins againſt law and goſpel-light, which Sodom never had; ſo, if the Lord do not leave us a remnant, we ſhall be like Sodom and Gommorah, in reſpect of judgments.——All theſe things, and a thouſand more that might be adduced, ſhould preſs you mightily to the ſtudy of holineſs, and living unto God: you are *dead to the law*, that you may *live unto God*. But next,

For *direction*. Now, here the queſtion may be propounded, *O how ſhall I live unto God?* I ſhall offer you no directions but one, which my text leads me to, and it is this. If you would *live unto God*, O ſtudy to be more and more *dead to the law*. The more you are dead to the

law as a covenant, the more will you live according to the law as a rule: What! do you not find a legal ſpirit that remains with you, and weakens your hands in duties of holineſs? When you are wreſtling at duties in your own natural ſtrength, it is a legal old covenant way; and do you not find it a hard, heavy, weariſom taſk? I ſuppoſe there is little holineſs there: but when you are leaning on the ſtrength of Chriſt, do you not find your ſoul enlarged and quickened in duty? When you perform duty from a principle of ſlaviſh fear, that is a legal way; and do you not find your hearts weakened, and little heart to the work? But on the contrary, when the love of Chriſt conſtrains you, is it not then that you run with pleaſure in the ways of his commandments? Yea, ſin hath dominion over you, when you are, and in ſo far as you are under the law; for the *motions of ſin* are by the law: the law irritates corruption, and cannot ſubdue it; for it is *the grace of God*, revealed in the goſpel, that effectually *teaches to deny ungodlineſs and worldly luſts*. To be *dead to the law*, is to be *married to Chriſt*; it is to be brought off from the firſt Adam, and united to the ſecond Adam. And, believer, as you are in Chriſt, ſo you are to abide in him, if you would be fruitful, and live unto God; *As the branch cannot bear fruit of itſelf, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me*, John xv. 4. Now, to *abide in him*, is juſt to be *ſtrong in the grace that is in him*, and to continue to be ſtrong in him by faith; and this is neceſſary in order to fruitfulneſs: as, though an imp be grafted into the root, if it be not faſtened and take firm rooting, it does not come to fruitfulneſs; ſo the ſinner is made a Chriſtian, by being cut off from the law, and ingrafted into Chriſt; but he is not a fruitful Chriſtian, if he do not take a ſtrong grip of Chriſt, and draw virtue from him: therefore, *Abide in me, and I in you*, ſays Chriſt; and, O but it is well ſaid! for, if he do not abide in us, we cannot abide in him. We will never abide in him by the grace of faith, unleſs he abide in us by the Spirit of faith. If we provoke God to take away his Spirit, our faith fades, fails, and decays; and then we depart from the Lord by an evil heart of unbelief.—Here is the way then to live unto God, and to bring forth fruit to him, even to die more and more to the firſt huſband, the law, and to live by faith upon your bleſſed Huſband, Chriſt.

QUEST. *But, by what outward means ſhould we thus live?* May we not *neglect duties*, ſince we are dead to the law? Nay, God forbid. It was the devil's temptation to Chriſt, to caſt himſelf headlong from the temple, becauſe God had promiſed to preſerve him in all his ways; ſo, believer, God hath promiſed to preſerve you; he hath promiſed that *ſin ſhall not have dominion over you*, and that you *ſhall never periſh*; and is the devil tempting you therefore to throw yourſelf down headlong from the temple, and from temple-means and ordinances, public and private? O tell that abominable devil, as Chriſt did, *It is written, Thou ſhalt not tempt the Lord thy God*. If you neglect means, you tempt the Lord your God, who hath commanded you to uſe means, and made this the method of the communication of grace and ſtrength, to wit, in the uſe of ſuch means, as faith, prayer, reading, hearing, meditation, watchfulneſs: therefore, O be diligent in the uſe of theſe means; only do not confide in the means, by putting them in Chriſt's room: give means their own room, and do not expect, without the grace of the new covenant, that means will do the buſineſs. Grace is the ſpring from which the living water does flow, and means are the channel and pipes through which the water is conveyed; and if the fountain do not ſend out ſtreams, all the conduits and pipes in the world can never convey it unto us. Therefore, in the uſe of means, be ſtill looking to the Lord: look to him, both for grace to uſe the means, and for grace to bleſs the means. If you lay any ſtreſs upon the means, they become unprofitable. In the uſe of theſe means, O cry, cry mightily to the Lord, that he would kill your ſelf-confidence: cry for the Spirit of life, to quicken you, that you may live unto God; for, till the Spirit of life enter into the dry bones, there will be no ſtirring, no motion, no living to God: cry for the Spirit of faith, ſo as you may ſay with Paul in the context, *I live, yet not I, but Chriſt liveth in me; and the life I live, is by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himſelf for me*. O cry for faith, and the aſſurance of faith: no doubt, one may have faith, and yet want that aſſurance, which we commonly call ſo; but whether there be ſome kind of aſſurance or perſuaſion in the nature of faith, is a queſtion that I do not here enter upon: only, this I am ſure of, from the word of God, that doubting is no part of faith; for faith and doubting are as oppoſite as light and darkneſs. Some believers indeed have many doubts, many doubts, many doubts: why? becauſe they have little faith, little faith, little faith: *O thou of little faith, wherefore didſt thou doubt?* And I find the believer who *walks in darkneſs, and hath no light*, he is directed to faith, as the antidote againſt his darkneſs and doubting; *Let him truſt in the name of the Lord, and ſtay himſelf upon his God*. Cry, I ſay, for the Spirit of faith; and *faith will work by love*: cry for a goſpel-ſpirit; for I teſtify in the Lord's name, that goſpel-holineſs will never flouriſh among us, or in the generation, till we be more free of a legal ſpirit: and that we will not *live unto God*, unleſs we be *dead to the law*.

SERMON

SERMON IX.*

The BEST BOND; or, the SUREST ENGAGEMENT.

JEREM. XXX. 21.

For, Who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me? ſaith the Lord.

MY friends, after that the firſt Adam's heart departed from the Lord, ſo as to violate the covenant of works, never one heart of all his poſterity could, or would have approached unto God again, but had remained in their natural enmity againſt him, had not the ſecond Adam ſo engaged his heart unto God, in our favours, as to draw the hearts of many after him: and if we could this day ſee in to Chriſt's heart, and diſcover his heart-kindneſs in this matter, ſo as to unite our hearts to him, and to God in him, and get the knot ſealed in the ſacrament with God's ſeal; it would make this a day to be much remembred to all eternity. O then, let your hearts be looking up to the Lord, that you may ſee in to the heart and boſom of this ſcripture, and in to the myſtery of this great queſtion, *Who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me? ſaith the Lord.*

The Lord, by the prophet Jeremiah, had been comforting his church, by ſeveral excellent promiſes relating to their return out of the Babyloniſh captivity, typical of the glorious things reſerved for the church in the days of the Meſſias: particularly in the preceeding verſe, it is promiſed, that they ſhall be bleſt with an excellent government, *Their nobles ſhall be of themſelves*, they ſhall not have ſtrangers and enemies to be their judges, but theſe of their own nation. *Their governor ſhall proceed from the midſt of them.* This hath a reference to Chriſt our Governor, David our King, as you may ſee by comparing this with ver. 9th, *They ſhall ſerve the Lord their God, and David their King, whom I will raiſe up unto them.* This Governor is of ourſelves, being *in all things made like unto his brethren: I will cauſe him to draw near, and he ſhall approach unto me.* It is a ſingle perſon that is ſpoken of, and the perſon is the GOVERNOR, and the GOVERNOR is CHRIST. God the Father did cauſe him, as Mediator, to draw near and approach to him; he commanded and authorized him to do it; he ſanctified and ſealed him for this end; he appointed and anointed him for this purpoſe, and he accepted of him, and declared himſelf well-pleaſed in him; and therefore he ſpeaks of it with wonderful pleaſure, *Who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me?* When God draws a perſon near to him, he is even delighted with that approach to him, whereof he himſelf is the cauſe; much more if it be ſuch a perſon as here, the Governor of Iſrael; *For, who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me?* Here is the iſſue of the excellent promiſes that were made to Iſrael, by way of anticipation of ſome objection that might be made, How ſhall all this be done? Why, Chriſt the Governor hath engaged for all that either God calls for from you, or that he promiſes to you. He is one that *ſhall not fail, nor be diſcouraged, till he hath ſet judgment in the earth*, Iſa. xlii. 4. Thus all the promiſes come to us in Chriſt; they come from God through him, and ſhould lead us up to him, *in whom they are all Yea and Amen.* They are rivulets that ſweetly flow out and run forth from the ocean to the city of God, to the houſe of the mourner, to the field of the withered and decayed, to the habitation of the hungry and thirſty, yea, to the grave of the dry bones, to make *the dry land ſprings of water*, and to make *the wilderneſs to bloſſom as the roſe.* What theſe excellent promiſes are, that thus run forth, you may ſee in the preceeding part of the chapter: For example, ver. 17. though the wound ſeem incurable, God will make a cure for it; and though you be thrown off at all hands, and thruſt out at every door, and none ſeek after thee, yet *I will put honour upon thee;* yea, *I will glorify thee, and thou ſhalt not be ſmall*, as it is, ver. 19. And the ſum of all the promiſes is, ver. 22. *Ye ſhall be my people, and I will be your God:* I will work in you all that you want; and that is, *You ſhall be my people:* and I will be to you all that you need; and that is, *I will be your God.* O that we could take hold of this promiſe! It is as much as to ſay, I will make you holy, and what I would have you to be; for, *Ye ſhall be my people:* and I will make you happy; for, *I will be your God.* O! but upon what conſideration, or on what account will he do all this? My text opens the ground, *For, who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me? ſaith the Lord.* Why will he do ſo much kindneſs to any poor worm of Adam's houſe? Why, becauſe Chriſt, as Mediator, hath engaged his heart to approach unto God in their room, to do all that was requiſite for making a vent to this kindneſs and favour of God towards man.

I know that ſome take the words to be ſpoken of the people of God their drawing near by faith, and in point of duty engaging themſelves to approach to him through his grace. This is a conſequent that follows upon the other; and therefore I ſhall not exclude it from its own room in the application of this ſubject, if the Lord will. But, with the beſt interpreters that I have ſeen, I apprehend it is ſpoken of Chriſt, holding out his undertaking for an elect world in the covenant of redemption, or grace, and becoming our Surety, engaging himſelf to the Father for us, in the view of our having ruined ourſelves, and broken our own credit and intereſt with God. The firſt Adam, our natural and federal head, in the covenant

* This was an action-ſermon preached immediately before the adminiſtration of the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper, at Dunfermline, July 19. 1724. To which is annexed, a Diſcourſe on the ſame ſubject, delivered after the ſolemn work was ended. This ſermon hath undergone four editions.

of

of works, he brake the covenant, and violated the engagement that he made of approaching to God, with his perfect, perſonal obedience; and ſo he, and we in him, loſt all our power with God. But behold, the ſecond Adam, having his heart filled and fraughted with love to a company of ſinful miſerable worms, ſuch as are here preſent, he takes on the engagement that Adam brake: and he being a perſon of intire credit, it was a done bargain, and God iſſues out all bleſſings on his account: *For, who is he that engaged his heart?*

In the words you may notice theſe four things.

1. The proper *work* and *office* of our Lord Jeſus as Mediator, *viz.* to *approach unto God*, and that for us, and in our room and ſtead, as the High-prieſt of our profeſſion. The prieſts are ſaid to draw near to God, Lev. x. 21. and xxi. 17, 18. It is ſaid, Exod. xx. 21. that *Moſes drew near unto the thick darkneſs, where God was.* So did Chriſt, our great Moſes, draw near and approach unto God.

2. Notice, in the words, his *cordial compliance* with his work; *He engaged his heart* to it: he received a commandment of the Father, who cauſed him to approach; he being the original cauſe and ſpring, as the connecting particle *for* does ſhew; FOR, *who is this* that does approach? Could any do it without me? No: the Father was firſt at work; but Chriſt was as willing to the work as his Father was to employ him: he *engaged his heart* to it; that is, he bound and obliged himſelf to it; he *undertook for his heart*, as ſome read it; he undertook for his ſoul, that in the fulneſs of time it ſhould be made an offering for ſin. His own voluntary compliance with his Father's will, and his compaſſion to fallen man, engaged him; and he was hearty and reſolute, free and chearful in it, and made nothing of the difficulties that ſtood in the way.

3. You have here the *ſingularity* of this fact, and the *wonderfulneſs* of it, expreſſed in the queſtion, *Who is this that engaged his heart unto me?* It points out the greatneſs of the perſon, the admirable nature of the work he eſſays. Chriſt is in all this matter truly wonderful; and when it is a God that expreſſes it in this manner, we may well aſk it with admiration, Who is this that engaged his heart to ſuch an undertaking? And then,

4. You have the *divine teſtimony* annexed to the whole, in theſe words, *ſaith the Lord.* Here is a noble ground for faith, even the teſtimony of the God of truth: let the mouth of unbelief be ſtopt, for the mouth of the Lord hath ſpoken it. God's teſtimony is our ſecurity; and we need no better than the word of a God teſtifying concerning his eternal Son. *Who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me? ſaith the Lord.*

OBSERV. *That our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the eternal Son of God, cordially and willingly engaged himſelf to approach unto God in the work and buſineſs of our redemption.*

I ſhall endeavour to clear this doctrine, and upon it ſpeak to the ſeveral parts of the text, in the following method: after that we have cleared the truth of the doctrine, we ſhall,

I. Shew what a *wonderful perſon* this is, that engaged his heart to approach unto God; as ſeems to be pointed out in this queſtion, *Who is this?*

II. The *nature* of the *work* that he engages himſelf in, while it is an engagement to approach unto God.

III. The *ſingularity* of the *fact*, included in the manner of the expreſſion, *Who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto God?*

IV. The *reaſons* of the doctrine; or, why Chriſt came under this engagement: together with the reaſons of our faith concerning it; or, why it is, that JEHOVAH's teſtimony is added in theſe words, *ſaith the Lord.*

V. Draw ſome *inferences* by way of *application* of the doctrine, as the Lord ſhall pleaſe to aſſiſt.

Now, before I proceed to the method here laid down, I would offer you ſome ſcriptural proofs of the doctrine. That Chriſt willingly engaged himſelf herein, is evident,

1. From his *accepting* of the work and office; *When ſacrifice and offering would not, then ſaid he, Lo, I come*, etc. Pſal. xl. 7, 8. compared with Heb. x. 5, 6, 7.

2. From his reckoning it his *glory* and *honour*, that he hath taken this office upon him at his Father's call; as is plain from that expreſſion, Heb. v. 4, 5. *No man takes this honour to himſelf, but he that is called of God as was Aaron: So Chriſt glorified not himſelf, to be made an High-prieſt; but he that ſaid to him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee: Thou art a Prieſt for ever.*

3. From his promiſing to *depend* on his Father for his *help* and *aſſiſtance* in the work; Iſa. xlix. 5. *Though Iſrael be not gathered*, ſays Chriſt, *yet ſhall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God ſhall be my ſtrength.* Iſa. l. 7. *The Lord God will help me, therefore ſhall I not be confounded; therefore will I ſet my face like a flint, and I know that I ſhall not be aſhamed.* Hence it was, that *he endured the croſs, and deſpiſed the ſhame. I will put my truſt in him*, ſays Chriſt, Heb. ii. 13.

4. From his promiſing *ſubjection* to his Father's will, in bearing reproaches, and laying down his life for thoſe that were given to him; Iſa. l. 5, 9. *I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. I gave my back to the ſmiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from ſhame and ſpitting.* And John x. 17. *I lay down my life; and this commandment have I received of my Father.* And,

5. According as he promiſed, ſo did he *accompliſh* the promiſe: His heart was ſet upon the work in the hardeſt part thereof; *I have a baptiſm to be baptized with, and how am I ſtraitened till all be accompliſhed?* And never did he reſt till he could ſay, *It is finiſhed; I have glorified thee on earth, I have finiſhed the work which thou gaveſt me to do*, John xvii. 4. Thus he fulfilled the engagement he came under. And then,

6. He expects the *glory promiſed* to him, and the accompliſhment of the *glorious promiſe* that was made to him upon his fulfilling his engagements; *I have glorified thee on earth: and now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own ſelf, with the glory which I had from thee before the world was*, John xvii. 4, 5. Yea, he challenges it as his due every way, ver. 24. *Father, I will that thoſe whom thou haſt given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou haſt given me: for thou haſt loved me before the foundation of the world.*——And thus in all theſe things you ſee the *truth* of the doctrine cleared; and ſo we proceed to the illuſtration of the general method.

I. The

I. The *first* thing I promiſed, was, To ſhew what a *wonderful perſon* this is, that engages his heart to approach unto God; as is pointed out by the queſtion, *Who is this?* There are theſe following things wonderful in this perſon engaging.

1. *Who is this?* I anſwer, who but the *eternal Son* of the eternal Father, one God with him and the eternal Spirit; even the *King eternal* and *immortal*, who is ſaid to be *over all, God bleſſed for ever, Amen.* Rom. ix. 5. AMEN ſays the apoſtle; and AMEN let your hearts ſay to it, by putting the crown of abſolute divine Sovereignty and ſupreme Deity upon the head of our LORD JESUS this day, in oppoſition to the damnable error of Arianiſm, that is like to take deep root in Britain and Ireland, and ſpread like a gangrene, and eat like a cancer. Who is he as to his perſon? He is the ſon of God: and who is he as to his nature and eſſence? He is "the ſame in ſubſtance, "equal in power and glory with the Father "and the Holy Ghoſt." He is *God over all, bleſſed for ever;* and curſed is the communicant that ſhall not ſay AMEN. Under the great ſeal of the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper, we make the apoſtle's confeſſion of faith, 1 John v. 20. that if any aſk, *Who is this?* We anſwer, THIS IS THE TRUE GOD, AND ETERNAL LIFE. This glorious engager, the Lord Jeſus, whoſe death we commemorate, is, with reſpect to his divine nature, the true God; and he hath upon his veſture and upon his thigh written this name, *King of kings, and Lord of lords.* This is the eternal Word, that was made fleſh; he took upon him our nature, and became man, that he might appeaſe God. The infinitely great quality of the perſon does highly commend his loving undertaking and engagement. But,

2. *Who is this?* It is *One*, who, *though he was in the form of God, and thought it no robbery to be equal with God, yet took upon him the form of a ſervant, and was made in the likeneſs of man; and being found in faſhion as a man, he humbled himſelf, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the croſs*, Phil. ii. 6, 7, 8. It is he, who, though his *generation cannot be declared, his goings forth having been from of old, from everlaſting;* yet engaged to be *made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that are under the law*, and was *cut off out of the land of the living.* It is he, who, though he was the *Prince of the kings of the earth*, and the *King of kings*, yet engaged to become a *ſervant to ſervants*, and accordingly *girds himſelf* to ſerve them, and to *waſh their feet*, John xiii. 4, 5. It is he, who, though he be admirable in his ſovereignty, *His kingdom being over all*, yet is matchleſs in his condeſcendency. Though he is one that could never have been known, unleſs he had made himſelf known; yet he hath ſhown himſelf to be one that is mighty in word and deed, ſaying, *It is I that ſpeak in righteouſneſs, mighty to ſave*, Iſa. lxiii. 1. It is he, who though he be the only Son, and dearly Beloved of God, yet engages to quit his Father's company, and take on his wrath and indignation. If it had been a ſimple privation of his Father's countenance for a little, it had been more than all the ſons of men were worth; for he was *daily from eternity his Father's delight, rejoicing always before him*, Prov. viii. 30. But it muſt be more; he engages to take on our ſin and guilt, and to bear our griefs; and, which is ſtill more, to undergo his Father's wrath; inſomuch, that though the Father's delight in him was never changed or altered, yet he engaged to become ſuch a ſtrange object of his delight, as that he ſhould delight to bruiſe him, and take pleaſure in making him a ſacrifice; Iſa. liii. 10. *It pleaſed the Lord to bruiſe him:* he took pleaſure in bruiſing him in the mortar of his infinite vengeance, till he bruiſed his blood out of his heart and veins, and his ſoul out of his body; for, *He ſwate great drops of blood in the garden;* yea, bled to death on the croſs, and then gave up the ghoſt. *Who is this?* Who but he who was the pleaſant object of God's infinite love? Chriſt was loved of the Father in his dying, and for his dying in our room: he loves him in himſelf, and loves him as a ſacrifice; for it was a *ſacrifice of a ſweet ſmelling ſavour unto God*, Eph. v. 2. But, O dear bought to Chriſt, was this love!

3. *Who is this?* who but that *glorious One*, whom we have infinitely diſobliged by our ſin, and had diſengaged to do us any favour, by our revolt from him, by breaking our engagements in the covenant of works, and by continual rebellion againſt him, and *vexing his Holy Spirit*, Iſa. lxiii. 10. *Who is this?* Even he whom the party that he engages for on the one ſide, does moſt loath and deſpiſe; for he *is deſpiſed and rejected of men: we hid as it were our faces from him: he was deſpiſed, and we eſteemed him not*; and yet he engages for theſe that were in actual oppoſition and enmity to him: for, while we were yet enemies, he engages for us; *He died for the ungodly*, Rom. v. 6. And *God commends his love towards us, in that, while we were yet ſinners, Chriſt died for us*, ver. 8. And *when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son*, ver. 10. He loved them, that loathed him. Again,

4. *Who is this?* He is one that ſtood in *no need of us*, being infinitely happy in himſelf, and had loſt nothing, though all mankind had periſhed for ever; and yet, before we were not happy, he would expoſe himſelf to the greateſt miſery, reſolving that he would not be happy without us. He would rather come and *endure the contradiction of ſinners againſt himſelf*, reproach, blaſphemy, and all manner of indignities: *though he was rich, yet for our ſake he became poor;* and though he was exalted to the higheſt, yet he would be humbled to the loweſt. Let all the excellencies of heaven and earth be put together; let all the perfections that ever the world heard of, and infinitely more; let them be all gathered together, and infinity added to them, and all ſhining in one perſon, and that is Chriſt, O how rich! how glorious! And yet this perſon engages to die for vile worms, whom he might have trampled under his feet for ever.

5. *Who is this?* Why, he is one that could lay his *hand upon both parties* that were at variance, God and man; and ſo lay hold on both, and bring them together in himſelf, though at an infinite diſtance from one another; *He hath made peace by the blood of his croſs, and reconciled heaven and earth*, Col. i. 20, 21. He is one, that was able not only to remove the partition betwixt Jews and Gentiles, man and man, but to take down the partition-wall betwixt God and man, to bring the ſinner to God, and God to the ſinner; *Chriſt hath once ſuffered for ſin, the juſt for the unjuſt, that he might bring us to God*, 1 Pet. iii. 18. *God is in Chriſt reconciling the world*

to himself: and so he is one that brings both together, by his almighty arm; *This man shall be the peace;* this God-man is our peace, being a friend to both parties: being God, he is such a friend to God, that he would let him want nothing of his due; he will give justice every farthing, and retrieve the whole glory that sin defaced: and being man, he is such a friend to man, that he will pay all our debt, recover all our loss, yea, and gain much more to us than ever we lost.

6. *Who is this?* He is one whose name is called WONDERFUL, Isa. ix. 6. But, who can tell the wonders of his person, the wonders of his perfections, the wonders of his offices, relations, appearances, birth, life, death, resurrection, ascension, and intercession? the wonders of his righteousness, the wonders of his purchase, the wonders of his love, in its height and depth, length and breadth; in its eternity, efficacy, and constancy? He is one whose name is WONDERFUL, whose followers, that bear his name, are for signs and wonders, Isa. viii. 18. *Behold I and the children which thou hast given me, are for signs and wonders.* Zech. iii. 8. *Thou and thy fellows, that sit before thee, are men wondered at.* And indeed the more of Christ that they have about them, the more they do become a world's wonder, as Christ himself was. What shall I say? Time would fail to speak of these things, and to mention his wonderful acts, his wonderful counsels, his wonderful way upon the earth, and in the hearts of his people; his wonderful works towards the children of men, both in judgment and mercy; and his wonderful conduct towards his own children. Let it suffice that this is he, whose name is, and shall be called, WONDERFUL.

II. The *second* thing proposed, was, To speak of the *nature* of the *work* he engages himself in, while it is said, he *engaged his heart to approach unto God.* The priests under the law, their approaching unto God did but adumbrate and shadow forth our High-priest his approach unto God, in our room and stead. In order to clear this point then, in the general, I premise these two things.

1*st*, All mankind were *barred out from the presence of God*, so as they could not approach to him in their own persons; and that by a three-fold bar.

1. The bar of a *broken* and *violated law*, or covenant of works. The covenant of works, you know, was, Do and LIVE, otherwise ye shall die: in which covenant the precept was Do, and the promise was LIFE, and the penalty was DEATH. Man, by his sin, hath broken the precept of doing, forfeited the promise of life, and incurred the penalty of death: now, if we were to approach God in mercy, this broken precept must be repaired, this forfeited life must be redeemed, this incurred penalty must be executed, and endured. Here is a bar that neither men nor angels can draw and take out of the way, in order to our approach unto God.

2. The bar of God's *injured perfections*, particularly God's *infinite holiness*, which stands up for the defence of the precept of the law; insomuch that none can approach to a holy God, unless his holiness be vindicate by a perfect obedience. Again, God's *infinite justice*, which stands up for the penalty, or threatening of the law; insomuch that none can approach to a just God, unless his justice be satisfied by a complete sacrifice. Now, as our natural want of conformity to the law, makes the holiness of God stand in the way of our approach to him; so our natural want of ability to give satisfaction, makes the justice of God to be a bar against our approach. O! who will draw this bar of God's injured perfections!

3. The bar of *natural enmity* and *sin* on our part; Isa. lix. 2. *Your iniquities have separate betwixt you and your God*, so as we cannot approach to him. We are *enemies to God by wicked works.* This is a bar that cannot be broken, but by an almighty arm.—Thus, I say, all mankind was barred out from the presence of God; no approaching to him.

2*dly*, I premise, That the work of him who shall approach to God, in our room, and as our representative, must include the *breaking of these bars.* He that will engage to approach unto God as our head, to bring us back to God, must engage to break these bars: And so,

1. To break the bar of a *violated covenant of works.* And accordingly, Christ comes; and, by his obedience to the death, *He magnifies the law, and makes it honourable:* The precept of the law that we had broken, he must fulfil, by obeying perfectly; the promise of eternal life, which we had forfeited, he must recover by redeeming the forfeiture, *bringing in everlasting righteousness;* the threatening and penalty of eternal death he must endure, or the equivalent, by coming under the *curse of the law.*

2. To break the bar of God's *injured perfections*, by vindicating the holiness of God, and satisfying the justice of God, that so these and the like injured attributes of the divine Majesty may not stand in the way; for, while they do, there is no approaching unto God.

3. To break the bar of man's *natural enmity* against God, otherways he that engages himself to approach unto God, cannot bring us to God with him.

These things being premised, we may the more easily see what is the *work* that the Lord Jesus engaged his heart unto, in approaching unto God: he comes to God in our room, who could not approach in our own persons. It is below the majesty of a great king, to treat and transact immediately with a guilty rebel and traitor: and so it is below the majesty of the great God, to transact immediately with wretched sinners: and who then will approach? Therefore he transacts immediately with Christ, a person of equal dignity with himself, as to his divine nature; and a person able to break these bars, and so make an open door for himself as Redeemer, and then, for all the redeemed at his back, to approach unto God as their eternal rest and happiness: and all this he does, by fulfilling the broken law; for, he *came to fulfil all righteousness*, by satisfying God's injured perfections; insomuch, that *God is well-pleased for his righteousness-sake:* and by destroying man's natural enmity; insomuch, that they are *reconciled to God, by the death of his Son.*

But, more particularly, I would shew here, 1. What *engagements* Christ came under. 2. What *approach* did he make to God, under these engagements. 3. Under what *considerations* are we to view God to whom he engages to approach.

4. In

4. In what *ſtation* did he engage to approach unto God.

1*ſt*, What *engagement* did Chriſt come under, when he engaged himſelf to approach unto this God? He came under engagements about the whole work of our redemption. And,

1. He engaged to put himſelf in the *form of a ſervant*, by taking on our nature, and taking our place in law, that ſo the law might reach him in the room of the guilty ſinner; otherways the law-curſe due to us could never have reached him. Now, to this engagement belong ſeveral things, which I ſhall ſhortly deliver in ſo many ſpiritual expreſſions.—He engaged *to be made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law.*—He engaged, even *he who knew no ſin, to be made ſin for us, that we might be made the righteouſneſs of God in him.* And thus,

2. He engaged to ſatisfy, not only the *law*, in all its commands and demands, but alſo all the *injured attributes* of the divine Majeſty, by bringing in *everlaſting righteouſneſs*.—He engaged *to give himſelf a ſacrifice; and to give his ſoul an offering for ſin;* and *to give his life a ranſom for many.*—He engaged to *make peace by the blood of his croſs*, and ſo to repair the breach betwixt God and man, making way by his blood, to the holy of holies, that we might *have boldneſs to enter into the holieſt, by the blood of Jeſus by a new and living way, conſecrate to us through the vail, that is to ſay, his fleſh*, that we might come again to God with *full aſſurance of faith.* And in order to this,

3. He engaged to redeem by *power* as well as by *price*, and *to make a willing people in the day of his power;* and that, having bruiſed the head of the ſerpent, and deſtroyed the works of the devil, he *ſhould bring forth his priſoners out of the pit wherein there was no water.*—He engaged to *lead captivity captive, to take the prey from the mighty, that the lawful captive might be delivered*, Iſa. lxix. 24, 25.; and ſo to reſtore the loſt image of God upon man, and to make them *partakers of the divine nature.* And thus,

4. He engaged not only to *deſtroy ſin*, and to condemn it in the fleſh, becauſe it tended to deſtroy God's law, to darken his glory, and to ſtrike at his being, as well as to ruin the ſinner; but alſo, to *deſtroy death, and bring life and immortality to light:* He engages *to come, that we might have life, and that we might it more immediately.*—And in all theſe Chriſt becomes engaged to the Father, for our debt, for our duty, and for our ſafety. And as he became engaged *to God for us*, ſo he became engaged *to us for God;* that having engaged to God for our *debt*, we ſhould be *juſtified;* having engaged for our *duty*, we ſhould be *ſanctified;* and that having engaged for our *ſafety*, we ſhould be *glorified*, and ſafely brought to heaven, to be for ever with the Lord.

(1.) He engaged for our *debt*, that it ſhould be paid every farthing, to the uttermoſt that the infinite holineſs of God could command in the precept of the law, and to the uttermoſt that the infinite juſtice of God could demand in the threatening of the law; and ſo he is *able to ſave to the uttermoſt*, becauſe *he ever lives to make interceſſion*, upon the ground of that complete payment that he made by his obedience unto death. And here ſtands the ground of our juſtification before God; this ground he engaged to God for us to lay down, and upon this ground he engaged to us that we ſhall be juſtified, ſaying, *I will be merciful to their unrighteouſneſs, their ſins and iniquities will I remember no more.*

(2.) He engaged not only for our debt, but for our *duty:* having engaged to God to make a purchaſe of all grace and holineſs for us, he engages, in his promiſe to us, *to give us the new heart, and the new ſpirit, to make us know the Lord;* and *to put his Spirit within us, and cauſe us to walk in his ſtatutes; to put his fear in our hearts, that we ſhall not depart from him:* and conſequently that we ſhall not ſin the ſin unto death, nor live and die under the power of ſin; and that *ſin ſhall not have* a final *dominion over us; but that the law of the Spirit of life in Chriſt Jeſus, ſhall free us from the law of ſin and death.* And in conſequence of theſe two engagements for debt and for duty,

(3.) He alſo engages for our *ſafety*, ſaying to his Father, *I give them eternal life, and they ſhall never periſh; neither ſhall any pluck them out of my hand*, John x. 28. He engages to the Father, *That of all that he hath given him, he ſhall loſe nothing, but ſhall raiſe it up at the laſt day;* and that *they ſhall all be with him where he is, to behold his glory.* And hence iſſue all the promiſes wherein alſo he engages to us for God, ſuch as, *that he will ſave us from falling, and preſent us faultleſs before the preſence of his glory with exceeding joy;* and that though we may be ſometimes carried captive of our enemies by conſtraint, yet that we ſhall overcome by the blood of the Lamb, and *ſit with him on his throne, even as he overcame, and is ſet down with his Father on his throne:* And that no croſs ſhall come, but what ſhall be for our advantage in the end, whatever for the preſent it ſeem to be to our ſenſe; but that *all things ſhall work together for our good who love him, and are the called according to his purpoſe.*

This leads me to a queſtion, Why, ſay you, *who may expect a ſhare of this engagement of Chriſt? Does he engage in behalf of us all?* I anſwer, in ſuch a manner as concerns all that hear me, that he engaged in behalf of all that were given him of the Father; and that none of all that hear this goſpel, may look upon themſelves as ſhut out, he expreſſes it thus, John xi. 37. *All that the Father hath given me, ſhall come to me; and him that cometh to me, I will in no wiſe caſt out:* And conſequently he engages in behalf of all that ſhall not exclude themſelves from the benefit of this glorious engagement, by their final unbelief, in rejecting this Chriſt, and refuſing to be ſaved on theſe terms, which Chriſt engaged to fulfil. And ſo the door is open to you all, to put in for a full ſhare of all that Chriſt hath engaged to do; eſpecially if you think that your own perſonal bonds and engagements, vows, promiſes, and covenants, are not ſo good and ſufficient as Chriſt's perſonal engagement in your room: think you ſo, man, woman? O then, here is a good bargain for you; you that have no money to pay your debt; no grace to perform your duty; no ſtrength to ſecure your ſafety; O here is a Chriſt engaging to God for your debt, your duty, and your ſafety! O let your heart ſay with application, AMEN, it is a good bargain for me; and if ſo, God hath beforehand ſaid AMEN, *ſo let it be.* In a word, the ſum of Chriſt's engagement, that he came under in his approach to God, was, to fulfil God's law, to vindicate his holineſs, to ſatisfy his juſtice, to bear his wrath

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in our room, and to be *made ſin for us*, and ſo to be made a *curſe for us*, 2 Cor. v. 21. Gal. iii. 13. He engaged to be made a ſacrifice, a ranſom, a propitiation for us, and to be all that the glory of God's perfections in the matter of our ſalvation required.——Thus he engaged himſelf to approach to God.

2*dly*, What *approach* did he make to God under theſe engagements? In ſhort,

1. It was a *near* approach, by God's own allowance and appointment. See the context; *I will cauſe him to draw* NEAR, *and he ſhall approach to me.* We behoved to have ſtood at an infinite diſtance from God to all eternity, had not Chriſt been allowed to come near in our room. But behold, he made a near approach under the ſhadow of lawful authority; his Father authorized him therein, and cauſed him to approach: God the Father is the primary cauſe of our ſalvation; *This commandment*, ſays Chriſt, *have I received of my Father*, John x. 15. It is his Father's will that he came to do, Pſal. xl. 8. And how near Chriſt approaches to God in our room, under this authority, allowance, and command, who can tell among men or angels? For he came ſo near, as to lay his hand upon God; yea, to take God and all his glorious perfections, all his ſeemingly jarring attributes in his arms, as it were, and reconcile them one to another, and bind them together with the bond of infinite amity and harmony, to the higheſt glory of each of them, in the matter of our ſalvation: And hence, upon this near approach it was ſaid, *Mercy and truth are met together, righteouſneſs and peace have kiſſed each other.* Therefore,

2. It was a *bold* approach, by God's own aſſiſtance; as well as *near*, by his allowance. This is evident alſo in the text, *I will cauſe him to draw near*; and *Who is he that engaged his heart to approach unto me? ſaith the Lord.* It was a bold and courageous approach indeed; but it was by his Father's help and aſſiſtance; Iſa. l. 7. *The Lord God will help me, therefore ſhall I not be confounded; yea, therefore have I ſet my face like a flint.* It was ſuch a bold adventure, as none could have made but himſelf. And yet,

3. It was an *humble* approach: for, *Though he was in the form of God, and thought it no robbery to be equal with God, yet he* HUMBLED *himſelf, and took upon him the form of a ſervant*, Phil. ii. 8. He became his Father's humble ſervant in the work of our redemption; *Behold my ſervant whom I uphold.* He ſerved him in a ſtate of humiliation, from the time of his incarnation to the time of his exaltation. He was meek and lowly while he offered his humble ſervice to God for our ſake, and his humble ſervice to us for God's ſake, ſtooping down to waſh our feet, to waſh our hearts, to waſh our conſciences, to waſh our ſouls in his own blood, ſaying, *If I waſh thee not, thou haſt no part in me.* His approach to God was an humble and reverential approach, with holy filial fear and regard of his Father; therefore it is ſaid, Heb. v. 7. that *in the days of his fleſh, he offered up prayers and ſupplications, with ſtrong crying and tears, to him that was able to ſave him from death, and was heard in that he feared* How humbly did he cry to his Father in the garden, when he ſaid, *Father, if it be thy will, let this cup paſs from me, nevertheleſs, not my will, but thine be done: Now is my ſoul troubled, and what ſhall I ſay? Father, ſave me from this hour; but for this cauſe came I to this hour; Father, glorify thy name.* It was in the ſaddeſt earneſt, and deepeſt humility, that he approached to his Father in this work.

4. It was a *ſolemn* approach: *Who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me?* It is I, ſays Chriſt; and he ſays it with a ſolemnity, *Lo I come*, Pſal. xl. 7. Lo I COME, *in the volume of thy book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God.* Lo I COME; as if he had ſaid, Let heaven and earth be witneſſes to this approach of mine; let God and all the creatures of God atteſt it; for I am not aſhamed of this work which the Father hath given me to do: *Lo I come.*——Other characters of this approach may fall in upon the next general head: therefore I go to the next particular here premiſed, which will alſo further illuſtrate the nature of this approach.

3*dly*, Under what *conſideration* are we to view the God to whom he approached? *Who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto* ME? What ME? It is to ME, ſays Jehovah. And here we would conſider the God to whom he approached in our room, in theſe following reſpects.

1. He engaged to approach unto God as an *abſolute* God. Chriſt, the ſecond Perſon of the adorable Trinity, *perſonally* conſidered, engaged in our name to approach to God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, *eſſentially* conſidered; to approach to the throne of infinite Majeſty. We have to do with a God in Chriſt, in all our approaches; and may not approach to a God out of Chriſt, otherwiſe we would be confounded: but Chriſt had to do with a God by himſelf. Chriſt is the Mediator betwixt God and man, but there was no mediator betwixt God and Chriſt: Chriſt muſt approach, as well he could, to God himſelf immediately, that we, through his mediation, might have acceſs to God. It was a ſaying of Luther's, *Nolo Deum abſolutum*; "Lord, deliver me from an abſolute "God, a God out of Chriſt;" for as he is terrible to ſinners, ſo, in himſelf conſidered, he *dwells in light to which no man can approach*, 1 Tim. vi. 16. But this inacceſſible Being is the God to whom Chriſt did approach.

2. He engaged to approach unto God as a *commanding* God, commanding perfect obedience, according to the tenor of the covenant of works; commanding perfect obedience in man's own perſon as the condition of life: and now, ſeeing, in the covenant of grace, a change of perſons is allowed, but no change of the terms or conditions, but that our holy God will ſtill be a commanding God, Chriſt accepts of the terms, and engages to fulfil the condition of life, be the command what it will: *Lo, I come, to do thy will.* Father, what is thy command? I come to thee as a commanding God, a Law-giver, to obey thy law; yea, *Thy law is within my heart*; or, as it is in the Hebrew, it is IN THE MIDST OF MY BOWELS. None, that had any blemiſh, was to approach or come near unto God, Lev. xxi. 21. If there had been any blemiſh in the perſon or righteouſneſs of Chriſt, he could not have approached to an infinitely holy and commanding God; and his coming to God under this conſideration, is juſt his coming under the law, or under the command, in our room.

3. He engaged to approach unto God as a *threatening* God, threatening death and wrath to the tranſgreſſors of his command, and ſaying, as Lev. x. 3. *I will be ſanctified by all that*

approach

approach, or come nigh unto me; I will either be ſanctified by them, or ſanctified upon them: and thus he had God to deal with, not only as a Commander and Law-giver, requiring obedience; but as a Judge requiring ſatisfaction when the law is broken. He approaches to God, not only as a God of infinite holineſs, whoſe command muſt be obeyed; but as a God of infinite juſtice, whoſe threatening muſt be execute: and therefore, he coming to God in the room of theſe that had broken the command, and incurred the threatening, it muſt follow that.

4. He engaged to approach to God as an *angry* God, an *offended* Deity, and an *Avenger of blood: The Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all*; and under this load of ſin and guilt he approaches to the God, that was to take vengeance upon ſin in his own perſon, and all the vengeance that ſin deſerved: He engaged to approach to God as a diſpleaſed and incenſed God, that he might pleaſe him by his obedience, and pacify him by his ſatisfaction. He engaged to approach to that God, who is a *conſuming fire* to ſinners; and, taking their ſins along with him, he goes in to the very midſt of that devouring fire, which would have devoured and deſtroyed the ſinner himſelf eternally, that he might quench the flame of that fire with his blood; though he was burnt to death in the cauſe, that we might not burn for ever in hell. What is hell, but the fire of God's wrath? It is juſt God himſelf, as a conſuming fire, that is the hell of hell. It was a lamentable moan of a man upon his death-bed once, "We have "ſome in this life that will go to a quire for "us, ſome that will ſay maſs for us, ſome that "will plow for us, and ſome that will pray "for us; but, O where is there one that will "go to hell for us!" But behold, here is one that engaged his heart to approach to God, as a conſuming fire, and ſo to go to hell, and quench the fire of it for us; yea, and to drink off the cup of God's red-hot boiling vengeance to the bottom. For he engaged to approach to God as a God of terrible Majeſty, being content that infinite juſtice ſhould act upon him a tragedy of blood and wounds, that our ſalvation might be obtained without any detriment to divine juſtice, and to the higheſt glory of all the other divine perfections.——When Chriſt approached to God as an *abſolute* God, he came near, as it were, to the ſeat of his Majeſty, to preſent himſelf in our room; when he approached to God as a *commanding* God, he came near, as it were, to the throne of his holineſs, and there he was an obedient ſubject in our room; when he approached to God as a *threatening* God, then he came near, as it were, to his bench of judgment, and there he was a condemned pannel at the bar in our room; and when he approached to God as an *angry* and *offended* God, then he came near, as it were, to the tribunal of juſtice, the fiery tribunal of his indignation, and there the ſentence was execute upon him, while he gave himſelf to incenſed juſtice in our room.—Now, Chriſt having thus approached to God, according to his engagement, the God to whom he approached is ſo well-pleaſed with this approach of his, that now, by an act paſt at the ſame tribunal of juſtice, where he was ſolemnly condemned to death in our room and ſtead, he is as ſolemnly juſtified and abſolved in our room; therefore he is ſaid to be *juſtified in the Spirit*, 1 Tim. iii. 16.; and Chriſt himſelf ſays, *He is near that juſtifies me*, Iſa. l. 8. And therefore *the Lord is well-pleaſed for his righteouſneſs ſake:* and when the Spirit of Chriſt *convinces of righteouſneſs*, he will demonſtrate this from that argument, that *Chriſt hath gone to his Father*, John xvi. 10. And now the approach that he makes to God, is to a God whom he hath pleaſed and pacified in our behalf, whoſe Majeſty he hath allayed, whoſe command he hath fulfilled, whoſe threatening he hath ſuſtained, and whoſe wrath he hath endured, and for whoſe loving-kindneſs he hath made a vent; and accordingly it is vented by an audible voice from heaven, ſaying, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleaſed.* Whatever approach now it is that Chriſt makes unto God, as an Advocate at the Father's right-hand, it is in the virtue and value of that engaged approach that I have mentioned; and ſo it is now to a God whom he hath pleaſed and pacified: and whatever approach we make to God in him, it is to a God reconciled in him, Rom. v. 10.——Thus you ſee under what conſiderations we are to view the God to whom Chriſt did engage to approach, and, *Who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me? ſaith the Lord.*

4thly, In what *ſtation* did he engage to approach unto God? Why,

1. He engaged to approach unto God in the ſtation of a *Surety*; therefore he is called, *The Surety of a better teſtament:* A Surety *for God to us*, that all that he hath promiſed in his word ſhall be made good; for *in him are all the promiſes Yea and Amen*, and he is engaged to ſee them accompliſhed: Alſo as a Surety *for us to God*, having given his hand to his Father, that all our debt ſhould be paid: Chriſt ſays to his Father, in a manner, as Paul ſaid to Philemon concerning Oneſimus, Philem. ver. 18, 19. *If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account; I Paul have written it with mine own hand, I will repay it.* So ſays Chriſt, Since theſe poor ſinners have wronged thee, O Father, by their ſin, and owe thee an infinite ſum, a debt of obedience and ſatisfaction, *Put it on mine account; I* JESUS *have written it with mine own hand, I will repay it:* I give my bond for it, ſubſcribed with my own hand: *Lo I come to do it; in the volume of thy book it is written of me.* And indeed he is a *Surety* that gets all the debt to pay, and all the duty to perform for the debtor and bankrupt.

2. He engaged to approach to God in the ſtation of a *Mediator*, therefore called, the *Mediator of the new covenant.* He is ſent of God to negotiate a peace betwixt God and man; and accordingly *he is our peace*, and travels betwixt the parties in order to their reconciliation. He is a *repairer of breaches*, and a *reſtorer of that which he took not away*, Pſal. xlix. 4. For, as Mediator, he reſtores that glory to God which he took not away; that obedience to the law which he took not away; that holineſs to man which he took not away; that beauty and order to the world which he took not away; that agreement and concord betwixt heaven and earth, betwixt man and man, which he took not away.

3. He engaged himſelf to approach unto God in the ſtation of an *Ambaſſador*, to ſerve him in that ſtation; and hence he is ſo frequently called the *Sent of God.* Chriſt magnifies his office as being the Sent of God, John iv. 34. *My*

meat is to do the will of him that sent me; and to *finish his work*. John v. 30. *I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me*. Christ magnifies the faith that believes on him as the Sent of God; *This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent*. Yea, I have observed, that Christ is spoken of, as the Sent of God, betwixt forty and fifty times in that one gospel according to John. He is sent as the Father's Ambassador, with the Father's seal, appended to his commission; *Him hath God the Father sealed*.

4. He engaged to approach to God in the station of a *mean Servant*; for, *He made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant*; yet, a *faithful* Servant, *faithful in all his house*; a Servant according to God's heart; and as righteous as God would have him to be; *By his knowledge shall my righteous Servant justify many*. A Servant whom God glories in; *Behold my Servant, whom I uphold; mine Elect, in whom my soul delighted*. I might here show you how he engaged to approach to God in the station of a *Prophet*, *Priest*, and *King*; a *Witness*, *Leader*, and *Commander*, Isa. lv. 4. But what I have said, is sufficient to give us some view of the nature of the work he engaged himself to, in approaching to God. Therefore I come,

III. To the *third* general head proposed, which was, To speak of the *singularity* of the fact, intimated in the expression, *Who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me?* Now, that this was a singular engagement, will appear, both from the *matter* and the *manner*.

1*st*, Consider the *matter* of this engagement, and we will see the singularity of it, especially if we notice the *mysteries* that ly in the bosom of this engagement; particularly these Six.

1. The *first* mystery in this engagement is, that herein we may see the *glory of the eternal God vailed with flesh*, and dwelling in a tabernacle of clay; *Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness, God manifested in the flesh*. To see the sun in the firmament converted to a clod of dust, or the highest seraph in heaven to a crawling worm, had been but a small matter, if compared with this; for here we have heaven and earth, time and eternity, finite and infinite together in one person.—Here is the *Antient of days* becoming a *young child*; *To us a Child is born*.—Here is the *everlasting Fountain of joy* becoming *a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief*.—Here is the *greatest beauty of heaven and earth* with *his visage marred more than any man, and his form than the sons of men*.—Here is the *Creator of the world*, to whom the earth and its fulness belong, yet destitute of house and hold; *The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air nests, but the Son of man hath no where to lay his head*.

2. The *second* mystery wrapt up in this engagement, is, that here we may see the *glorious Law-giver*, whose will is a law to men and angels, *subjecting himself to his own law*, and that in the room of rebels, that had violated his law, and contemned his authority; for *he was made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law*.

3. The *third* mystery here to be seen is, that which might make us faint away with wonder and amazement, that the *blessed God* should, in a manner, become a *cursed sinner*, that cursed sinners might be blessed in him: behold the ever blessed God becoming a *curse*, Gal. iii. 13. And to be *made a curse*, is a stronger word yet than *cursed*.—Behold the ever holy God becoming *sin*, 2 Cor. v. 21.; and to be *made sin*, is a stronger word yet, than to be a *sinner*. He became a sinner by imputation, even *he who knew no sin, that we might be the righteousness of God in him*. He put his name in our bond, and wrote down himself the *sinner*, that our names might be put in his bond, and we might be righteous through his righteousness. But for the blessed God to become a *curse*, and the holy God to become *sin*, is more than if all the angels in heaven should become devils. Is there not somewhat singular here?

4. The *fourth* mystery wrapt up in this engagement, is, that here we see the *Creditor* becoming *Surety for the debtor*, and paying the debt that was owing to himself. The eternal Son of God was as much injured by our sin as the Father was, and yet he engaged to come and satisfy his own justice.

5. The *fifth* mystery here involved, is, in this engagement we may see the *Judge of all the earth* brought *under condemnation*: condemned by his own Father, whom he never offended; condemned by the law, which he never broke; condemned by sinners, whom he came to save from condemnation; condemned to death, though he be the *Lord of life*, and hath *the keys of hell and death in his hand*, and at his girdle.

6. The *sixth* mystery to be seen in this engagement, is, that here we may observe *justice raging against the innocent*, and *absolving the guilty*, and yet without any iniquity or injustice; a God of love and a compassionate Father forgetting, as it were, his bowels towards his only Son, and taking pleasure in his death; *For it pleased the Lord to bruise him*; and yet receiving these into his arms and bosom, who had violated his law, and contemned his authority, and grieved his Spirit.—And, by this means, here we see the *righteousness of the law* fulfilled in these that had *broken the law*, and never obeyed one of its precepts.—Here we may see the poor *guilty sinner*, that stands condemned by the law, condemned by justice, condemned by conscience, yet put in case to challenge the whole world to *lay any thing to his charge*, Rom. viii. 33.—By this mean also we see the debt paid and yet pardoned, the guilt of the sinner punished and yet forgiven.—In a word, there was this singular in it, that he engaged to bring the greatest good out of the greatest evil. Sin is the greatest of all evils, and that whereby, of any thing in all the world, God is most dishonoured; and yet there is nothing by which God brings greater glory to himself, than by the fall of man: upon these ruins *mercy shall be built up for ever*, says God; and mercy magnified to the highest, in a way wherein justice is satisfied to the uttermost; sin being condemned by a sacrifice; life bought by a death; and the gates of heaven opened by a cross. The mysteries contained in this engagement shew it to be singular.——And thus the matter of the engagement discovers the singularity of the fact.

2*dly*, Consider the *manner* of it, and here the *singularity* thereof will further appear: how did he engage?

1. He engaged *alone*, he alone; there was none that would or could engage to do this, but himself; Isa. lxiii. 3, *I have trode the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with me*; among

among all the creatures of God, there was none to take part with him in treading the wine-preſs of his Father's wrath: *He ſaw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no interceſſor; therefore his own arm brought ſalvation, and his righteouſneſs it ſuſtained him*, Iſa. lix. 16.

2. He engaged *fully* to do all, to ſuffer all, to purchaſe all, to apply all, and to be All in all; he engaged not only to do, but to *ſuffer*, 1 Pet. iii. 18. *Chriſt hath once ſuffered for ſin, the juſt for the unjuſt, that he might bring us to God:* not only to ſuffer, but to die, and to die for enemies, rebels, and traitors, ſuch as were given him of the Father; and not only to die, but to continue for a time under the power of death; though he was life itſelf, and could, in the firſt inſtance of time, have riſen up from the grave that he was laid into.

3. He engaged *freely;* his Father's cauſing him to approach, did not hinder the freedom of his engagement; for, as God, *He and his Father are one*, and have but one divine will; and, as man, his will is ſweetly ſubject to the divine will. He engaged ſo freely, that there was nothing in us, that could move him but miſery; there was none of us could deſire him to do it; he engaged before we had a being: there was none in heaven or in earth that could compel him to it; and there was nothing that he had to expect from us for his pains; we could never reward him for his work: and all that we ſhall do to eternity, is only, through his grace, to bliſs him for what he hath done.

4. He engaged *firmly*, and that both in point of conſtancy and courage. In point of *courage*; he engaged in the work courageouſly, though he had juſtice, and wrath, and hell, and heaven, and all on his top; yea, and poor man alſo, for whom he engaged; yet, how courageouſly did he go through with his work! ſo firmly, as not to be moved with diſcouragements. He went and ſet his face up to Jeruſalem, where he was to be crucified; and you ſee wherewith he encouraged himſelf, Pſal. xvi. 8. compared with Acts ii. 25. *Becauſe the Lord is at my right-hand, I ſhall not be moved:* God's *hand was upon the Man of his right-hand, upon the Son of man whom he made ſtrong for himſelf;* and therefore *the right-hand of the Lord did valiantly; the right-hand of the Lord was exalted; the right-hand of the Lord did valiantly.*—As he engaged firmly in point of courage, ſo alſo in point of *conſtancy;* he never took his word again, but ſtood to the bargain: neither fear of the wrath of his Father, nor ſenſe of the unworthineſs of the ſinner, nor yet the frequent falls and relapſes of his people, could make him alter: he foreſaw all their relapſes into ſin, and into the ſame ſins, yet could it not move him to break the bargain; therefore, *Return ye backſliding children, I will heal your backſlidings*, Jer. iii. 22.; yea, *I will heal your backſliding, and love you freely*, Hoſ. xiv. 4. Your inconſtancy, might he ſay, ſhall not make me inconſtant too: he hates putting away, and continues in his love.

5. He engaged *timeouſly* and *ſpeedily;* he did not linger, for the matter could not admit of a delay: when our neck was on the block, and the ax of divine judgment coming down, as it were, to give the fatal ſtroak, he cries ſpeedily, Hold, hold thy hand. What, might God ſay, will you come and be a ſacrifice in their room? No ſooner is the motion made to him, than preſently he was on fire of love to be thus imployed and ſubſtitute in our room as a ſacrifice; *Lo I come* he ſpeaks like one ready to run. When the plague was begun, Moſes commands Aaron to go quickly into the congregation to make an atonement, Num. xvi. 46. The ſentence of divine wrath, which is a terrible plague, was gone out; and therefore Chriſt does ſpeedily engage to make the atonement.

6. He engaged *heartily;* he engaged his *heart* to approach unto God. This being the main particular, with reſpect to the *manner* of the fact, or that branch of the *ſingularity* of it, expreſly mentioned in the text; therefore let us eſpecially take notice of this, *He engaged his heart to approach.—He engaged his heart;* that is, not only did he engage for his *ſoul*, as ſome underſtand it, that his *ſoul ſhould be made an offering for ſin;* but alſo, *he engaged his heart;* that is, he engaged *willingly;* and ſo it was with a thouſand good-wills: Lo I come, Father; thy will is my will.—*He engaged his heart;* that is, he engaged *cordially*, *chearfully*, and *affectionately*; *I delight to do thy will, O my God!* We never read that Chriſt had a ſad heart to quit, for a while, that joy and pleaſure that he had in heaven: Why, what was the matter? You ſee it, Prov. viii. 31.; he had ſo much pleaſure and ſatisfaction in the work he was engaged in, that it is ſaid, *His delights were with the ſons of men, rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth*, even the places where his ſick patients lay. It was not for any pleaſure that he took in *habitable places;* nay, it was not *places*, but *perſons* in ſuch and ſuch a place: ſome of my ſick patients ly in this corner of the world, and ſome of them in that corner; ſome of them ly among the iſles, and uttermoſt parts of the earth; ſome of them ly in yonder iſle of Britain, ſome of them in Scotland; and, may not I ſay, ſome of them ly in Fife, and ſome of them in Dunfermline? He rejoiced in the habitable places of the earth, where he had patients to heal; *His delights were with the ſons of men:* For his heart was engaged in his work, he heartily conſented to it from all eternity. And though eternity cannot be divided into parts, yet, to ſpeak after the manner of our conception, he ſpent the reſt of that eternity in rejoicing in the thoughts of it.

But more particularly, that his heart was engaged, will appear, if you conſider,

(1.) That not only did he give his *hearty conſent* from all eternity, but ſo ſoon as ever he had created the world by his almighty arm, then preſently he falls about his work and buſineſs: for he was *ſlain from the foundation of the world.* It is true, he came not perſonally for the ſpace of about four thouſand years from the beginning of the world; but though he came not in *perſon*, yet he came by *proxy*. The infinite wiſdom of God thought fit to order matters ſo, that many a ſacrifice was ſent to be a ſhadow of this good thing that was to come; and many a ſervant did he ſend to aſſure them that he was a coming.

(2.) When the *fulneſs of time was come*, that he appeared on the ſtage of the earth, he ſhewed, in the whole courſe of his life, how much his *heart* was engaged in his *mediatorial work*. When he was yet a child, and his parents loſt him, and found him in the temple, and began to chide with him; What, ſays Chriſt? Luke ii. 49. *How was it that you ſought me? wiſt*

ye

ye not that I muſt be about my Father's buſineſs? Never did a hungry man delight more in meat, than Chriſt delighted in the work of our redemption: *It was his meat and drink to do the will of him that ſent him.*

(3.) That his heart was engaged in the work, appears from his *zeal* againſt every thing that had a tendency to hinder his going on to the hardeſt and higheſt part of his work. What can be more expreſſive of a heart engaged in the work, than the paſſage you have, Mat. xvi. 23. There Peter began to rebuke Chriſt, when he ſpake of his ſuffering; *Be it far from thee, Lord.* One would think, that Chriſt would have taken this in good part, and that it was love in Peter; but we never read that Chriſt took any thing ſo ill: he turned about, like a man in the greateſt paſſion, and ſays, *Get thee behind me, Satan:* Never was ſuch a word heard from the mouth of Chriſt, and that ſpoken to a ſaint. It is Peter's voice, but the devil hath tuned it; What would become of an elect world, if I ſhould ſtop here? *Get thee behind me, Satan.* His heart was engaged to the work.

(4.) It appears from his *longing to pay the debt* which he had engaged to pay: *I have a baptiſm to be baptized with, and how am I ſtraitened until it be finiſhed?* He longed to be plunged over head and ears, as it were, in the ocean of divine wrath: and when it came near to the time of his death, it is noted, Luke xix. 18. *He went before aſcending up to Jeruſalem;* as a child, that is going with his friends to a place where he deſires to be, runs out before, as being fond to be forward; ſo Chriſt went before, and all the way talked of it to them, as we uſe to talk of what we pant after: Yea, when it came near to his ſuffering, he cannot forbear telling his diſciples, that *with deſire he deſired to eat that paſſover,* wherein he ſaw, as in a glaſs, how he was to ſuffer. And when Judas went forth to betray him, he ſaid, *What thou doeſt, do quickly,* John xiii. 37.; and when he was gone, he rejoiced, and ſaid, *Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him:* He reckoned the work done, becauſe the inſtrument that ſet all a-work was gone out. And, at the end of the 14th chapter of John, he brake off, as it were, in the midſt of the ſermon, and ſays, *Ariſe, let us go hence.* Of all works, preaching was moſt pleaſant to him; but behold he breaks off, and goes out, that he might be taken and crucified, that the occaſion might not ſlip. And then he does not ſtay till Judas found him out; No, he goes forth to the place where Judas and his band were, and offered himſelf a willing ſacrifice. When they ſaid, *We ſeek Jeſus of Nazareth;* he anſwers, *I am he,* John xviii. 4, 5.: and when Peter would have reſcued him, he bade him put up his ſword, ſaying, *The cup which my Father hath given me to drink, ſhall I not drink it?* Yea, when he was beaten and buffeted, how did he *give his back to the ſmiters, and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair? He was led as a lamb to the ſlaughter; and as a ſheep before her ſhearers is dumb, ſo he opened not his mouth.* Yea, when hanging on a croſs, he had enough to provoke ſo great a ſpirit to have reſcued himſelf, when they cried, *Come down, and we will believe thee: If thou canſt ſave thyſelf, we will believe that thou canſt ſave others:* Nay, ſay they, *he ſaved others, but himſelf he cannot ſave.* He might, like a Sampſon, have broken down the pillars of heaven and earth about their ears; but he bears all patiently. And then, how his heart was engaged, appears in the very laſt act; *He bowed his head,* and cried out with a joyful heart, *It is finiſhed:* the work which my Father gave me to do, is finiſhed; the work which I engaged my heart unto, is finiſhed: *And ſo he gave up the ghoſt,* committing his ſpirit into his Father's hand, as a pledge and token that the engagement was fulfilled. And now, this work being accompliſhed, ſhall we not think that his heart is as much engaged to the work of redemption by *power,* as it was to the work of redemption by *price?* Yea, *He hath entered into heaven, now to appear in the preſence of God for us,* Heb. ix. 24. *If, when we were yet enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; how much more, being reconciled, ſhall we be ſaved by his life?* Rom. v. 10. *He that was dead is alive, and lives for evermore;* and *he ever lives to make interceſſion for us.* He lives to apply, by the power of his Spirit, what he purchaſed, by the price of his blood.——Thus you ſee the *ſingularity of the fact,* both to the matter and manner of it; and how his heart was engaged to approach unto God: And ſo far is he from being diſſatisfied with the bargain, that never a repenting thought was in his heart to this day, with reſpect to the whole of his work.

IV. The *fourth* thing propoſed, was, To give the *reaſons* of the doctrine, why Chriſt did ſo *heartily* come under the engagement; together with the reaſons of our *faith* about it; or, why is it that Jehovah's teſtimony is added in theſe words, *ſaith the Lord: Who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me?* SAITH THE LORD.

Now, as to the *firſt* of theſe, *viz.* the *reaſon* why Chriſt did ſo *cordially engage* in this work. There are theſe *four* reaſons eſpecially that I would offer.

1. He engaged his heart, from *obedience* to his *Father's command; I delight to do thy will, O my God.* God the Father chooſed him to this ſervice; *Behold my Servant, whom I have choſen; mine Elect, in whom my ſoul delighteth.* And he authorized him in it, and cauſed him to approach: *This commandment have I received of my Father.*

2. He engaged his heart from *zeal* to his *Father's glory.* Though the whole creation of men and angels had been offered up as a whole burnt-offering, it would not have repaired the honour of God for one ſin whereby his honour is impaired: But Chriſt's engagement is what brings more glory to God, than if all mankind had ſtood, or yet fallen a ſacrifice to divine juſtice; therefore Chriſt, from a zeal to his Father's glory, did come under this engagement; *The zeal of God's houſe did eat him up.* By his engagement all the *attributes of God* are glorified.—God had a mind to ſet out his *love* and *mercy* to the utmoſt, and herein it is done more than any other way; *God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in him ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life,* John 3. 16. We may behold here the height and depth, the length and breadth of the love of God, in taking his Son out of his boſom, where he lay from eternity, and giving him for us. He looked over all the copies of his love, grace, and mercy that he had written in all his former works, and found them

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ſhort of the thing; therefore it is his will to write his love in letters of blood, upon him who is an infinite Spirit with himſelf: and, that this may be done, he gives him a body; *A body haſt thou given me*, that this body, this human nature, might be a ſacrifice for ſin. —God had a mind to ſet forth the glory of his *juſtice* to the utmoſt, and by this engagement it is done. What though the whole world were drowned in a deluge of water, or, as Sodom, burnt to aſhes? What though all the poſterity of Adam were doomed to everlaſting burning? What though every ſpire of graſs, or atom of duſt, were a rational creature, and for ſin thrown into hell? This would be indeed an act of excellent juſtice: but what is all this to the juſtice execute upon Chriſt, when he ſtood in our room? What are all other judgments to his bloody ſweat in the garden, and his expiring grones upon a croſs? Here is the higheſt act of juſtice imaginable, to make the ſoul of his dearly beloved Son an offering for ſin, when imputed to him. See Rom. iii. 23. *Whom God hath ſet forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteouſneſs for the remiſſion of ſins that are paſt, through the forbearance of God.* Here the awakened ſword of juſtice is drunk to full and complete ſatisfaction with the moſt noble blood that ever was or could be.—God had a mind to ſet forth his *holineſs* to the utmoſt: now the perfect obedience of men and angels might ſet forth his holineſs; but what is all this to the obedience of the Son of God, whoſe obedience does indeed magnify the law? God's law was never honoured, and his holineſs never ſhewed with ſuch a ſparkling luſtre.—God had a mind to ſet forth his *power* to the utmoſt; and now the arm of omnipotency was not ſo much manifeſted in laying the foundation of the earth, and ſtretching out the heavens as a curtain, and turning the wheels of providence, as in bringing about the ſalvation of ſinners by Chriſt; the power of God ſupporting Chriſt under that load of wrath, which would have cruſhed ten thouſand worlds: *Once have I heard, yea twice, that power belongeth unto the Lord*, Pſa. lxii. 11. Once have I heard it in the work of creation and providence, but far more glorioufly in the work of redemption, wherein he ſpoiled principalities and powers, bruiſed the head of the ſerpent, deſtroyed the works of the devil, diſarmed death, and knocked off the fetters of our ſpiritual captivity.—In a word, God had a mind to ſet forth his *wiſdom* to the utmoſt. Wiſdom ſhines every moment in the work of creation, it glitters every day in the work of providence; but *all the treaſures of wiſdom are hid in Chriſt.* Here is the wiſdom of God in a myſtery; *the manifold wiſdom of God*; particularly in uniting the moſt divine extremes: the divine and human natures are united in one perſon; the juſtice and mercy of God united in one joint harmony, for the ſalvation of ſinners, without robbing each other of their right, and ſo God and man united in an eternal fellowſhip; ſtubble is made to dwell with devouring fire, without being deſtroyed; and weakneſs to behold glory, without being overwhelmed; yea, ſtraw is made to dwell with everlaſting burnings; *Who among us ſhall dwell with devouring fire? who among us ſhall dwell with everlaſting burnings?* Iſa. xxxiii. 14. Why, even the believer can dwell with a God of terrible majeſty and infinite juſtice, and dwell there with ſatisfaction, and without hazard of being conſumed, becauſe of this engagement of Chriſt, whereby juſtice is infinitely ſatisfied.—Thus, I ſay, God had a mind to ſet forth the glory of his perfections: now, zeal for this glory of God engaged the Mediator's heart to this work.

3. He engaged his heart, from a view of his Father's *reward*; *For the joy that was ſet before him, he endured the croſs, deſpiſing the ſhame*, Heb. xii. 2. *and now is ſet down at the right-hand of God*, Heb. ii. 9. His Father promiſed him, that, having *drunk of the brook in the way*, he then ſhould *lift up his head*; and accordingly, he *having humbled himſelf, and become obedient unto death, even the death of the croſs*, therefore *God hath highly exalted him*, Phil. ii. 8, 9. In a word, it was the Father's promiſe to him, that, upon his *making his ſoul an offering for ſin, he ſhould ſee his ſeed, and ſee the travel of his ſoul and be ſatisfied.* And therefore his heart was engaged to the work.

4. He engaged his heart to this work; why? It was even out of *love* and *pity to loſt ſinners:* he ſaw us helpleſs and hopeleſs, and lying in our blood; and then our time was a time of love. Chriſt was drawn to this work; but what was it that drew him? even a cord of love: Love brought him out of heaven, and love nailed him to a croſs, and love laid him in a grave, and love made him riſe again, and mount up to heaven to agent our cauſe. On what deſign came he to the world? It was a deſign of love. What ſickneſs died he of? he was even ſick of love, and died in love. O! ſhall not this love beget love, and engage our hearts to him, whoſe heart was engaged to this work out of love to us? In a word, it was to engage the heart of ſinners to him, and ſo to make way for their approaching unto God in him.

2*dly*, As to the *reaſon* of *our faith*, in the laſt word of the text; it is built upon a *Thus ſaith the Lord; Who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me?* SAITH THE LORD. There is JEHOVAH'S teſtimony; and why is this added? Why?

1. Becauſe nothing is more *quieting to the conſcience* of a ſinner than the teſtimony of a God concerning a Saviour; God, by his holy Spirit in the word, teſtifying of Chriſt to the conſcience, ſaying, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleaſed.* True peace of conſcience is grounded upon this teſtimony.

2. Nothing is more *ſecuring to the ſoul*; for God's teſtimony is our ſecurity; Pſal. xix. 7. *The teſtimony of the Lord is ſure.* It is *very ſure*, Pſal. xciii. 5. Here is ground for the aſſurance of faith; the ſure word and teſtimony of a God that cannot lie.

3. Nothing is more *rejoicing to the heart*; Pſal. xix. 8. and Pſal. lx. 6. *God hath ſpoken in his holineſs, I will rejoice:* Why? nothing ſpeaks out more love than this, when JEHOVAH ſays the word, as well as does the work. The ſoul cannot but rejoice when the Lord ſpeaks to it; at leaſt, here is ground of joy unſpeakable; John xv. 11. *Theſe things have I ſpoken to you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.*

4. Nothing is more *ſilencing to unbelief* than this: why? here is the very utmoſt length that unbelief can go; for, ſays the unbelieving heart, if God would ſay it, then I would believe it. Well, *Thus ſaith the Lord* comes in here, to ruin and ſilence your unbelief. Here is the reaſon

reaſon of our faith: for you are to notice two things in the text; the one is, the glorious *object* of faith, a Chriſt engaging himſelf in our room: The other is the convincing *reaſon* of faith; it comes with a *Thus ſaith the Lord.* Now, in order to get our faith fixed, and brought to a full aſſurance and certainty, we are not ſo much to look to the *object* of faith, or the thing to be believed, as to the *reaſon* of faith, and the ground of it, namely, God's teſtimony; he ſays it: his truth and veracity is at the ſtake to give us ſecurity; it is the great word of the great God. It is not the greatneſs of a promiſe that draws our faith, but the fidelity of the promiſer; nay, the greater the promiſe is, the more will we doubt of it, unleſs there be a ground for believing it. If a man of undoubted integrity come and tell you never ſo great things that he is to do for you, and give to you, the greatneſs of the things promiſed is not the reaſon of your believing him; nay, the greater they are, the further will you be from believing: but the reaſon of your believing is, becauſe the man is honeſt and able, and a perſon of intire credit, whom you can truſt. Even ſo it is here; there is a great thing propoſed to our faith, that Chriſt, the *Sent of God*, is engaged for our complete ſalvation; and upon this ground he promiſes in the context, *I will be your God, and ye ſhall be my people.* But, the greater it is, the further are we from believing it; and therefore we muſt have a reaſon for our faith: well, it is here, the God of truth ſays it, and we are to take it upon the teſtimony of the God that cannot lie. When Abraham was *ſtrong in the faith*, and *againſt hope believed in hope*, was it the greatneſs of the promiſe that ſupported his faith, or the reaſonableneſs of it? No, no; his body and Sarah's both were dead: but he conſidered the veracity and ability of the God that promiſed; *He was fully perſuaded that he that had promiſed was able to perform*, Rom. iv. 21. When Moſes was ſent to Iſrael in Egypt, to tell them that the ſet time was come that they were to be delivered from their Egyptian thraldom and bondage, and to be brought to a land flowing with milk and honey: here is a great promiſe: but O, ſays Moſes, how will they believe this? Why, ſays God, *Go tell them* I AM *hath ſent you*, even the God of *beings*, that can give being to what I ſay. I was known to their forefathers by the name, *Lord God Almighty*; becauſe I did mightily for them, to wit, Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob: and now I am come to accompliſh my promiſe that I made to them concerning their ſeed; therefore I will be known now to them by the name, I AM THAT I AM. I have all Beings in myſelf from eternity, and can give a being to my promiſe. Here is a good ground for their faith. If we look not to this ground, the greatneſs of the promiſe will overſet our faith, while the man ſays, O! it is too good news to be true! It is too great for me! and ſo we reaſon ourſelves out of our faith: But, O! ſee who ſays it, and that it is the word of JEHOVAH, and here is firm footing for your faith.

V. The *fifth* thing propoſed, was the *application* of this doctrine, in ſome *inferences*. Is it ſo, that Chriſt, the eternal Son of God, did thus cordially engage himſelf to approach unto God in the work and buſineſs of our redemption? Then hence we may infer the following particulars: We may ſee,

1. The greatneſs of our *ruin by nature*, and the ſad caſe that mankind is in; that not one of all the poſterity of Adam can or dare approach unto God, or come under engagements for this end. If we do, we engage ourſelves to what is impoſſible to perform, and we approach to a fiery tribunal, where we are doomed to eternal death, unleſs we come under the wings of this glorious Engager and Approacher to God. This God will ſhew no regard to any perſonal bond or engagement of ours: for our perſonal credit is cracked and broken, not only originally in Adam, by the violation of the covenant of works, but actually in our own perſons: we never kept a word that we promiſed to God; we never kept our engagements to God one day to an end: and therefore God will not truſt us. I am far from diſallowing of *perſonal covenanting* and engaging, when it is put in its due place; that is, after a man hath once cloſed with Chriſt, as the principal Engager; and then vows, through his grace, and under the covert of his engagement, from gratitude, to ſerve the Lord, and walk in his ways: but for all other kinds of engagements, let us know, that God will take none of our bonds without a cautioner. And we are blind, if we do not ſee that our credit is cracked: look to our national engagements; our COVENANTS, NATIONAL and SOLEMN LEAGUE; and ſure our *national* credit is cracked and broken: never a nation was more ſolemnly engaged to God, and yet never any national engagement was more ſolemnly broken and buried; the credit of our miniſters and people, of our nation and church, are ſunk into the depth of defection, diviſion, error, ſecurity, and carnal compliances. And whereas our forefathers tranſmitted to us their poſterity, precious truths, and pure Confeſſions of Faith, worthy of the name of Reformers; how are we like to tranſmit to our poſterity a world of traſh and lumber, inſtead of precious treaſure? while, among other things, *old Reformation-principles* and *doctrines* are like to be carried down to ſucceeding generations after us, under the taſh of *wildneſs*, *new ſchemes*, and *Antinomian-cant* *. And as we ought to be hum-

* This affair may be ſeen cleared up, Serm. IV. p. 70. Serm. VII. p. 129. the whole of Serm. VIII. particularly p. 149, 150.—— Although among the many peculiarly important and ſingularly intereſting doctrines of Chriſtianity there is ſcarce any that hath a greater tendency to promote holineſs, than the believer's being freed from the law as a covenant, in point of juſtification, in virtue of the meritorious obedience of Chriſt in his room; yet, in regard this doctrine is eminently calculated to advance the glory of God, in the manifeſtation of the freedom of his grace, and to debaſe the creature, in levelling pride and ſelf-confidence, there is hardly any that is more ſpurned at than this, in the age we live in, and by none more than the ſelf-ſufficient Legaliſt, who prides himſelf in, and vaunts mightily of his legal righteouſneſs; and ſo ſpeaks, writes, and reaſons againſt the Scripture-doctrine of free juſtification through the merits of Chriſt: yea, ſo much is he in conceit with his legal turn of mind, and external conformity to the law, that he ſticks at nothing that he thinks will bring a reproach upon his opponents; and therefore, let their abilities be never ſo great, and their character never ſo high, he is determined to calumniate their name, and depreciate their reputation: for this purpoſe he heſitates at nothing he imagines will gain his end; and hence we find, that introducers of new ſchemes in Divinity, diſturbers of the peace of the church, enemies to holineſs, friends to licentiouſneſs, advancers of Antinomianiſm, and what not, are the uſual epithets and appellations we meet with conferred upon them. But what period of the church produced more eminent divines, greater lovers of our Reformation-principles, truer patrons of genuine piety, more ſhining examples of true holineſs, greater promoters of external purity, and ſtronger oppoſers of licentiouſneſs, than the friends to the Marrow doctrine, of *dying to the law, in point of juſtification, in order to living unto God, in point of ſanctification* were, who were, and ſtill are thus impeached?—But they being fully perſuaded, that this is a doctrine agreeable to the inſpired Writings, and peculiarly calculated to promote holineſs, [Gal. ii. 19. Tit. ii. 11, 12.] they bore all this unjuſt calumny and defamation patiently, accounting it their greateſt honour to ſuffer reproach for the truth's ſake.

bled this day for the breach of our *National Covenant* and *Solemn League*; ſo we may ſee what is neceſſary, in order to the reviving of a covenanted Work of Reformation, and of our Solemn Engagements, even that the generation be brought to acquaintance with Chriſt, as the firſt and foremoſt Engager in their room; and then, that, under the acceptable covert of his engagement, they come under obligations, through his grace, to approach unto God, by returning to him and to their duty. O that the Spirit of wiſdom and revelation in the knowledge of Chriſt, were poured out for this end! However, as our national engagements are ſadly broken, ſo look to your baptiſmal engagements, your communion-engagements, and all your other particular engagements to duty; and ſee, that as our national, ſo our perſonal credit is cracked; for an evil heart of unbelief cauſes your departure from the living God, every hour of the day. And this is ſuch an univerſal diſeaſe, that there is not one of Adam's race that God can now truſt without a cautioner, nor allow to approach to him without a mids-man.

2. Hence ſee the *glorious excellency of Chriſt*, and the *ſufficiency* of this *wonderful Engager* for his people, in that he was able to approach to an offended God, and able to ſtand there in the ſinner's ſtead, and to plead for their good; able to ſtand the trial of infinite holineſs and impartial juſtice, and, where nothing was to be forgiven, was able to ſatisfy all that the law and juſtice could demand, and to finiſh every thing that was neceſſary to be done, in reference to man's ſalvation, and the work of redemption. O ſee his glory, ſee his glory! O glorious Engager, glorious Approacher! Behold his glory, and the glory of God in him! If you ſee any thing of this glory to captivate you, then the *God, who commanded light to ſhine out of darkneſs, hath ſhined in your hearts, to give you the light of the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jeſus Chriſt.*

3. Hence ſee what is the *goſpel-way of a ſinner's engaging to duty*, and *approaching to God*; Why, it is juſt to take on with this Engager, and ſo to engage under him; and to take on with this bleſſed Approacher, and to approach to God in him. In the old covenant of works, man got a ſtock of created grace in his own hand; and if he miſpent his ſtock, and became bankrupt, he was to anſwer for himſelf; he had no ſurety or cautioner to ſtand up for him, or to pay his debt, nor to approach to God for him: but the covenant of grace is better ordered than ſo, and therefore called *a better teſtament*, whereof Chriſt is the Mediator, in whoſe hand the principal ſtock is; and whatever ſmall meaſure of grace believers have beſtowed upon them, yet their ſtock can never be ſpent, and they can never break, or become liable to a law-purſuit, for the Cautioner keeps them and their ſtock both; and he being the Engager, they may engage to do any thing, yea, all things, upon his ſcore; *I can do all things, through Chriſt ſtrengthening me*: and he being the leading Approacher to God, they may approach to God with boldneſs, when he goes before them; *We have boldneſs to enter into the holieſt, by the blood of Jeſus.* Here then is a teſt of right engagements; you cannot be truſted if you engage alone; you muſt match with one that can make good your engagements. In your common affairs in the world, you know that no man will take a perſon's bond or engagement for a ſum of money; for example, if he know the perſon to be inſolvent, that can never make payment, but rather is always taking on more and more debt; but if that perſon, be he never ſo poor himſelf, will provide you a ſufficient cautioner, that will give his bond of ſuretiſhip for him, then you will accept of the perſon's bond under this cautionry; becauſe, though the principal, whom you have good ground to ſuſpect, ſhould break the next hour, and become utterly inſolvent, yet you are ſecure, becauſe you can purſue the cautioner when you will, upon his engagement and bond of ſuretiſhip. Well, juſt ſo is it here; poor broken bankrupt that thou art, there is no truſting of thy bond or engagement; God will not truſt any of the race of Adam; ſince the time that he brake, when he violate his firſt covenant-engagement. Nay, the Lord knows, you are ſo far from being able to pay your debt, that you are but every moment taking on more and more; but, be you never ſo poor and inſolvent, if you once accept of Chriſt for your Cautioner, then God will accept of any bond off your hand, that hath his name as the Engager in it; for, if you fail, your Cautioner is liable, and he is a rich and opulent Cautioner, ſponſable enough; and God ſeeks no better than his bond, though you be never ſo unable to pay; yea, God reckons himſelf ſecure, and that all ſhall be well enough paid, when Chriſt is the Cautioner and Engager accepted by you. He is ſecured of his honour; obedience to his law is ſecured, ſatisfaction to his juſtice is ſecured, glory to all his attributes is ſecured: and herein lies the triumph of faith, over all charges and challenges from the law or juſtice of God, Rom. viii. 33, 34. What is the charge? Why, ſays the law, you owe me a debt of obedience; yea, ſays juſtice, and you owe me a debt of ſatisfaction, becauſe of your diſobedience: nay, but ſays bold faith, you may produce what charges you will, but there is a diſcharge to counterbalance it. If you had my ſingle perſonal bond for payment, then I confeſs I would be liable; but as I can elide any law-purſuit againſt me, with the defence of my Cautioner's full payment in my room, ſo if you have any thing further to ſay againſt me, go to my Cautioner, who is engaged for all: he is able to anſwer all that you can ſay; and therefore let all challengers and him reckon the matter betwixt them.—In a word, right engagement is to engage upon Chriſt's engagement. What is that? It is juſt, as it were, to lay a wager upon Chriſt's head. I will wager upon his head, that I will get to heaven, in ſpite of all the devils in hell; I will wager upon his head, that the head of the ſerpent ſhall be bruiſed; I will wager upon his head, that ſin ſhall not have dominion over me; I will wager upon his head, that I ſhall perform duty, and do all things through him ſtrengthening me; I will wager upon his head, that my ſins ſhall be forgiven me; as the Jews, you know, confeſſed their ſins upon the head of the ſacrifice ſhadowing Chriſt; and what was the goſpel of it? Why, when it was done in the faith of Chriſt, the great ſacrifice, it was in effect to ſay, I will wager upon the head of this ſacrifice, that as it is ſufficient for the expiation of my ſins, ſo all my ſins ſhall be pardoned

doned upon this ground. What ſay you, man? Will you venture all that concerns your holineſs and happineſs, grace and glory, duty and dignity; will you venture all upon Chriſt? Will you wager and engage upon his head? Then in God's name you ſhall gain the day. But here alſo is a teſt of right approaching to God in all duties and ordinances, and at a communion-table; why, it is juſt, as it were, a coming to the chamber of divine preſence, ſo as to come in at Chriſt's back, ſetting him before you as the firſt Approacher to uſher you in; *I am the way, and no man cometh to the Father but by me.* It is to come to God in the faith of Chriſt's having approached to him before you, and to come boldly, never fearing that his infinite holineſs ſhall daſh ſuch a filthy ſinner, nor that his infinite juſtice ſhall confound ſuch a guilty ſinner. Why, your Uſher, that hath gone before you to the preſence of this holy and juſt God, hath gratified his holineſs, and ſatisfied his juſtice both. —Here, I ſay, you ſee the right engaging and right approaching.

4. And laſtly, Paſſing all other inferences that might be drawn from the doctrine; hence ſee the *duty* of all that *hear this goſpel*, and what the Lord is *calling you to this day;* it is even this, that your heart be engaged to approach unto him, whoſe heart was engaged to approach unto God in your room; that ſo, approaching heartily to Chriſt, you may approach confidently to God in him; for there is no approaching to God but by taking Chriſt by the way. O then, let your hearts be engaged to approach unto Chriſt; this is the very deſign of all that we have been ſaying, even to engage your hearts to the Son of God. And, O Sirs, what in all the world will engage your hearts, if the engaged heart of Chriſt do it not? He is come here this day to court your hearts; the very heart of a Saviour is come down to court the heart of a ſinner, and to court you with this argument, That his heart is ſo much upon you, that he engaged his heart to approach unto God in your room. Away with the devil's logic, *May be it was not for me that Chriſt engaged, nor for me that he approached unto God; for there is but a ſelect number, that were elected from eternity, for whom he engaged and approached.* In order to ſhut this objection out of the way, let me tell you, man, that *ſecret things belong to God, but to us the things that are revealed.* Let an infinitely wiſe God anſwer for his own decrees, as well he can; but you dare not be anſwerable to God for meddling with them; and you meddle too far, if the thoughts thereof diſcourage you from coming to Chriſt this day. Will it be a good anſwer for you, before the bar of God? Lord, I thought, perhaps, I was not elected, and therefore my heart could never be engaged to Chriſt. What anſwer can you expect from God, but the like of this, Wretch that thou art, had you not my revealed will to be a rule of your duty? And did not I reveal, That upon the peril of damnation you was to cloſe with my Chriſt? And what had you to do with my ſecret decree? How durſt you attempt to be wiſe above what is written? Who but the devil could ſuggeſt that to your heart, that you was not an elect? And he was a liar for ſaying ſo, for he told you what he did not know himſelf. How does the devil act herein like himſelf, while he would carry you up to the pinnacle of the temple of eternal predeſtination at the firſt inſtant, that you may thence throw yourſelf down from the battlement of heaven to the bottom of hell, which was the way himſelf went, and he would have you along with him? O! will you regard the ruining ſuggeſtions of a black devil, more than the kindly motions of a Saviour? O! will you rather utſhoot the devil in his own bow, and draw an argument for faith from what was done from all eternity? Tit. i. 2. Was eternal life promiſed in Chriſt before the world began? was all engaged for from eternity? Then there is the leſs ado for me, when this promiſe of eternal life comes directed and offered; for, *to you is the word of this ſalvation ſent*, that Chriſt hath engaged for all that concerns our ſalvation; and we have nothing ado, but, through grace, to conſent that this Engager be ours, to do all for us. From all eternity the Mediator's heart was engaged to the work of our redemption; and from this infinitely high and eternal tower there are ropes of divine promiſes hanging down, for us to lay hold on with our hearts: For *the promiſe is to us and to our children, and to all that are afar off.* And when our hearts embrace any of theſe promiſes that are faſtened to Chriſt's engaged heart, then our hearts are carried up in God's order to the knowledge of the divine counſels, and go up the ſcripture-ſtair; while Satan would have us begin at the top, that we may fall down headlong. Now, among theſe promiſes that are let down from Chriſt's engaged heart, for us to embrace with our heart, there is one, Jer. xxxi. 2. *I have loved thee with an everlaſting love, therefore with loving-kindneſs will I draw thee.* O Sirs, here is a cord of love let down, and the upper end of it is faſtened to Chriſt's heart, and the lower end of it hanging down the length of your hearts: And, O! ſhall not Chriſt's heart and yours be knit together this day? here is a cord to bind his heart to your heart, and your heart to his heart. O! ſtrong cord of God's making! O! ſhall not the Saviour's heart and the ſinner's heart meet together this day? Will the heart of Jeſus gain no heart in this houſe to-day? Yea, we hope there ſhall be a meeting of hearts betwixt him and a remnant here. O then, ſinner, come in to his heart, for his heart is open: and I have a commiſſion to tell you, that his heart is open to you, and opened ſo wide, that you may all go in to his opened heart. It is not a hard heart like yours; No, no: If he had been as hardened againſt you, as your hearts were hardened againſt him, he would never have engaged ſo heartily to approach to God for you, nor ever ſent us to tell you his heart's love towards you. O believe it upon his word, Jer. xxxi. 20. He is not hard-hearted; no; his heart is a melting heart, ſaying, *I do earneſtly remember you ſtill; my bowels are troubled for you; I will ſurely have mercy upon you.* From the very time that I engaged for you, which was from all eternity, I do earneſtly remember you ſtill; and now the time of love is come, the time of letting out my heart toward you: my bowels are ſounding for you, and my heart is melting over you, and warm drops of love are falling down from my melted heart to your hard hearts, that they may be melted and diſſolved, ſo as both mine and yours may be melted into one, and being run together with the fire of my everlaſting

lasting love, they may be engaged to each other for ever. O Sinner! sinner! sinner! O enemies! enemies to God, enemies to Jesus! O hard-hearted sinner! Words and rods, calls and threatenings, sermons and sacraments have not melted your heart; and if you go to hell, the flames of hell will never melt your heart: but here are the flames of infinite love from the heart of a God-man; what will this do? A God of love is come down, and must not the mountains melt before him? Yea, mountains of enmity and unbelief, and the hard flinty heart will melt like wax before him. A live coal from the flaming altar of Christ's engaged heart, is come down to put fire to your cold-rife heart. O! is the blessed fire kindled? Is your heart engaged to him or not? If not, will you consider,

(1.) What a *sad thing* it is, if your heart shall not be engaged to approach unto him: It says, the heart is engaged to some others than to Christ, that your heart is engaged to idols and lusts, and you cannot find in your heart to sign a bill of divorce from these. But, O! will you tell me, if your heart be engaged to the devil, engaged to the world, engaged to the flesh, and the lusts thereof, engaged to wicked company, engaged to corrupt courses, and that you cannot be disengaged from them, nor break these engagements, nor your covenant with hell? O! will any of these lovers to whom your hearts are engaged, will any of them engage to approach to God in your room, as Christ hath done? Will any of them engage to bring you to heaven, or to keep you out of hell? Nay, are they not engaged rather to ruin your souls for ever, if they can? And why should your hearts be engaged to your greatest enemies, that would lead you to destruction; and not engaged to Christ, who engaged his heart to approach unto God for your salvation and redemption? If your hearts be not engaged to Christ, it says you are, at best, married and engaged to the law; you are going about to establish a righteousness of your own; hoping to please God, and procure salvation to yourselves by your prayers and good duties: Your language is like that of the wicked servant, that said, *Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.* You are not yet pleased to have one to undertake for all in your room; and therefore, O sad is your state! for you stand under a personal obligation to pay all indeed: You are *a debtor to do the whole law;* and yet, because of your failure, you are under obligation to bear the whole curse of the law. O terrible! If you stay there, you must approach to the tribunal of God, in your own person. O! how will you approach to God without him! You will find God out of Christ a consuming fire.

(2.) Consider how *sweet* it is to have your hearts engaged to him, whose heart was engaged to approach to God for you: his heart was engaged to you before ever yours were engaged to him; yea, from all eternity; and you may *rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.* Though your debt be never so great, he is engaged to pay it; though your sins be never so heinous, he is engaged to pardon them; though your corruptions be never so strong, he is engaged to subdue them; though your enemies be never so mighty, he is engaged to conquer them; and though the promises be never so precious in themselves, and unlikely to be accomplished to you, yet he is engaged to fulfil them; only, while you are here, on this side Jordan, he will accomplish them in his own time, and in his own measure, and according as your need, your work, and his glory do call for it. Yea, he is engaged to perform all your work, in you and for you, and to perfect strength in your weakness: he is engaged to guide you by his counsel, and bring you to his glory, and to lead you safe through the valley of the shadow of death into IMMANUEL's land: he is engaged for your debt, your duty, your safety, and all. O what a load-stone is this, to draw the heart and engage the affections of any rational soul, to engage with one that engages for all that you can need through time and through eternity! Why, say you, But must I engage to do nothing? O that old covenant, *Do* and *Live*, sticks fast to you: in the covenant of works, man was engaged to do all; but O, in the covenant of grace, Christ is engaged to do all. Why, man, if you can do any thing without Christ, you may try your hand; but why will you give Christ the lie, who says, *without me ye can do nothing?* And if that be a truth, O how sweet is it to have a heart engaged to him, that has engaged to do all! You may know from your experience, how sad a thing it is to take any engagement upon yourself alone, and on your own head: for it never abides a touch; and when you break your engagement, then you are quite dispirited, as if the covenant of grace were broken; and thus you turn your covenant of duties to God's covenant of grace, and so the covenant of grace to a covenant of works; and, in that case, no wonder that you find the law a hard and heavy task-master. But the covenant of grace is Christ's engaging to do all; it is not a bargain that God is making with you; for he will not make a bargain with the like of you; God knows you are a bargain-breaker; but it is a bargain made with Christ, wherein Christ hath engaged to God to do all for you, because you can do nothing: and now he courts your heart to fall in with this device of glorious and free grace.

(3.) Consider *who* it is that is courting your heart: It is he to whom the heart of God is engaged; *Behold my Servant, whom I uphold; mine Elect, in whom my soul delighteth.* God's heart was engaged to Christ from all eternity, not only because he was his eternal Son, but also because he engaged his heart to approach to him on your account. God's heart is so much engaged to him for that very reason, that he declares three times, with an audible voice from heaven, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased;* and all that he seeks is that you be well-pleased too. And, O you are ill to please, if that which pleases God, will not please you; and your heart is ill disposed, if it be not engaged to him to whom God's heart is engaged. God the Father put him upon this work, out of good-will to you: he caused him to approach on your account; and he is pleased with his engagement and approach; and nothing in the world will please God so much, nor make him take so much pleasure in you, as your being well-pleased with Christ and his undertaking, so as to find your heart engaged to him for it: for then you will please him more than ever your sins

displeased him; and you will honour him more than ever your sins dishonoured him: Yea, then he will get full satisfaction for all your sins; because that glorious Engager, whom you close with, hath fully contented his heart; and so you will satisfy his justice more than your eternal damnation in hell could do. O! the heart of God is engaged to him, and the hearts of angels are engaged to him, and the hearts of all the redeemed are engaged to him: O! shall all hearts be engaged to him but yours! O there would be joy in heaven, and it would be a day of the gladness of Christ's heart, and it would give a glad heart to God, angels, and saints, if your hearts were engaged to Christ!

(4.) Consider *whose heart* he is courting: You perhaps think, surely it will be some very good heart that will please him: indeed I know none that have a good heart, by nature; and you that think you have a good heart to God, do but deceive yourselves: But, O he is even courting the love of that heart that is full of enmity against him; his love is seeking to break your enmity this day. What for a heart have you, man, woman? Be what sort of a heart it will, he is seeking it; *My Son, give me thy heart.* Is it a wicked heart, and a wandering heart, an unbelieving heart, a deceitful heart? Is it the heart of Manasseh in compact with Satan? Is it the heart of a Mary Magdalene, out of whom were cast seven devils? Is it the worst heart in all the world, and the worst heart that ever was in the world? a hard heart, a stout heart, a stony heart, a heart full of hell, and a heart like the devil? It is even the heart that he is seeking and courting this day: he engages to give you a new heart and a new spirit; and if you sign his engagement with your heart, saying, Content, Lord; he will make your heart to his mind by degrees; and your heart shall be according to his heart. What, say you, is that possible, that he is courting such a heart as mine? Would it not be presumption for such an one as me, vile, filthy, black, and ugly me, to trust for so much good at the hand of such an one as Christ? What, man! when God calls, is it presumption in you to answer his call? No; it is the greatest presumption in the world to sit his call, and refuse his kind embraces, when he offers to take you into his very heart. When Christ offered to wash Peter's feet, O did it not ill become him to say, *Lord, thou shalt never wash my feet*, John xiii. 8. Be your feet never so dirty, and your heart never so black, you have the more need to let Christ wash you.

(5.) Consider, that the *present opportunity* is a *special season* of letting out your heart upon him, when he is coming so near to you in this work. It is a dangerous thing to miss the tide when it is flowing: some of your friends and neighbours are in eternity, since the last communion here; and you may never hear another action-sermon all your life: and though you may hear other sermons, yet it is but now and then that the wind blows, and that the Spirit breathes; and it is dangerous to resist the motions that blow you in to the happy harbour of Christ's engaged heart: if there be a gale of heaven just now blowing, yet it may be over before an hour go about. O shall not your heart be engaged unto Christ! What if death approach to you, and snap the thread of your life in two? O! you would be more miserable than the devil to all eternity; for he never had such an offer as this. Death is approaching, judgment is approaching, eternity is approaching, and your heart not approaching to Christ: wo is me! what will come of you!

(6.) Consider, that Christ hath *fulfilled his engagement to the Father for you*, by bringing in *everlasting righteousness*; and God hath accepted it, and is well-pleased with it as the condition of the covenant, and all the promises thereof: and, upon this account, the promise is made to you, as follows immediately upon the text, *I will be your God, and ye shall be my people.* I WILL and YE SHALL, is the tenor of the promise; because Christ hath fulfilled the condition of it, so as you have nothing to do, but to say with the heart, *Thy will be done.* And if your heart be engaged to him, and made willing, the God who commends Christ so highly to you, in the words of the text, will turn it over to your commendation, saying, *Who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me, saith the Lord?* Now, say not, that you want such and such qualifications and conditions requisite in these that give their heart and hand to the Son of God; if your heart stand off from him on this account, it argues a heart in league with the law as a covenant of works, which is but a black bargain now, for any of the fallen race of Adam; but the better testament is a better bargain, where Christ hath engaged for all fully, and you are only to take all freely: and never a good qualification will you have acceptable to God, till your heart be engaged to him whose heart was engaged to give all. If your heart be not thus engaged to Christ, to be obliged and indebted to him for all, then, though you had a thousand times more qualifications than you would be at, yet you shall go to hell with them, and perish eternally: and if your heart be once engaged to Christ, then, though you had ten thousand good qualifications, you will *count them all but dung, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ*, as Paul did. It is said of the creditor, concerning his two debtors, Luke vii. 42. *When they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them all.* So long as you think you have something to pay your own debt, or hope that you shall have something to make payment with, you are not in God's way of forgiveness; but when you have nothing to pay; not a penny in your purse, either to pay your debt of obedience and satisfaction to the law, as a covenant; or your debt of duty to the law, as a rule, and are content to take a cautioner, then he frankly forgives all. And so the best qualification is for you to see that you have nothing; no money nor money-worth, that you may be obliged to Christ for all.

What say you, man? Is your heart engaged to him? I think so, may some say; but it may be only a flash, because I have a deceitful heart. Why, man, be your heart never so deceitful, yet if there be such a heart-warming in your breast, as makes you subscribe to his engagement to do all for you, and to make you *holy* as well as *happy*, and to free you from sin as well as hell; if it be such as makes you come out of yourself, saying, *I dare engage for nothing, but my heart goes in to Christ, as engaging to God for all*; then, in God's great name, I will say, it is a good flash indeed; even a flash of heavenly fire, kindled at Christ's warm

heart

heart towards you, which will never cool to eternity, though your live-coal ſhould come under the aſhes again.

What ſhall I ſay? O! is there any here, whoſe hearts are not yet engaged to Chriſt? O many, many! but, wo is me that there ſhould be any! O drunkard, ſwearer, Sabbath-breaker, whoremonger, mocker, here is a good bargain for you, even you whom we cannot allow to come to a communion-table; yet we allow you, yea, God allows you and commands you, and we in his awful name and authority command you to come to Chriſt, and take a full pardon of all your ſins, and ſubſcribe to Chriſt's whole engagement; and you ſhall have a title not only to the communion-table below, but to the communion-table above that ſhall never be drawn. Away, man, away with all objections againſt Chriſt; let your objections be ten thouſand times more and greater than they are, there is no room for one of them here; for Chriſt's engagement to do all things for you, anſwers all difficulties to you: and therefore, be you never ſuch a wretched ſinner, there is no objection you can make, but it is anſwered here, if your heart be not engaged to ſome other lovers. O, ſay you, I have not power, I cannot get my wicked heart engaged to him. O doleful and miſerable caſe! What is this, that infinite love and everlaſting kindneſs, flaming out of Chriſt's heart upon you, cannot engage your heart unto him! O! is there no power in this love? Is not love ſtrong as death, and the coals thereof coals of fire, which have a moſt vehement flame? O! here is a ſtrong flame, that is able to melt the hardeſt heart to the ſweeteſt compliance; and therefore, O will you bring theſe ſtrong cords of death, by which your heart is held, bring them to this fire, and it will burn and burſt them aſunder! Do not reſiſt the powerful love and precious grace of God, but be content to let it in to your heart, and it will draw and engage it. And therefore, ſeeing no argument will do but an argument of power; and ſeeing almighty Power uſes to ride in the chariot of this goſpel of grace; O then, will you join with me and ſay, *O powerful arm of* JEHOVAH, *come and draw, come and draw; O exalted* JESUS, *come and draw, by the power of thy Spirit. Awake, O arm of the Lord, and put on ſtrength, and let the right-hand of the Lord do valiantly.* Let all the heart-leagues with luſts and other lovers than Chriſt be broken this day, and Chriſt alone have the whole heart engaged to him; and let all the people ſay, AMEN, *So be it*, LORD. And if your heart ſay, AMEN, I hope your heart is engaged and made *willing in a day of power*: and being made willing to come to his Chriſt, you ſhall be made welcome to come to his table; having ſigned his engagement to approach to God in your room to do all for you, you may approach with boldneſs to God in him, and expect the ſame welcome with your Cautioner that goes before you. *Who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me? ſaith the Lord.*

A DISCOURSE *on the ſame* SUBJECT, *after the* SOLEMN WORK *was ended.*

NOW, my friends, after the great work is over, I would aſk you, (whether you have been communicants or not) Have your hearts been engaged to Chriſt this day, as the glorious Engager and Approacher to God for you? I would tell you, if your hearts have been engaged to him, then your hearts have been diſengaged from all things beſides him: you have been brought to forſake your father's houſe, and the people that are yours, and to *What have I any more to do with idols?* There hath been a mutual donation betwixt Chriſt and you, as man and wife give up themſelves to one another. Ye have rendered up your love to him, inſtead of all other lovers to whom your hearts were engaged before; and ye look upon yourſelves as bound in love and gratitude, never to give a back-look to any other lover, ſo long as your preſent Huſband lives; and behold *he lives for ever and ever:* whereas your former huſband, particularly the law, is dead, and ye are dead to it, Rom. vii. 4. and are to expect nothing from it, becauſe you have all, and more than all, in him to whom you are now engaged, and whoſe heart is engaged to you. Yea, as ye have rendered up your love to him as your Huſband, ſo ye have rendered up your arms to him as your Lord: ye have ſurrendered all the weapons that have been weapons of unrighteouſneſs, to be weapons of righteouſneſs unto holineſs, never to fight againſt him any more, but rather to fight under his banner againſt all his enemies, eſpecially under his banner of love; for the love of Chriſt will conſtrain you both to work and war. Now,

Firſt, A word to you whoſe hearts have *never yet been engaged to Chriſt.* O do ye know what for a caſe ye are in? and whence it is that your hearts are not engaged to Chriſt? Why, ye are even ignorant of glorious Chriſt: for, *They who know his name will love him, and put their truſt in him;* but you are *alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in you;* and *enemies in your minds by wicked works:* your *carnal mind is enmity againſt God, and is not ſubject to the law of God;* and your darkened mind is enmity againſt Chriſt, and is not ſubject to the righteouſneſs of Chriſt. Thus you are enemies to the Lord of life, and care not for him to be your Lord; ye are enemies to the word of life, and care not for that word to be your rule; ye are enemies to the Spirit of life, to the grace of life, the light of life, and the way of life: ye are dead, and under the power of death and of ſin, under the power of ſecurity and heart-obduration, having no favour of Chriſt about you; under the power of a ſordid choice, whereby ye ſet up the baſeſt of objects above our Lord and Maſter, whom yet the tongues of ſeraphims are not worthy to adore: behold, ye are chooſing ſome baſe luſts and idols in his room, or elſe inſolently capitulating with him upon the moſt ignoble and ignominious terms, to engage your heart to him, and to your luſts both, to him and to the world both, to him and to other lovers to be hugged in your boſoms with him, as if he were a miniſter of ſin, and a ſlave to ſerve your luſts; or at beſt, ye put him off with trifling delays from your heart, and let him ſtand at the door and knock, without ever having your heart engaged to come to him, or to let him come to you. Well, is that the matter with you? What is this that thou

thou art doing, poor ſoul? Shall there be no gathering of the people to Shiloh for your part? Shall never our Lord's train and retinue be any whit the more for you? What! ſhall he have no train? Glory to him, that he will have a retinue to attend him, and no thanks to you; there ſhall be a number to follow the Lamb to heaven, though ye ſhould follow the devil to hell. But, Oh! may I yet beſpeak you in the name of Jeſus! And, O Jeſus, may I beg thy leave to be thy ſpokeſman, to tell them thy words? And now, ſince he hath ſet me here, and given me leave to ſpeak for him, I muſt tell you ſome of his words to you.

And, Firſt, I will tell you what is his *complaining* word upon you; *Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life: All day long have I ſtretched forth my hands to a diſobedient and gainſaying people.*

Again, I will tell you what is his *lamenting* word over you; *O Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem*; O Dunfermline, Dunfermline, *how often would I have gathered you as a hen doth her chickens under her wings, but you would not, you would not!*

Again, I would tell you what is his *aſtoniſhing* word; *Be aſtoniſhed, O heavens, at this, and be ye horribly afraid: for my people have committed two great evils, they have forſaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewn out to themſelves broken ciſterns that can hold no water.* They reject fulneſs itſelf, and turn to an empty world, as if it were their heaven and their happineſs.

Further, I muſt tell you what is his *weeping* word. O ſhall he weep alone, and none drop a tear with him, while he is grieved at the hardneſs of your heart; and with the tear in his eye, weeping over the city, and ſaying, *O if thou hadſt known, in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace!* but the time approaches when they ſhall be hid from thine eyes; the time of deſolation is coming, becauſe thou knoweſt not the time of thy viſitation. Do ye expect that theſe days will always laſt with you, and that you will never be deprived of ſermons, and miniſters, and ſacraments? Nay, they ſhall be hid from your eyes: *Your fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live for ever?* Nay, ſince the laſt communion here, one of our dear helpers, in this preſbytery, from whoſe lips you uſed to hear the joyful ſound, he is gone away to the communion-table above; and glory to God, that he got a full gale of heavenly wind, to drive him in with holy joy and triumph to the harbour of glory. But now, O ſinners, have ye no regard to Chriſt weeping over you, and ſaying, O if ye knew the day of your viſitation, before the ſhadows of the everlaſting evening be drawn upon you! And, O that ye knew the things that belong to your peace, before they be hid from your eyes!

But again, I muſt tell you what is his *wrathful* and *threatening* word; *If you believe not that I am he, ye ſhall die in your ſins*; and, *How ſhall ye eſcape, if ye neglect ſo great ſalvation?* If they eſcaped not who refuſed him that ſpake on earth, much more ſhall not we eſcape, if we turn away from him that ſpeaketh from heaven.

And, O! what if it come to his *farewel* word! *I go my way, and ye ſhall ſee me no more*, till *he come in the clouds of heaven, and every eye ſhall ſee him*; and then you will come to that word with it, who live and die with a heart never engaged to him; you will come, I ſay, to that word with it, *O mountains and hills, fall upon us, and hide us from the face of the Lamb.*

And how dreadful will his *laſt* word be to you, *Depart from me, ye curſed, into everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels!* Ye did eat and drink in my houſe, and at my table, but I know you not; *depart from me*: ye adventured to approach to my table, but your hearts were not engaged to approach to me; nay, your hearts departed from me; therefore depart with a vengeance; *Depart from me, ye curſed.*

But, becauſe it is not come to that with you as yet, nay, it is yet a day of ſalvation; I would tell you next, his *expoſtulating* word, or his *intreating* word; he would gladly take his word of wrath again, that ye whoſe hearts are ſaying, *Away with him*, may yet take your word again: he is ſaying, *Why will ye die, O houſe of Iſrael? As I live, I have no pleaſure in your death; O turn ye, turn ye:* Come, come, the door is yet open, the door of ſalvation is caſt up wide to the walls, that ye all may run in; the drawbridge of mercy is not yet taken up; the day of mercy is preſent; the day of judgment is but coming, and now I am looking to you, and ye are looking to me; and if ye be not looking on me, ye that are behind the pillars and lofts there, I hope ye are hearing me: and therefore, in the view of that moſt awful day, when we ſhall hear and ſee at another rate, before the flaming tribunal, I take witneſſes here, in the preſence of the great God, and all this numerous company, that I am giving you a new offer of Chriſt; as an Engager to do all for you; and that if you will but conſent to take him, and give him employment, yea, that if you do not reject him, you ſhall have him. None here ſhall have it to ſay, they got nothing at this communion: for, lo, you have got an offer of Chriſt, and if ye go away without him, we ſhall be witneſſes againſt one another at the great day of his appearance. O! *Now is the acceptable time, and now is the day of ſalvation.* O! are ye pleaſed? Are your hearts pleaſed with one to be a Cautioner for you, to ſave you both from ſin and hell, and that will engage for debt, and duty, and ſafety, and pave your way for approaching to God's glorious preſence for ever? Will ye have him for your head and captain? I allude to the words of Jephthah, Judg. xi. 9. *If I fight for you and prevail, ſhall I be your head?* O yes, yes, ſay they; well, ſo ſays Chriſt to you, If I engage to ſatisfy juſtice for you, and anſwer all law-demands for you, and take away all your ſins, and fight all your battles, and do all *your work in you and for you*, ſhall I be your head? O! is *your heart* engaged to ſay, yes? O man, woman, old and young, that are here, do *your hearts* ſay, AMEN, AMEN; content to have him as a Prophet, to take away the darkneſs of my mind; content to have him as a Prieſt, to take away the guilt of all my ſins; and content to have him as a King, to take away the power of all my luſts and idols, and to make me holy and happy in himſelf, that his name may be glorified in me, and his grace magnified for ever: O then, I hope, the day of ſalvation is begun, that ſhall be celebrated with joy to eternity. Therefore, let me cloſe with a word, in the next place,

2*dly*, To you whoſe hearts are *engaged to the Lord Jeſus*, whether ye have been communicants or not; and becauſe ſome ſuch may be in doubts, whether ever they have believed in Chriſt truly and ſavingly. Why, if your hearts

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be truly engaged to Chriſt, never make a queſtion about your believing; for a heart engaged to him is the beſt believing in the world; Rom. x. 10. *With the heart man believeth unto righteouſneſs;* and if your doubt remain, the beſt way of getting it reſolved, is, to let your heart go out upon him anew, as the glorious Engager and Approacher to God in your room. Are you afraid you come ſhort of heaven? So ye may indeed, unleſs Chriſt had engaged to bring you there; but if ye lay ſtreſs upon his engagement, there is no fear. Are ye frightened you come ſhort of duty? So you may, if you be the only engager; but will ye truſt Chriſt for nothing? Where is your faith in his engagement, *to do all for you and in you?* What, may ſome ſay, would you have us all to turn Antinomians, to do nothing, and engage to do nothing, but leave all to Chriſt? The Lord pity a poor deluded world, that is wedded to a covenant of works. Will you tell me, man, is that Antinomianiſm, "to come out of your-"ſelf to Chriſt for righteouſneſs, to anſwer all "the demands of the law as a covenant of "works; and to come out of yourſelf to Chriſt "for ſtrength, to anſwer all the commands of "the law as a rule of life and holineſs, and "ſo to engage for nothing in your own perſon "alone, becauſe God cannot truſt your per-"ſonal bond, but to take Chriſt for your Cau-"tioner, and to lay ſtreſs on his engagement?" —And ſeeing you cannot approach to a holy and juſt God in yourſelf, look to Chriſt as the firſt Approacher for you, and then to approach to God in him. If you thus engage upon Chriſt's head, according to his promiſe, then engage to what you will; and if you approach to God in his name, then you may approach with boldneſs.

If you think of engaging and approching in your own name and perſon, that is the old covenant-way of engaging and approaching; and therefore no wonder then, if that be your way, that you be overwhelmed with fears and doubts, and diſcouragements.

But let gallant faith come in and ſay, Chriſt hath engaged, and therefore I have nothing ado but to truſt him for all, and in the uſe of means depend upon him: Chriſt hath approached before me, and therefore upon the red carpet of his juſtice-ſatisfying blood, I will go in to the holy of holies, even in to the preſence of a juſt and holy God. O have you thus approached to God at this occaſion? I know not, ſay ye; I would be glad to know. Why, if ye would judge of your approach to God in Chriſt, judge of your approach, not by the *meaſure* of it; for believers are only admitted ſometimes, as it were, to waſh his feet with their tears, like Mary, though at other times they may be privileged to ly in his boſom, like the beloved diſciple.—Judge not of your approach, by the *matter* of that which he gives you; for ſometimes you may be ſeeking one thing, and he may give another: It may be ye were ſeeking a feaſt of joy; but if he hath given you a feaſt of godly ſorrow, that is as good for you.—Judge not of your approach by your *former experiences:* It may be, ſome time a-day you was like a lamb in his boſom, ſaying, under a ſenſe of his love, *This is my Beloved;* and now, perhaps, you muſt ly like a dog at his feet, ſaying, under a ſenſe of ſin, *Truth, Lord, I am a dog:* well, that is a token of more a-coming.—Judge not of your approach by your *own ſenſe* and *apprehenſion;* for, David was not in a deſperate caſe when he was crying, as Pſal. xiii. 1. *How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord, for ever? how long wilt thou hide thy face from me?* When your longings are increaſed, though your ſtrength be ſmall, yet it is a notable feaſt; for, *He will ſatisfy the longing ſoul, and fill the hungry with good things.* Be thankful if you get as much as holds your ſoul in life, though you get not much. Know, that though he will be faithful to the accompliſhment of all his promiſes, and to do all that he hath engaged for, yet *the times and ſeaſons are in his hand,* and he hath his own meaſure of communication: if ſome of you received what you would be at, you would grow giddy, and be ready to cry with Peter, *It is good for us to be here,* and forget the other work that God hath for you in the world. He is engaged by promiſe; but know, moreover, that he accompliſhes his promiſe according to your need, and as it is for your good and advantage, and according as he hath work and buſineſs to put in your hand. Now, ſome here, I hope, have got their hearts engaged to approach to a God in Chriſt, upon the ground of Chriſt's engagement to approach to God in their room; and I hope they can ſay it with holy confidence, that their hearts have been drawn, and they have been cauſed to approach to God: and if ſo, then, I hope, you can ſay of the water of the well of ſalvation, O ſweet, ſweet! O *how ſweet are thy words to my taſte! ſweeter than honey to my mouth!* And that all other things in a world are but empty traſh, *loſs and dung, in compariſon of him.* O the gallant fops of the world would think ſhame of themſelves, if they knew how much contempt the pooreſt ſaints on earth do pour upon them, and all earthly glory and gallantry, when they get near to God!—Surely, if you have been favoured with this approach to a God in Chriſt, it hath brought you to a great *wondering* at the grace of God. *O what am I? and what is my father's houſe?* Why did he paſs by my neighbour, my huſband, my wife, my brother, my ſiſter, and fix his love upon me, the vileſt of them all?—It hath brought you to great *humility* and abaſement; *Now mine eyes ſee thee, therefore I abhor myſelf, and repent in duſt and aſhes.*—And alſo to a great *longing* after more fellowſhip and communion with him; *O when wilt thou come unto me! O when ſhall I come and appear before thee! O to depart in peace, for mine eyes have ſeen thy ſalvation! O to be among the four and twenty elders that are before the throne! O to be drinking at the fountain-head!* Why, what means this language, poor ſoul? It ſeems you are juſt lying in his lap; *He hath loved you with an everlaſting love, and therefore with loving-kindneſs hath he drawn you:* His heart is engaged to you, and your heart is engaged to him; the Spirit hath been ſent to faſten Chriſt's heart and your heart together, and the knot ſhall never be looſed; *Him that cometh, I will in no wiſe caſt out.*

And now, that he is engaged to do all for you, O does not *equity* and *gratitude* require, that you be *wholly* engaged to him, and that for ever? Let your *hearts* be more engaged to him than ever; let your *affections* be engaged to love him; let your *wills* be engaged to obey him in his preceptive and providential will; let your *thoughts* be engaged to think upon him and his loving-kindneſs; let your *tongues* be

engaged to ſpeak to his praiſe; *In his temple ſhall every one ſpeak of his glory*; let your *whole life* be engaged to his ſervice, and all ſo engaged as to depend on him for all. He hath engaged for all, that you may depend on him for all; and all the ſervice you perform will be vain and to no purpoſe, unleſs it be done in the faith of his engagement to do all in you and for you. The believer hath two hands, the one a holding hand, and the other a working hand; like a woman ſpinning at the wheel, (to uſe a homely *ſimile*) the one hand holds the thread and draws it down, and the other hand goes round and ſets about the wheel; now, if ſhe do not hold the thread conſtantly with the one hand, it is to no purpoſe though the other hand go round with the wheel: even ſo it is here, the one hand of the believer is the hand of faith, whereby he takes faſt hold of Chriſt, and draws grace and virtue from him; the other is the hand of obedience and ſervice, which is accepted only in Chriſt, and upon the ſcore of his engaging for all, and to do all our work in us and for us. Now, if the hand of faith let go the hold of Chriſt, ſo as not to draw virtue from him, nor depend upon his engagement, it is in vain that the other hand of obedience and ſervice doth go its round: but, when faith keeps faſt hold of Chriſt's engagement, then there is profitable ſervice and obedience; for, *we are accepted in the Beloved.* Let faith take a view daily of your priviledges in Chriſt: O how ſtrengthening for your work and warfare would it be to you, if you had the lively faith of his engagement! It would make you approach to God in every duty with boldneſs. Did you believe that his honour is engaged for your through-bearing, till you arrive at glory; that his faithfulneſs is engaged, his power is engaged, his name is engaged, his truth is engaged, his credit is at the ſtake; for he hath ſaid, *I will never leave thee nor forſake thee; I will put my Spirit within thee, and cauſe thee to walk in my ſtatutes:* Is he thus engaged? Then let faith keep a faſt grip of his engagement; and when faith is like to loſe the grip, remember, that he who hath engaged for every thing that concerns you, hath engaged for faith too, having promiſed to keep your *faith that it fail not*, and to *keep you by his power through faith unto ſalvation.* Therefore, in the want of faith, look to his engagement for it; and in the weakneſs of faith, look to his engagement to ſtrengthen it; and in the trial of faith, look to his engagement to ſupport it. Let not your faith depend upon your faith, but your faith and dependence be wholly on Chriſt, for all that you need with reſpect to work and warfare, duty or difficulty, ſoul or body, grace or glory, time or eternity; then will God put your name and Chriſt's together, ſaying, *Who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me?*

SERMON X.*

GOSPEL-PRINCIPLE the *Foundation* of GOSPEL-PRACTICE; or, the great Duty of *Receiving Chriſt*, and *Walking in him*, opened.

COLOS. ii. 6.

As ye have received Chriſt Jeſus the Lord, ſo walk ye in him.

YOU have here ſuch an ordinary text that perhaps there are few preſent but have heard ſermons preached upon it: and yet it is ſuch an extraordinary text that we can never hear enough upon it, nor ever reach to the bottom. There is more in it than ever yet we ſaw or felt. It contains a ſum of heart and life religion, and of all that concerns either faith or manners; a GOSPEL-PRINCIPLE, which is *believing in Chriſt*; and a GOSPEL-PRACTICE, a *walking in him: As ye have received Chriſt Jeſus the Lord, ſo walk ye in him.*

The apoſtle here, in this epiſtle, gives a good copy to all the miniſters of Chriſt to follow in their preaching and teaching. 1. To *inform the judgments* of people, and lay a good foundation in the knowledge of Chriſt. 2. To *excite their affections* after Chriſt, and to rouze and awaken them to a walk and converſation ſuitable to their knowledge and faith; knowing that there can be no ſure building erected in a goſpel-walk, unleſs there be a ſure foundation laid in a goſpel-principle. That the believing Coloſſians were well informed and inſtructed, the apoſtle notices, to the commendation and praiſe of free grace; and he exhorts them to perſevere in the doctrine wherein they were taught by *Epaphras, a faithful miniſter of Chriſt*, chap. i. 7.: However there were falſe teachers that had crept in among them that were ready to *beguile them with enticing words*, chap. ii. 4. and that had actually ſeduced and carried away the Galatians from their true faith which they formerly profeſſed, Gal. i. 6, 7.; yet he would have the Coloſſians to ſtand faſt in their faith, and in that doctrine which had been truly and honeſtly delivered to them. The apoſtle commends the Coloſſians for their *ſtedfaſtneſs*, as you ſee in the verſes preceding our text; and yet he exhorts them more and more to this duty, as you ſee from the verſe following the text; which may let us in to ſomething of the intent of the text itſelf; intimating, that the doctrine of Chriſt had been brought to them, and they had believed it, and received it, and Chriſt in it, and that though this was well, yet

* This Subject was entered upon on a thankſgiving-day after the celebration of the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper at Kinglaſſy, and afterwards proſecute and finiſhed, in a ſeries of diſcourſes at Dunfermline, in the year 1724. *Never before publiſhed.*

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it was not all; they were therefore, through grace, to perſevere in that doctrine; to walk forward in the knowledge of Chriſt, and his goſpel, and in the practice of what they knew.

The verſe that goes before the text ſets before us two things that denote the good conſtitution and temperament of a right church, ſuch as the church of the Coloſſians was. 1. The firſt is its *order*; O but it makes a beautiful church when all things in it are *ordered according to the pattern ſeen in the mount*, with reſpect to the doctrine, worſhip, diſcipline, and government! When the doctrine is ſound and lively; the worſhip, pure and ſpiritual; diſcipline, powerful and impartial, and the government, beautiful and regular: but it is a very unpleaſant appearance in a church, when *confuſion*, with reſpect to all theſe, doth take place. 2. The ſecond was *ſtedfaſtneſs in the faith*. The apoſtle rejoiced to behold, in the church of Coloſs, not only their order, but their ſtedfaſtneſs in the faith of Chriſt, in the doctrine of the goſpel; for, when a church fails in this, then all goes to wreck. If the apoſtle Paul were on earth, and to write an epiſtle to the church of Scotland, would any think that he would have this to commend us for, *Our order and ſtedfaſtneſs in the faith?* O for ſuch a proſpect of affairs in this iſland, that we who have been Corinthians, in reſpect of our *diſorders* and *diviſions*, and Galatians, in reſpect of our *unſtedfaſtneſs* in the right faith of Chriſt, and the revolt of many from Reformation-truth, may become Coloſſians in reſpect of our order and ſtedfaſtneſs in the faith; *I joy to behold your order and ſtedfaſtneſs*, ſaith the apoſtle.

Now, as there are two things in that preceding verſe that ſhew the good conſtitution of a church in general; ſo, in this text, there are two things that ſhow and ſet forth the good ſtate of any church-member in particular, or of a true Chriſtian; the firſt is, the *receiving of Chriſt Jeſus the Lord*; the ſecond is, a *walking in him*. And we may conceive theſe two as having a reference to two things mentioned in the preceding verſe, namely, *order* and *ſtedfaſtneſs*; for, as there is no order, but all in confuſion in that ſoul where there is no faith, or receiving of Chriſt; ſo there is no *ſtedfaſtneſs in the faith*, where there is no *walking in him*. And as the text ſtands properly connected with the former verſe by the particle THEREFORE; *As ye have* THEREFORE *received Chriſt Jeſus the Lord, ſo walk ye in him:* From the connexion of theſe two verſes, I ſay, you may obſerve, *That churches of the beſt conſtitution, both for the order and ſtedfaſtneſs of their faith, had need to be exhorted to hold faſt their principles and to keep their way.* This obſerve, I think, may be obvious to you at the firſt view; it is the ſcope of the apoſtle all along the chapter to fortify this church againſt ſwerving and declining from the truths of Chriſt; and why does he ſo? even becauſe truth is but *one*, and when received is all reduceable to this one word, *the receiving of Chriſt Jeſus the Lord*, who is the centre of truth. Truth, I ſay, is but *one*, let all the men in the world ſay what they can about it, or the ſeveral branches of it, truth is but *ſimple* and *one*; but error is *many*. And the apoſtle, in order to fortify them from ſwerving from the truth, offers ſeveral caveats in this chapter. One is ver. 4. *And this I ſay leſt any man ſhould beguile you with enticing words*; ENTICING WORDS are the bait wherewith the credulous and ſimple ſort of people are taken; ſuch as the apoſtle notices, Rom. xvi. 17, 18. The ſimple are they that are caught with this bait of enticing words, like merchants that put off ſlight and corrupt wares with the fineſt words.—Another caveat is ver. 8. *Beware leſt any man ſpoil you through philoſophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men; after the rudiments of the world, and not after Chriſt:* and as the former is a bait to the ſimple; ſo here is a bait to the more learned, where human philoſophy, and natural reaſonings are ſet in oppoſition to ſcriptural truth, as it is in Chriſt Jeſus.—A third caveat is ver. 16. *Let no man therefore judge you in meat or in drink, or in reſpect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath-day.* Where he cautions them againſt all legal ceremonies, the error of Judaizers, and theſe that are ſymbolizers with ceremony-mongers.—A fourth caveat he gives, even to this church of Coloſs, is, ver. 18, 19. *Let no man beguile you of your reward, in a voluntary humility, and worſhipping of angels, intruding into thoſe things which he hath not ſeen, vainly puft up with his fleſhly mind: and not holding the head, from which all the body, by joints and bands, having nouriſhment miniſtred, and knit together, increaſeth with the increaſe of God.* Where the apoſtle cautions againſt ſtrange paradoxes and opinions in religion. Although ſome, for maintaining the faith of their forefathers, have been calumniate as if they were bringing in *new ſchemes* of doctrine *, we could ſhow how ſome, in oppoſition to them, have brought in *ſtrange opinions* that were never before heard tell of in this church; ſuch as, *goſpel-repentance before faith and juſtification*; a new ſcheme and principle that may be charged with not holding the Head, Jeſus Chriſt, and faith in him as the head of all other goſpel graces. Of the like nature is that of maintaining, the *believer's obligation to take the law out of the hand of a God out of Chriſt*. How is this, and many other points that I could name, chargeable with *not holding the Head* Chriſt, *from which all the body, by joints and bands, having nouriſhment miniſtred and knit together, increaſeth with the increaſe of God?*—A fifth caveat is againſt all ſuperſtitious ordinances of men, ver. 21, 22, 23. Theſe ſuperſtitious ordinances of men are but a tempting of God, Acts xv. 10. *Why tempt ye God to put a yoke upon the neck of diſciples, which neither we, nor our fathers, were able to bear?* The apoſtle there ſpeaks of legal ceremonies that were inſtituted of God, after they came to be aboliſhed; and the argument is the ſtronger: for, if it was a tempting of God to make uſe of theſe ceremonies that God himſelf had inſtitute of old, then what prodigious tempting of God is it, to bring in ſuch a ſuperſtitious and ceremonial ſervice into the worſhip of God, as is intirely of human invention?—In a word, the ſixth caveat is againſt all deviations whatſoever from Chriſt and his truth, and this is the ſcope of the whole chapter: He fortifies them againſt all deviations and declinings; and how does he that? juſt as you would do to a houſe that leans to the one ſide; what would you do? ſurely you would labour to get it upright and perpendicular to its foundation: Even ſo, the apoſtle ſtrives to make the church here perpendicular, and upright upon their foundation, and that is Chriſt and his doctrine; exhorting them, under the phraſe

* The foundation of this calumny is accounted for, Serm. IV. p. 70. and particularly Serm. VIII. p. 149, 150. Serm. IX. p. 178.

of

of *holding the head*, ver. 19. and getting a *full aſſurance of underſtanding to the acknowledgement of the myſtery of God.* And ſo in the text, and immediate context, it is expreſſed by a *walking in him*, a being *rooted* and *built up in him*, and *eſtabliſhed in the faith as ye have been taught.*

The apoſtle here uſeth ſimilitudes, and there are theſe three compariſons couched here, 1. That Chriſt is the *way*; and this is implied in theſe words, *walk ye in him.* 2. That Chriſt is the *root*, and this is implied in theſe words, *rooted in him.* 3. That Chriſt is the *foundation*, and that is implied in theſe words, *built up in him.* Why, ſay you, how can a man ſtand rooted and ſtable, and yet walk? why, you may walk, and yet keep your way ſtedfaſt; you may build, and yet build high in Chriſt; you may be rooted in Chriſt, the true vine, and yet *grow in him.* And hence that emphaſis, in the 6th and 7th verſes, *As ye have received*, and *as ye have been taught.* Why, ſome may think they cannot grow unleſs they change and over-grow their principles, as a child does overgrow his old clothes. But why cannot a man mend his pace, and yet go on in his right path ſtill? Cannot a man build high, and yet build upon the foundation ſtill? Cannot a man *grow in grace*, and in the *knowledge of Chriſt*, and of the truth of Chriſt, and yet grow upon the everlaſting root ſtill? Yea ſurely: we are to walk as we have received, and to be eſtabliſhed as we have been taught. And here is comfort to believers that are of the loweſt form, ſuch as have no great ſtock of knowledge to trade with in difficult queſtions; here there is comfort that fundamental points are few and clear; ſo few, that a weak capacity, in any meaſure divinely ſpiritualized, may bear them; and ſo clear, that a dim eye, in any meaſure divinely enlightened, may ſee them. Would you know what is the field where all the flowers of truth grow? it is the word: therefore, ſays Chriſt, *Search the ſcriptures, for theſe are they that teſtify of me.* The ſcripture is God's word, God's field; and Chriſt is the treaſure hid in the field: ſearch in that field till you find the treaſure, and then you will find all truth treaſured up in them. Hence the apoſtle, Eph. ii. 20. ſums up all fundamental truths in two words to believers; *Ye are built upon the foundation of the apoſtles and prophets, Jeſus Chriſt himſelf being the head corner-ſtone.* There is the ſum-total of doctrinal fundamentals, or fundamental doctrines. Yea, the very ſame apoſtle hath learned us to ſum up all in one word, πάντα καὶ ἐν πᾶσι Χριστός, *Chriſt is All, and in all.* God can, with one glance of Chriſt's glory, in the light of his word and Spirit, give you a view of all. Why, the ſcripture is to be believed, becauſe it is inſpired by God, it is a garden of God's planting; but there is a garden within that garden: the goſpel is the paradiſe of the whole ſcripture, and Chriſt is the tree of life in the midſt of that goſpel-paradiſe.

But beſides the doctrinal fundamentals, there are what we may call practical fundamentals which pertain to the ſtate and being of a true Chriſtian, and theſe are two, and they are both in our text; the one is a *receiving of Chriſt Jeſus*, and the other is a *walking in him.* The former, *viz.* the *receiving of Chriſt* is neceſſary to the eſſence and being of a Chriſtian; the latter, *viz. walking in Chriſt*, is neceſſary to the progreſs, growth, and well-being of a Chriſtian.

Now in the words, you may notice theſe four things. 1. The believer's *character* and *privilege*, he is one that hath *received Chriſt Jeſus the Lord.* 2. The believer's *duty*, namely, to *walk in him.* 3. The *rule* of his duty, which is to walk in him *as* he hath received him. 4. The *connection* betwixt the character and the duty, the one being ſuppoſed to the other, goſpel-faith being the ground of goſpel-practice; no walking in Chriſt unleſs there be a receiving of him: *As ye have received Chriſt Jeſus the Lord, ſo walk ye in him.*

Now, I ſhall, as the Lord may aſſiſt, explain theſe parts of the text in the proſecution of this doctrine.

OBSERV. *That as true believers are theſe that have received Chriſt Jeſus the Lord; ſo they ought to walk in him as they have received him.*

The method may be according to the parts of the text.

I. To ſpeak of the believer's *character* and *dignity* as a receiver of Chriſt Jeſus the Lord.
II. To ſpeak of the believer's *duty*, namely to walk in Chriſt.
III. To ſpeak of the *rule* of his duty, and the *proportion* it ſhould bear to his reception of Chriſt, namely, that he is to walk in Chriſt *as* he hath received him.
IV. To ſpeak of the *connexion* betwixt the character and the duty, or between receiving Chriſt and walking in him; where we may enquire into the order of this connexion and the reaſon of it.
V. Draw ſome *inferences* for the *application* of the whole.

I. The *firſt* general head is to ſpeak of the believer's *character*, he is one that receiveth Chriſt Jeſus the Lord. *Receiving* Chriſt and *believing* in him are equivalent terms, John i. 12. *To as many as* RECEIVED *him, to them gave he power to become the ſons of God, even to them that* BELIEVE *in his name.* And as they have *power*, or *privilege*, to become the ſons of God by believing in him, or receiving him; ſo they have power to receive him by virtue of their receiving the ſpirit of faith, by the means of the doctrine of faith, or the goſpel-doctrine, Gal. iii. 2. *Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?*—But that I may ſpeak more cloſely to this point, *the receiving of Chriſt Jeſus the Lord*, the text leads me to enquire into three things. 1. The *act* of faith as it is a *receiving.* 2. The *object* of it, *Chriſt.* 3. The *capacity*, or *reſpect*, under which this object is received, namely, as he is *Chriſt, Jeſus, the Lord.* Theſe points being very great and momentuous, I would touch at them ſeverally.

Firſt, The ACT of faith, it is called a *receiving of Chriſt.* Now to explain this act of receiving Chriſt, as diſtinctly as, through grace, I can, you may notice that it hath ſomething *ſuppoſed* that it relates to, and ſomething *imported* that it conſiſts in.

1ſt, It hath ſomething *ſuppoſed* that it relates to. This *receiving* then does refer or relate unto ſome *offer* or *tender* that is made of Chriſt to him that does receive him. For Chriſt is unknown to nature, he is unknown to reaſon, and unknown to the wiſdom of the wiſeſt men upon the earth, until he be revealed and offered, there being no footſteps of the goſpel in the heart or nature of man; whatſoever there

there may be of the law, there is none of the gospel. Now, therefore, receiving relates to offering; a receiving-hand hath relation to an offering-hand, holding forth Christ to be received, and that is the hand of God's free grace in the dispensation of the gospel. And this offer of Christ unto sinners in the gospel, in order to their being believers, is sometimes in scripture called *a giving of Christ*, John iii. 27. *A man can receive nothing unless it be given to him from heaven*; and therefore we maintain, that as it is the duty of all that hear this gospel to receive Christ, and believe in him; so it is the privilege of all that hear the gospel that Christ is given to them in the offer thereof. It is true the giving in *possession* follows faith; *My Father giveth you the true bread.* The taking hand of faith, presupposes the giving hand of God. God's promise in the gospel is the offering hand, that offers Christ; a saving faith of God's operation, is the receiving hand which goes forth to the hand that offers; and when these two hands meet together, then the work is done, there is a receiving. But that you may the better understand this point of receiving Christ, by considering this *offer* that *receiving* relates to, there are three things that may be noticed. 1. To what kind of *persons* the gospel offers Christ. 2. Upon what *grounds*. 3. For what *ends*. Mark these three then in the offer of Christ.

1. To what *kind* of *persons* the offer is made. To whom doth the hand of the promise hold them out? The person to whom he is held out is no other than a *lost sinner*, a lost soul; *Christ came to seek and save them that were lost:* I mean not only these that are sensible of their lost state, but these that are in a lost state, whether they be sensible of it or not: if the gospel comes to them, the offer of Christ comes to them: *To you, O men, do I call; and my voice is to the sons of men.* We are warranted to *preach the gospel to every rational creature*, Mark xvi. 15. The offer of Christ comes to you. Why, may not *sin* exclude us from the offer? By no means; ——*Christ came to save sinners*, 1 Tim. i. 15. If sinners were excepted, all mankind would be excepted; for, *all have sinned.* But is it to *gross sinners?* Yea, Isa. i. 18. *Come let us reason together,* ——*though your iniquities were like scarlet, I will make them white as snow; though they be red, like crimson, I will make them as wool:*—to murderers of the Lord of glory was the offer made, Acts ii. 41. But are *mockers* and *scorners* under the offer? Yea, they are, as you see, Prov. i. 22, 23. But what if a person cares not for the offer, and thinks himself happy enough without Christ, and believes himself well enough as he is without him; is the offer of Christ to such? Certainly it is; *Wherefore do you spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness*, Isa. lv. 1, 2. But if a man be neither convinced of sin or misery, nor see any need of Christ, is Christ offered to him? Yea, undoubtedly he is; Rev. iii. 18. *I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed.* Let them venture to shut the door of the gospel-offer who will, we must open it in God's name to all who hear this gospel, and tell them that Christ is offered to them, that he may be received by them; and if there were no offer, it would not be their duty to receive, and so unbelief would not be their sin.—Again, let them shift the offer of the gospel who will, and think Christ is not offered to them, this offer will rise up in judgment against them, if they do not answer it; for *he that believeth not, shall be damned:* and one of two shall take place upon this universal offer, either ye shall receive him as offered, or ye shall all be made inexcusable that receive him not: I am pretty sure, though we reach not the first, yet the second shall take place, though I should say no more than I have said. The gospel-offer does not tell *who will* come; for many get the offer who will never receive the gift offered to them: but it tells *who should* come, and that is *all:* but though all should come, whether they be sensible of their lost state or not; yet these that see themselves lost, are in the fairest way to receive the offer of a Saviour; and none will come till God make them see themselves lost and undone without Christ, as all of you are lost indeed, though few are sensible of their lost state. However, I say to lost souls, Christ is offered to these that are spoiled by the sentence of the law, arraigned, convicted, condemned, and accursed; the hand of the gospel promise holds out Christ to you; for, where Moses leaves you, there Joshua finds you; where the law ends, there the gospel begins: the law ends in the shipwreck of the sinner, in splitting him upon the rock of its terrors and curses, drowning him in the ocean of divine wrath, and sinking him into the deeps of despair; and just there the gospel begins; it comes to the bottom of the pit of sin and misery, and offers a Christ, a Saviour. Thus, where Moses leaves you, there Joshua finds you. When the law ends, Christ begins; and when the soul is so shipwrecked by the law, that he is, as it were, all to pieces, to such an one is the gospel-offer most welcome; for the hand of grace holds forth Christ, like a plank after shipwreck, a plank, to swim ashore upon. Such a soul is encouraged to see no other qualification required of him to come to Christ, and receive him, but just that he is lost, which he finds himself to be; and there is no other condition or qualification required, but that you be a lost man, a sinful miserable person. Some will offer Christ upon such and such terms, saying, you must be so and so *humbled*, so and so *penitent*, before Christ can be offered to you; so that a man that finds himself a lost, sinful, unhumbled, impenitent, wretched creature, can never come to their hand, or meddle with what they offer: just like a man holding out a cup of excellent wine to his friend, and offering him a drink, but in the mean time he hath made the wine scalding hot upon the fire, so as the man, to whom it is offered, dare not touch it with his lips: even so, many offer Christ, and hold forth the cup of salvation to the people, but they heat their gospel-liquor, as it were, red hot upon the fire of the law; I mean, with so many legal terms, conditions, and qualifications, that the poor soul, that finds himself a lost sinner, every way sinful, destitute of all good qualifications, dare not come near, and thinks he may not, he ought not come near with his lip to taste it. We need be at no pains to hinder sinners from coming to Christ, to receive the offer, for they are unwilling enough of themselves. Besides that, they

they will never have a good qualification till they come to him and receive him, and all good in him; all grace and glory, all holineſs and happineſs.—Thus you ſee to what *kind* of *perſons* the offer of Chriſt is made, which the receiving of Chriſt doth relate to.

2. Upon what *ground* is the offer made? or, what is the ground upon which Chriſt is offered? To this I anſwer only in general, It is juſt upon the ground of free grace; ſovereign grace to Chriſt crucified. And hence the goſpel is called by the name of GRACE, Tit. ii. 11. *The grace of God that bringeth ſalvation hath appeared to all men*, or, as in the margin, *The grace of God that bringeth ſalvation to all men:* it brings the offer of Chriſt, and ſo of ſalvation to all men to whom the goſpel comes; and it is grace that does it, without the conſideration of any condition, or qualification in us. Sovereign grace is a thing that can neither be promoted by our goodneſs, or hindered by our badneſs. Free grace that makes the offer looks neither to the worthineſs, nor unworthineſs of the receiver; neither to his merit, nor demerit; neither to the merit of his virtue, nor the demerit of his vice. It is the hand of the promiſe that offers Chriſt to the loſt ſinner, upon the ground of free grace alone: and here is the moſt inviting encouragement to a loſt ſinner that can be, that as he hath no worthineſs to plead for him, [which if he had, grace would be no grace;] ſo his unworthineſs is no bar againſt him; for, if it were, then grace would be no grace alſo in this reſpect: for if your worthineſs did work it, then it would not be the work of grace; or, if your unworthineſs did hinder it, then it would not be the doing of grace: Yea, grace would never do any thing at all; for all are unworthy: here there is encouragement to all ſinners to receive an offered Chriſt. But what is the obſtruction? Why, when a man ſhould take hold of Chriſt, then his heart goes about to mar the freedom of grace, before he dare venture his ſoul upon it; and how is that? Even by ſeeking ſome qualifications in himſelf that Chriſt ſhould be offered unto him: Why, I ſhould be ſo and ſo holy, before I meddled with Chriſt; ſo and ſo humble and penitent, before I reckon the goſpel-offer belongs to me. Thus a man naturally would be looking after ſomething in himſelf, and he would gladly find it, that he may thus build the goſpel upon the law; God upon the man; Chriſt upon ſelf; and free grace upon works; for it is no better than ſo: and thus the ſoul will not come to free grace; he will be obſtructing himſelf; and in this mire he lies till free grace teach him how to come to the market of free grace, *without money, and without price;* till then all is but nothing: the ground of the offer is free and ſovereign grace. What a great deal of latent obſtructions are there that hinder our receiving this offer of Chriſt made by free grace! Why, when a loſt ſinner comes ever to find himſelf a loſt ſinner, then he ſtands aback, becauſe he thinks either he is too much loſt, or too little loſt. Either, 1. He thinks he is *too much loſt*, his ſins are ſo very great; and ſo the man ſecretly ſays, that he would buy his pardon with his own goodneſs, if he had it, and will not be obliged to free grace for it; or by this means he magnifies the demerit of his ſins, above the merit of the blood of Chriſt, which is a great affront poured upon the infinitely glorious bargain that is in his offer. Or, 2. He thinks he is *too little loſt*, his ſenſe of ſin and humiliation is ſo very little; and this is another obſtruction. He would be more broken and more humbled before he thinks the offer belongs to him; and this ſhews the fulneſs of his heart, that though he thinks he cannot buy Chriſt at the goſpel market, with his good works, yet he would buy and purchaſe Chriſt with his humiliation, deep down-caſting, and the like. Now, this cannot be, it is but a rotten excuſe; for what though you ſhould ſink as far into the deeps of legal conviction, as deſpair itſelf; yet, will that deſpair merit any thing at the hand of God, or yet make God better pleaſed with him? No: to deſpair is to diſpleaſe him, as well as to preſume. And as you cannot preſume, if you come to take him in the tenor of our text, namely, as a *Chriſt*, as a *Jeſus*, as a *Lord*, (of which afterwards;) ſo you cannot deſpair, if you know that the ground of the offer is free grace. Would you be humbled to deſpair in yourſelf, and of all your excellencies, and of recommending yourſelf to God by any good, any humility of yours, it were a good deſpair; but if you would be humbled for ſin, ſo far as to expect thereupon the favour of God, and forgiveneſs of ſin, this can never be. But here a queſtion may be propoſed, *What meaſure of humiliation ſhould I have?* We anſwer, So much humiliation as makes you ſee your want of humiliation, your want of all good, all grace, all conditions, and qualifications; ſo much as ſhall oblige you to relinquiſh your own fancied goodneſs, and make you to come to Chriſt for all, and accept of him upon goſpel terms, and the term of the goſpel is free grace. I will tell you, by a compariſon, the true level of humiliation: When is the metal ſufficiently melted in the fire? it may be burnt in the fire, and it may be melted too little; but when is it enough? Why, it appears to be melted enough when it runs eaſily into the mould: but now, it is not the melting that gives it the ſhape, the form, or faſhion, but the melting makes it run into the mould, and the mould gives it the form or ſhape; ſo I ſay here, When is the ſoul melted enough? it is when it runs into the goſpel-mould. There are ſome that have, as it were, too much of the fire; there are theſe that apprehend themſelves ſuch great ſinners that they dare not come to Chriſt. There are others that have too little of the fire; theſe are they that only think they are not ſo good as they ought to be, and therefore they ſhould not come. There are others that have nothing of the fire at all; and theſe are they that think they are good enough already, and they need not come to receive Chriſt. But then only is the ſoul melted enough in the fire, when it runs into the mould. What is the goſpel-mould? It is even Chriſt. And when the melted ſoul, like melted lead, or other metal, runs into this mould, then, and not till then, does it get a good ſhape: it is not the melting that gives it the ſhape or faſhion, or form, but it is the mould that gives the form. And ſo never expect to have any good form, any good ſhape, any good qualification, till your ſoul run in to this mould, by *receiving Chriſt Jeſus the Lord*, thus offered to you upon the ground of free grace.—And thus you ſee the *ground* of the offer.

3. For

3. For what *end* is the offer made? Why, Chriſt is offered to the loſt ſinner, upon the ground of free grace, to be both a *Jeſus* and a *Lord*. As he is to be *received* as ſuch (of which we may afterwards ſpeak,) ſo he is *offered* as ſuch, even as a Saviour and a Lord; that is, he hath coupled the ſalvation of Chriſt, and the dominion of Chriſt together; and it ſhows that all whom he ſaves he will ſanctify; that whom he ſaves by the price of his blood, he will conquer by the power of his Spirit; he being the Chriſt of God, Anointed of God, Sealed of God, to be both a Saviour and a Lord; and he is offered for this end to be both. This ſhews what a ſuitable offer it is to the poor ſinner that is both under the wrath of God, the curſe of the law, condemned to hell-fire, which makes him ſtand in need of Chriſt as a Saviour; and alſo, he is under the power of ſin, the ſlavery of luſts, the bondage of Satan, which makes him ſtand in need of Chriſt as a Lord; and here is encouragement to the poor ſoul, that would be ſanctified as well as juſtified, Chriſt is offered for wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification, and redemption: he is not offered as a Saviour only, to ſave from hell; but as a Lord alſo, to deliver from ſin. Now, what is the great obſtruction here, that hinders the receiving of the offer? Why, it is even the falſe heart that would divide ſalvation from dominion; would be content to have his ſoul ſaved, but not to have the ſin conquered; would have Chriſt as a Jeſus, but not as a Lord: the man would be under his garment, and yet not under his government. In this caſe, the man is not ſo much out of love with ſin, as out of love with hell; not ſo much in love with Chriſt, as with his benefits; while his guilt craves Chriſt's ſalvation, but his luſts oppoſe Chriſt's Lordſhip: If Chriſt were offered as a cloak to your luſts, then the falſe and bloody calumny of ſome would be true, that we call men to believe, and then live as they liſt. Why, if Chriſt were offered as a Jeſus, a Saviour, and not as a Lord, then ſuch a thing might be ſuppoſed; but let the mouth of calumny be ſtopt: we offer Chriſt to ſinners, upon the ground of free grace, both as he is a Jeſus and a Lord; and I defy any man in the world to receive this offer, and yet deſire to live as he liſt. It is not poſſible in nature. For if the language of a man's heart be, *Lord, let my ſoul be ſaved, but let my luſts reign*; in this caſe the offer is not received; for then the man ſays, Let me have Chriſt as a Saviour, but not as a Lord; and ſo the offer not being received, it is not faith, but a fancy, a deluſion; for, at the ſame time that he deſires ſuch a latitude, he refuſes the offer of Chriſt as a Lord; yea, and betrays the rottenneſs of his faith in him as a Saviour, while he would divide ſalvation from dominion, and Chriſt's prieſthood from his lordſhip.

When God brings a man therefore to receive his offer in the goſpel, he makes him to paſs under three convictions, which three you read of, John xvi. 8. *When the Spirit is come he will convince the world of ſin, of righteouſneſs, and of judgment.* 1. He paſſes under the conviction of *ſin*; both of his general ſin, in rebelling againſt and contemning the authority of a commanding God in the law; and of his particular ſin of unbelief, in deſpiſing the grace of a promiſing God in the goſpel. 2. He paſſes under the conviction of *righteouſneſs*; that is, of the righteouſneſs of Chriſt as a Saviour, a Prieſt, a ſacrifice, and as the *Lord our righteouſneſs*, for juſtification: he is convinced that he is loſt for ever without an intereſt in this righteouſneſs. 3. He paſſes under the conviction of *judgment*; that is, of the government of Chriſt; making the man willing to be ſubject to him, as well as juſtified by him; to be under the dominion of his grace, as well as under the covert of his blood. Now, till a man have paſſed theſe three convictions, he is ſtill blocked up, and concluded under unbelief.

There are two things, which when they do appear, tend mightily to draw out the heart toward the goſpel-offer; the one is in us, the other is in Chriſt. The firſt is, the neceſſity of the ſinner; and the ſecond is, the excellency of the Saviour. The neceſſity of having Chriſt upon pain of death, and excellency of the knowledge of Chriſt. The one makes the man willing to be ſaved by him; the other makes the man willing to be ſubdued by him. Such is my neceſſity; Oh I muſt have him for a Jeſus to me! Such is his excellency; Oh I muſt have him for a Lord to me! And thus he is brought to go in to the proper ends of the goſpel-offer, namely, to receive Chriſt as Jeſus the Lord.

Thus I have ſhewed you ſomewhat relative to the offer which this *receiving of Chriſt* relates to. And from this manner of offering Chriſt, it appears, that though the offer be to ſinners, and grounded upon free grace, yet what a hard thing, yea, how impoſſible it is, without the almighty power of God, to receive the offer, or to believe in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. What a mighty hard work it is! when there are ſuch obſtructions in the way. Many think it is an eaſy thing to be believers; and ſo it may be ſaid indeed of a multitude of ordinary, ſuperficial, dogmatical believers in the world. But ſaving faith, though it be the eaſieſt and ſweeteſt thing in the world, under the conduct of divine grace, and the drawings of the divine Spirit, yet without that, it is the hardeſt thing in the world. Why?

1. For a loſt ſinner, under the curſe of the law, to believe that God ſhould be as good to him, as the promiſe of the goſpel tells him, is hard; nay, he is afraid the promiſe be too good to be true, and this argues his want of faith; for whatever unbelief does, faith never queſtions the truth of God's promiſe.

2. For a proud man to be beholden to free grace, when he hath been building his hope all his days upon ſome good work or deed of his own; for ſuch a ſinner to ſtrip himſelf of his own righteouſneſs, and look upon it as a filthy rag; how hard is this! nay, publicans and harlots go to heaven ſooner.

3. For a ſinner filled with ſelf-love, ſelf-eaſe, ſelf-will, ſelf-wiſdom, ſelf-ſufficiency, ſelf-eſtimation, ſelf-juſtification, to deny himſelf, his ſinful ſelf, his natural ſelf, moral ſelf, worldly ſelf, religious ſelf, and go wholly out of himſelf, and wholly in to Chriſt for all; all this is very hard: and yet for this end Chriſt is offered that he may be thus received, even for *wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification, redemption*, and all; for *wiſdom*, that is, as a Prophet to teach you; for *righteouſneſs*, that is, as a Prieſt to juſtify you; for *ſanctification*, that is, as a King to ſanctify you; and for complete redemption, that

that is, for your *all in all*; even the whole of your salvation, in time and through eternity. Now, the hardness and difficulty of believing and accepting of this noble offer, does not ly in some great work that you have not power to do, for faith and works are opposite here; believing is not working; *He that believeth, is he that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifies the ungodly*, Rom. iv. 5.: but the difficulty rather lies in some great worth, and apprehended good, that you have no will to quit, till a day of power make you willing; such as, your own wit and wisdom, which you oppose unto Christ as a Prophet; your own works and righteousness, which you oppose unto Christ as a Priest; your own strength and power, together with your own self-love and sin-love, which you oppose unto Christ as a King. In receiving this offer, the man not only quits his sin and lust, which is very hard; but quits his righteousness and works, which is yet harder. Need I to explain this, for preventing mistakes, in this critical age and day of reproach? When I speak of quitting our works; I mean, a quitting them, not in point of *performance*, but in point of *dependence*; it is a quitting the law, not as a rule of *obedience*, but as a rule of *acceptance*, or as a *covenant of works*. Now, I say, it is the hardest of all for a man to quit his works and righteousness, and have no hope of any favour or acceptance with God for them; for the light of nature will tell him, that he should quit his sins; but the light of nature, and the remainders of the legal covenant in him, will never tell him that he should quit his works and righteousness; nay, it will tell him, on the quite contrary, that he must *do, or be damned*; that he must *do and live*; and work so and so well, and God will accept of him. This is the way of the covenant of works, the natural way; and to quit that way is right hard, so as to venture all upon the works of another, the righteousness of another: Indeed it is not so hard for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, with his bunch on his back, as for a rich man; I mean, one that is rich in his own conceit, *rich and increased with goods, and standing in need of nothing*; nay, it is impossible for him with his bunch of duties and works of righteousness on his back, to enter into heaven. Some by the *needle-eye* understand the wicket of the gate of Jerusalem, no camel with his burden could go in; so it is here. Others by the *camel* understand a *cart-rope*, as they think the word we translate *camel* may be rendered; and as a cart-rope cannot go through a needle's eye, unless it be untwisted and put through the needle's eye thread by thread; neither will any get to heaven, unless the cart-rope of his righteousness be untwisted and dissolved piece-meal; for otherwise his cart-rope will be fit for nothing, but casting anchor on the sandy bank of the law, where his vessel will be broken to pieces, and his soul will sink into the sea of God's wrath; for, *By the deeds of the law no flesh living can be justified.*

So that, I say, the difficulty here lies not so much in some great thing that you have not *power* to do, but in some great thing that you have not *will* to undo: and so the greatest knack of true religion lies in being made willing; and the great power of God is necessary for that end; *Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power*; and when this day of power comes, then, to receive the offer of Christ for the ends for which he is offered, becomes as easy as ever before it was hard; why, the offer takes hold of the man's heart, and the offering hand takes hold of the receiving hand; like a child that never had a pen in his hand, and cannot write a word, the father takes the child's hand within his, and leads it; so here, the Lord takes the man's hand, and leads it to write down his name, to sign the offer, saying, I accept.

Now, what shall we say? Is there any here to whom the offer is come with power? The external dispensation of this gospel, and revelation of this offer, make it the unquestionable duty of every one of you to accept and receive it; but it is the internal effectual revelation of it only, that will determine you actually to accept and receive it freely, *without money, and without price*; without terms and conditions on your side; renouncing all the good qualifications you dreamed of having to recommend you to him, and coming to him for all; like a black and ugly monster coming to accept of an offer that can make you fair and clean. It is an offer of all things in Christ; and nothing makes it hard and uneasy but yourself, that you will not quit an *all*, that is *nothing*, and take an *all*, that is *all things*. The natural man finds it hard, because it is a quitting all the good that he has; but the enlightened soul finds it easy, because it is just a taking all the good that he wants; and when he is taking all things in Christ, he does not find it hard to quit all in himself: why, he sees *all things loss and dung, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ*; and when he sees that, he finds it is not hard to relinquish a heap of dung for a heap of jewels, and a pearl of infinitely great price in the midst of them. O! is there any here welcoming God's offer? Here is his offering hand, where is your receiving hand? Here is the hand of grace offering, where is the hand of faith accepting? Is any here taking God's offer off his hand? Do you see the offer is to you; to you, man; to you, woman: whether young or old? *To you is the word of this salvation sent.* The greater gift it is that is offered to you, the less will you be ready to take, as long as you think, it cannot be to me. But to you, I say, it is, man, woman; whoever you are, *the promise is to you*; the offer is to you, be who you will. Now, are you receiving, are you taking God's offer? Why, if you be doing so, it is easy, through grace, to know that you are doing so. How do you know when you are taking a gift that a man offers you, in an outward sense? The man holds it out in his hand, saying, Take it; and if you receive, then you hold out your hand to his, saying, Content, I will take it: or, if your hand be short, and cannot reach his, yet you will hold it out in testimony of your acceptance, saying, Well, come and give it. So here, in a spiritual sense, if you be taking God's offer off his hand, then your heart will be determined to say, Content, Lord; even so I take the unspeakable Gift that thou offers: or, if your hand be short, or withered, that you think you cannot get the offer embraced as you would, yet you will be stretching out heart and hand as you can, saying, Come, Lord, and give what thou offers; even a whole Christ to be wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, redemption, and all to me. O! is this the language of your soul, I have nothing, but let Christ

Chriſt come and be all to me; I can do nothing, but let Chriſt come and do all for me; I have a world of ſelf-enmity, and innumerable evils, that oppoſe Chriſt within me, but let Chriſt come in and put all to the door that hold him out; I cannot take him, but let him take me, and take my bleſſing for ever? Why, if that were the language of your heart and ſoul, I hope there hath been ſome ſecret power working in you to make you thus far to receive the offer of God.——And thus I have conſidered the offer which the receiving of Chriſt relates unto. Now I told you that as to this act of *receiving* we would conſider what it *relates to*, and what it *conſiſts in*. Having then ſhewed what it relates to, namely, the offer, I come to ſhew,

2*dly*, What it *conſiſts in*. Here I need not tell you, that *receiving* and *believing* are all one, according to John i. 12. and this believing is not a mere notional perſuaſion, or dogmatical opinion concerning Chriſt; for that is too ſlight a thing to be accounted a receiving of Chriſt; but this receiving of Chriſt,

(1.) *In general* to expreſs it in a word, if poſſible, it may be called (as one of our renowned commentators expreſſes it) a *fiducial knowledge*; that is, ſuch a knowledge of Chriſt as leads the ſoul to an aſſured confidence in him. Our Shorter Catechiſm defines faith to be, a *receiving of Chriſt, and a reſting on him for ſalvation, as he is offered in the goſpel*. And this *reſting* is not ſo much a different act from that of *receiving*, as it is a continuation of that act of receiving; for when we receive him for ſalvation, we begin our reſting on him: and when we reſt upon him for ſalvation, we continue our receiving of him, or believing in him. The reception, is the reſt begun; and the reſting, is the reception continued. And therefore whatever application of Chriſt is imported in *reſting on him*, the ſame is imported in *receiving of him*. And as Chriſt is offered to every one in particular, that hear the goſpel; ſo it is the duty of every one to receive the offer by applying Chriſt to himſelf, for his own particular good, benefit, and ſalvation. I could here lay before you ſeveral terms or expreſſions whereby this faith, or receiving of Chriſt, is held forth in the ſcripture, but I confine myſelf to the text. Receiving of Chriſt is, "a going out of the "whole ſoul, to cloſe with Chriſt for complete "ſalvation to a man's ſelf, as he is offered in "the goſpel;" and ſo the language of faith is, Here is an offer made by God to me, to me myſelf; and therefore I receive Chriſt for ſalvation to myſelf according to the offer, and that with my whole heart and ſoul; for, *With the heart man believeth unto righteouſneſs: My heart truſted in him, and I am helped*, ſaid the pſalmiſt. Some make faith to be only an act of the *will*, that they may exclude from the nature of faith that perſuaſion which yet cannot be excluded. In oppoſition to ſuch we aſſert, That, according to ſcripture, faith is an act of the *whole ſoul*; the *underſtanding*, *will*, and *affections*: and hence theſe, and the like ſcriptures, make faith to be an act of the ſoul, Pſalm lvii. 1. *O my God, my ſoul truſteth in thee*. Pſal. xvi. 2. *O my ſoul, thou haſt ſaid unto the Lord, thou art my Lord. O my ſoul, wait thou only upon God, for my expectation is from him. My ſoul maketh her boaſt in the Lord. My ſoul thirſteth for the living God. Return to thy reſt, O my ſoul*. All eminent expreſſions of faith. Now, I ſay, this receiving of Chriſt is the ſoul's cloſing with him; the ſoul's going out toward him; or going in to him as offered, ſo as to become one with him. As you ſee how grafts are knit to the ſtock, ſo as to become one with the ſtock, and one in the ſtock, or elſe it cannot live in a vegetative manner; ſo the ſoul is by faith knit and unite to Chriſt, the root, to be one with him, and one in him: for true faith ſo cloſes with Chriſt, as not merely to have a Chriſt without the man; but a Chriſt within him; and therefore the ſoul, by faith, goes in to Chriſt, ſo as not only to unload his debt, and leave his ſin and guilt upon him, but alſo to ſurrender himſelf into his poſſeſſion and propriety. But that I may further open up this *act* of receiving Chriſt, I would

(2.) And *more particularly* conſider the nature thereof in the following *qualities* of it.

1. This act of receiving Chriſt is a *ſpiritual* act, in oppoſition to natural acts done by natural wit and ſtrength: men may believe that way with a cradle faith, a natural faith, a common faith, and believe unto perdition; but will never believe to the ſaving of their ſouls. True faith is a ſpiritual act, under the conduct of the Spirit of faith; and therefore faith is called a *fruit of the Spirit*, Gal. v. 22.; and of the power of the Spirit, even *the exceeding greatneſs of his mighty power*, Eph. i. 19. It is a fruit and effect of the day of God's power, and the revelation of his arm, Iſa. liii. 1. It is the *gift of God*, and a fruit of his free grace; and hence we read of ſome that *through grace believed*, Acts xviii. 27. The power of the Spirit of Chriſt creates it where it is not; and that ſame power of the Spirit excites it where it is. It is a ſpiritual act.

2. This act of receiving Chriſt is a *judicious* act, in oppoſition to darkneſs and confuſion. The man being acted by the Spirit of faith doth act judiciouſly and diſtinctly, as in a matter of the greateſt concern, with judgment and underſtanding, ſaying, as John vi. 68. *To whom ſhall we go, thou haſt the words of eternal life: We believe and are ſure, that thou art that Chriſt the Son of the living God*. The man believes the promiſe, and the doctrine of grace and ſalvation ſo judiciouſly, that, as his judgment approves it as a *truth*, ſo the will accepts it as a *good*; *This is a faithful ſaying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jeſus Chriſt came into the world to ſave ſinners, of whom I am the chief*, 1 Tim. i. 15.

3. This act of receiving Chriſt is a *warrantable* act, in oppoſition to preſumption and deluſion. True faith acts upon a ſufficient warrant. It acts upon the warrant of an *objective ſufficiency*; there is a ſufficient Chriſt preſented to him. O the ſufficiency of his perſon, being God-man, in one perſon! the ſufficiency of his offices, whether his general offices, as a Mediator, a Surety, a Redeemer; or his particular offices, as a Prophet, Prieſt, and King; the ſufficiency of his righteouſneſs, his doing and dying, his obedience and ſatisfaction; the ſufficiency of his power, being *able to ſave to the uttermoſt*; the ſufficiency of his will, while he proclaims his *good-will towards men*, and that *God is in Chriſt reconciling the world to himſelf*. Beſides, faith acts upon the warrant of a general diſpenſation of grace, through Chriſt, in the external revelation of the word, where the elect are not characterized more than others, but life and ſalvation through Chriſt held out to ſinners of mankind without diſtinction of nation, ſtate, or condi-

tion; and ſo in an indefinite way. Thus run all the promiſes, except theſe that are made to believers, or ſuch as have grace already; to them indeed the promiſes are definite, as alſo they are definite to the elect in the purpoſe of God; but in the external diſpenſation of the goſpel, they are indefinite and general, Acts ii. 32. Rom. ix. 4. And as the promiſe is indefinite, ſo the call is univerſal, whether by exhortations, invitations, counſels, or commands, to all and every one to come and receive Chriſt, and all his ſure mercies, freely. And upon ſuch like warrants as theſe does faith act.

4. This act of receiving Chriſt, it is an *adventuring* act, in oppoſition to diſpondency, diffidence, and diſtruſt: hence it is called a *boldneſs; We have boldneſs to enter into the holieſt by the blood of Jeſus.* It is a venturing our ſouls, our life, upon the blood of the Son of God, and upon the promiſe of God in Chriſt. To receive Chriſt, and believe, is in effect to ſay, I adventure my ſoul upon nothing in the world, but upon the promiſe of a God that I have provoked, and been an enemy to all my days; I have nothing but the word of this God, and yet I muſt venture upon it my everlaſting all. It is an adventuring grace, like Peter upon the boiſterous water, with this in his mouth and heart, *Maſter, ſave me*, Mat. xiv. 30. To venture upon the promiſe of a provoked God, and to believe him to be a God in Chriſt reconciled, according to his word, upon the account of the *ranſom he hath found out*, and the *propitiation he hath ſet forth*; here is the boldneſs of faith. It is a venturing act.

5. This act of receiving Chriſt, it is an *evangelical* act, in oppoſition to a legal faith. It is evangelical in the ground of it: legal faith acts upon the ground of a legal inherent ſtrength, and perſonal righteouſneſs; but true faith upon a borrowed ſtrength, and an imputed righteouſneſs of another, ſaying, *Surely in the Lord only have I righteouſneſs and ſtrength*; and ſo it is a ſelf-emptying grace, ſtripping the man of his own righteouſneſs, of his own ſtrength, and taking him intirely off his own bottom. It is evangelical in the order of it, receiving him as a *Jeſus*, and then as a *Lord*; firſt for juſtification, and then for ſanctification: legal faith perverts that goſpel-order, ſeeking ſanctification firſt, that upon that bottom it may build its juſtification; *Seeking righteouſneſs, as it were, by the works of the law*, Rom. ix. 32. It is evangelical in its fruit; legal faith is a fruitleſs faith, it brings forth no acceptable fruit, either from a right principle or to a right end; and ſo all its fruits of good works are rejected, as unprofitable and vain: but true faith brings virtue and good from its object; ſuch as, eaſe to the conſcience, quiet to the mind, holineſs to the heart, and holy luſtre to the whole life; when faith touches, if it were but the hem of Chriſt's garment, virtue comes out, and heals the ſoul; grace comes forth, and purifies the heart; yea, it brings forth all the good fruit of goſpel-grace; *Out of his fulneſs have we all received and grace for grace*, John i. 16. Faith is the receiving grace, and other graces are received by it; it fetches them out of Chriſt's fulneſs; it brings out repentance, and then it is a penitential faith: goſpel repentance is in it, and with it, and after it, but not before it. As true faith is a penitent faith; even ſo it is a humble faith, a joyful faith, a thankful faith, an obediential faith, a working faith; yea, faith is the root of all theſe fruits that natively grow upon it, and go along with it.

6. This act of receiving Chriſt, it is a *particular, appropriating, fiducial* act, in oppoſition to the general doubtſom faith of the Papiſts, which we have abjured in our National Covenant. The man that believes, truly believes *applicatively*. The man that receives Chriſt rightly, receives him with a particular appropriation to himſelf; juſt as a man eats and drinks for his own particular benefit; and hence faith is called an *eating of the fleſh, and drinking of the blood of the Son of God*; that is, he takes home Chriſt, his merit, righteouſneſs, mediation, and the benefits thereof to his own ſoul. And thus it is alſo a *fiducial* act, importing an aſſured confidence, according to the meaſure of it, in oppoſition to a doubtſom faith. A doubtſom, wavering faith is not the faith that receives Chriſt; nay, it is a faith that receives nothing, if we will take God's word for it, James i. 5, 6, 7. *If any man lack wiſdom, let him aſk it of God;—but let him aſk in faith, nothing wavering; for he that wavereth is like a wave of the ſea driven with the wind and toſſed; for let not that man think that he ſhall receive any thing of the Lord.* Why then, a doubtſom faith receives nothing, far leſs ſuch a prize as Chriſt. I know how ſome have been reproached on this head, notwithſtanding of this plain ſcriptural doctrine, as if they aſſerted, that they had no pity upon doubting believers. Really we ſhould have no pity upon ourſelves if we ſhould ſay, that no believers have their doubts. Well, ſay you, may not a man that hath faith have doubts? Yea, to be ſure he may; but his doubts are not his faith, but his unbelief; and who ever ſaid but a believer may have much unbelief? I would aſk ſuch perſons, may not a man that hath grace, have corruption? And yet you will own that his corruption is none of his grace; nay, it is the direct oppoſite of grace: even ſo, a man that hath faith may have doubts, but yet his doubts are not his faith; but his ſin, his unbelief, and the quite oppoſite of faith: there is no doubting in his faith, even as there is no corruption in grace; they are antipodes. And it is not by his doubting, but by his believing, that he receives any thing from God. The Lord deliver us from juſtifying a doubtſom faith which Chriſt reproves; *O thou of little faith, wherefore doſt thou doubt?* Some make doubting a mark of faith; but it is ſuch a mark of faith as corruption is a mark of grace, as in the following ſenſe; Why, ſay you, there is a notorious profligate ſinner, that ſays he never doubted all his days, but ſtill had a good hope; that is indeed a ſign that he hath no faith: whereas the poor ſoul that finds a world of doubts may yet be a true believer. Very true; and therefore I ſay it is ſuch a mark as corruption is a mark of grace, in this ſenſe; there is an impenitent wretch that ſays he never ſaw what they call corruption within him all his days; nay, he bleſſes God he is a good Chriſtian, a good neighbour, and hath always had a good heart to God: there is an evidence that he hath no grace: whereas the poor ſoul that finds corruption working, and ſin raging within him, may yet be a true ſaint. Thus as corruption felt may be a mark of grace, becauſe grace fights againſt corruption; even ſo, doubting felt may be a mark of faith, becauſe faith fights againſt doubting, and oppoſes it, as being quite contrary to its very nature. But will any

any therefore put doubting into the nature of faith, as if it were essential to faith to doubt? Or, will any therefore exclude persuasion from the nature of faith, as if it were not essential for faith to be persuaded, because the man that has faith is sometimes doubting? Just as if it were not in the nature of the eye to see, because the man that hath eyes is sometimes sleeping: nay, we say, it is in the nature of faith to see, and be assured, and persuaded, because it is a fiducial act; hence these and the like scriptures, Rom. iv. 20, 21. *He staggered not at the promise of God, through unbelief, but was strong in the faith, giving glory to God; being* FULLY PERSUADED, *that he that had promised was able to perform.* And Heb. xi. 13. it is said of all the Old Testament believers, to whom notwithstanding the revelation of the object of faith was not so clearly made as under the New Testament, that they *received the promise:* well, but what sort of an act was that receiving act of theirs? why, it follows, *they were* PERSUADED *of them, and embraced them.*

The common sense of mankind usually takes faith, or believing, for a *persuasion:* I believe such a thing; that is, I am *persuaded*, or assured of it; I do not doubt it: I believe such a man; that is, I am *persuaded* it is truth that he says: if the honest man give me his word, his oath, his bond, this fortifies the persuasion, and certifies the person that hath ado with him. So here, to believe, is to be persuaded, assured, and certified upon the word, the oath, the bond, the promise, the covenant, yea, the blood and righteousness of a God; and he that believeth upon such a ground, as all true believers do, must believe with persuasion, according to the measure of faith: if it be a weak faith, it is a weak persuasion; if a strong faith, a strong persuasion. And it is not a natural persuasion, a man's persuading himself, and so no more of it; nay, it is supernatural, and comes of God, which the former does not; Gal. iv. 8. *This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you;* intimating, that right persuasion cometh of God.

This act of receiving Christ then is a *fiducial* act, a *fiducial persuasion*, which some call a *fiducial assurance.* I know that one great ground of mistake in this point is, the confounding of *fiducial* assurance with *evidential* assurance. The former is the assurance of faith, and in the nature of it; the latter is the assurance of sense, and the effect of faith; and is not properly faith at all, but sense: they differ in their *acts;* by fiducial assurance, we *receive* Christ as ours; by evidential assurance, we *know* him to be ours: the former every believer hath, when he acts faith; the latter many believers want, even when they act faith; because, though they may be conscious that they are acting, yet they may not be conscious of the quality of the act, if it is saving or not.—Again, this fiducial and evidential assurance differ, as in their acts, so in their *order;* we first *believe* by a fiducial persuasion, and then we are *sure* by an evidential persuasion; the one is the cause, the other the effect: the persuasion that is in faith, is like heat in the fire; the persuasion that is after faith, is like fire in the room, that is the effect of the other.—They differ in their *object;* the object of fiducial assurance is *without* the man, and looks to the promise of God, and righteousness of Christ; but the object and foundation of evidential assurance is *within* the man, and looks to the work of God within; such as graces, attainments, and experiences.—They differ in their *effects;* the effect of fiducial persuasion is *justification*, the effect of evidential persuasion is *consolation:* a man is not justified by his evidential knowledge, or by knowing that Christ is his; but he is justified by his fiducial knowledge, or his receiving and resting on Christ for salvation, as offered in the gospel. *By his knowledge, shall my righteous Servant justify many.* Faith is a fiducial act.

7. In a word, It is an *interesting* act, whereby a man is interested in Christ and all that he is worth; insomuch that upon his believing, all his debts are paid: as a woman that is in debt, upon her marriage to a rich man, all her debt is paid; because, by her marriage, all her debt is transferred upon the husband that hath married her: so the soul, being married to Christ, hath all his debt paid; the soul being now under the covert of its husband, is not answerable for his own debt, nay, hath not his own sins to answer for, but Christ the husband answers for them.—And thus much concerning the *act* of faith in receiving Christ; it is a spiritual act, a warrantable act, a venturing act, an evangelical act, and a fiducial act, as also an interesting act. I come now to consider,

Secondly, The OBJECT of this act, namely, *Christ; As ye have received* CHRIST: which admits of a double interpretation. 1. By Christ may be meant Christ *doctrinally* considered; or the doctrine of the gospel of Christ. 2. By Christ may be meant Christ *personally* considered; or Christ himself received in and by that doctrine.

1. I say, by *Christ* may be meant Christ *doctrinally*, or the doctrine of the gospel of Christ, as Eph. iv. 20. *Ye have not so learned Christ;* that is, ye have been otherwise taught the doctrine of the gospel. And whoever views accurately the context here, both the verse preceding the text, and the verse following, as formerly explained, will find, that by *Christ* here may evidently be understood the doctrine of Christ, or the gospel. And indeed none can receive Christ, and reject his doctrine; but, in receiving Christ, must first receive his doctrine, and so Christ therein; and so he that receiveth Christ is said to *believe the gospel;* and every true receiver of Christ is a receiver of his doctrine, because that is the *seed* by which he is conceived and born, and it is the milk by which he is brought up and nourished to eternal life, 1 Peter i. 23. chap ii. 2. I need not here stand to commend the gospel doctrine. It is enough to say, that by the Lord's blessing upon it, it is the seed to conceive, and the milk to nourish all the children of God. Why? it is the *channel* in which the Spirit runs; *Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?* Gal. iii. 2.—It is the *organ* of the almighty power of God; *I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation, to every one that believeth:* his power in working faith, his power in measuring faith, and his power in saving sinners in a way of believing, is put forth in the gospel; Why? *For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith*, Rom. i. 16. 17. The law hath convinced many, but never converted one to this day; and a gospel minister may preach the law for many good ends, but it is the gospel part of preaching that doth the business,

buſineſs, if the power of God be going along with it; for the goſpel only is the channel wherein the converting power of the Spirit runs; *Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God:* wherein Chriſt is revealed in order to his being received. It is not the goſpel of itſelf, but the Chriſt revealed therein that heals the ſinner. It is like the ſerpent lifted up upon the pole in the wilderneſs; the pole did not heal, but the ſerpent upon the pole, that healed the ſting; but the pole held it up to be ſeen: Even ſo, it is not the pole of the goſpel that heals, but Chriſt lifted up upon the pole. It is Chriſt that is to be received, but he is to be received as offered in the goſpel; and the goſpel holds out Chriſt to the eye of faith: it is with reſpect to Chriſt what the pole was with reſpect to the ſerpent; and therefore they that pull down this pole of the goſpel in any reſpect, they take away Chriſt from the eye of the wounded ſoul, the ſtinged ſinner; they that pull down the pole, they take away the ſerpent out of view that the ſinner cannot ſee it. Caſt down Chriſt they cannot, but they will pull down the pole, and ſo take him out of ſight. They that are concerned to have, or to give others a ſight of Chriſt, will be concerned to have the pole ſtreight that holds him up; I mean, the goſpel ſound and clear that holds him forth.

Now, there is no good merchant for the kingdom of heaven, but, for the treaſure's ſake that is hid in the field, will buy the whole field; Mat. xiii. 44. *The kingdom of heaven is like a treaſure hid in a field; the which, when a man hath found, he hideth; and for joy thereof goeth and ſelleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.* Well, did the man buy the treaſure only and not the field; as many think they can take Chriſt, and reject the goſpel? No; he went and bought the field where the treaſure was. The treaſure is Chriſt; the field is the goſpel; and he bought, he received the goſpel; and ſo had the treaſure in it. Every true believer values the goſpel at a very high rate; and the reaſon is, becauſe it is the field where the treaſure is hid, where Chriſt is to be had. And yet withal many may receive the goſpel-doctrine by a dogmatical faith, an opinionative faith, and not receive Chriſt himſelf. This is a faith that thouſands periſh by; but true faith receives the goſpel, and Chriſt in it. Therefore,

2. By *Chriſt* here, as the object of faith, we are to underſtand Chriſt *himſelf* to be received; Chriſt *perſonally* conſidered. The object of faith is Chriſt the Son of God, not excluding the Father, and the Holy Ghoſt; for each perſon of the glorious Trinity is the object of faith; Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, one God; but this God would be as inacceſſible to us as to the fallen angels, were it not through Chriſt. Chriſt, you know, ſignifies ANOINTED, and to receive Chriſt is to receive him as the *Meſſiah*, the Sent, Sealed, and Anointed of God, Iſa. lxi. 1. His anointing ſignifies his ſingular ordination to be our Redeemer, and to perform the work of our redemption; for, *Him hath God the Father ſealed*, John vi. 27.; SEALED, by the ſupereminent unction of the Holy Ghoſt, and authorized of the Father to it: he did not undertake this work preſumptuouſly, without a call, but by the ordination and appointment of God. His being the Chriſt, points out his eminent qualifications for the work of our redemption; as he is a Redeemer of God's ſending, ſo of God's qualifying; *He hath laid help upon one that is mighty;* one that is able of himſelf, and enabled of his Father to work out our ſalvation and redemption work: and ſo to receive Chriſt is to receive God's Sent, God's Anointed, God's Sealed one. And here faith views the divine authority of his commiſſion in that he is given of the Father to be a Prophet, Prieſt, and King; and came from the Father in his name and authority. And hence there is nothing that Chriſt commends more in the New Teſtament than this faith that believes his divine miſſion, his divine ordination to this mediatory work; as John xvii. 8. *I have given unto them the words which thou gaveſt unto me, and they have received them, and have known ſurely that I came out from thee; and they have believed that thou didſt ſend me.* To receive *Chriſt* then, is to receive God's Ambaſſador, God's Anointed; and that is a noble faith.

But again, to conſider the *termination* of faith upon this glorious object; the man that receives Chriſt, receives him as a living root, and as a glorious head: as a living root, in whom he is implanted; and as a glorious head, to whom he is united. Faith goes in to him; and ſo by faith there is a ſaving implantation in him, a ſpiritual union to him: and ſo this receiving of him makes all that is in Chriſt yours. If a man ſhould look for life and righteouſneſs from Chriſt without union to Chriſt, it is as if a woman ſhould look for an eſtate from a man by conveyance, and not by marriage: now, God gives not any ſaving benefit to ſinners by conveyance, but by marriage and union with Chriſt. Many indeed have a great deal of gifts, parts, and abilities; and ſuch knowledge as peradventure you may call it revelation; theſe things are given to men through Chriſt, but with this difference; ſome, they receive theſe things from Chriſt as a ſteward, that may diſpenſe them; but not from him as a head, flowing in to them as members. To natural men, and wicked men, theſe things come from Chriſt as a ſteward; but they come not from him as a head of union; for theſe only that are united to him by faith have ſpiritual bleſſings flowing to them from Chriſt, as the head, to them as members. It is true, that unions are great myſteries; the union of God and man, into *one Chriſt*, is a great myſtery; the union of Chriſt, and all his members unto *one body*, is a great myſtery; the apoſtle calls it a *great myſtery*, ſaying, *I ſpeak concerning Chriſt and his church*, Eph. v. 32. The believer receiving Chriſt, is in him as a member is in the head, and as a branch is in the root; and in him ſo as that he lives by the life of Chriſt, and is righteous by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, and is acted by the Spirit of Chriſt. Neither is this union to Chriſt by receiving him leſſened by this, that Chriſt is in heaven, and we upon the earth; for as the union between man and wife is not leſſened the one towards another, though they be a thouſand miles aſunder (though the communion is not ſo much:) ſo here, the union that we have to Chriſt, by receiving him, is not leſſened by his being in heaven, and we upon the earth: It is true, the communion is not ſo cloſe, nor ſo intimate, as it would be, if we were in the ſame place with him; but the union is not leſſened; they are united and married to the perſon of Chriſt by receiving him.

Now,

Now, the *object* of faith being Christ's person, and the receiving of Christ, a closing with this person, here is the honour of all the saints. What a comfortable and honourable station is it to be a member united to this glorious Head! And therefore, before I pass this, I would acquaint you with a thing which you will find true in your experience, namely, many are very much troubled and tried in seeking this and the other benefit from Christ, such as the pardon of sin, and mortifying of corruption; they seek and are never the better; and what is the reason? Even because they begin at the wrong end of the gospel; at the wrong end of religion and Christianity: they seek the things of Christ but not the person of Christ; they look out for his graces and benefits without closing with his person. O! says one, for such and such a benefit from Christ, and such and such graces of his Spirit; very well, but would you have them from Christ without union to him? Would ye have blessings from Christ without Christ himself? Why, what though you should get some blessings from him, if you live and die without him. O, says one that goes to a sacrament, O for some communion with Christ! very good; but here is the falsity; you would have communion without union to him, and that cannot be. Union to his person is the foundation of true communion with him in his benefits; and therefore you may seek communion with him, and yet neglect the foundation. You cannot have true communion without union by faith, receiving Christ himself; for as the graft cannot have sap from the root unless it be set into the stock; if it be not ingrafted it cannot have communion with the root; so neither can you have these graces and comforts that you would have in a way of communion with him, unless it be first in a way of union to him. And therefore, let it be your great business, through grace, to close with Christ himself, the person of Christ, as he is handed to you in the doctrine of the gospel: never rest till the offering hand of the gospel, and the receiving hand of faith meet together; for when Christ is received, then, and not till then, is there a real union; and this is the foundation of all true and spiritual communion.—Thus much shall suffice concerning the object, namely, Christ *doctrinally* and *personally* considered. But the object will be further cleared by the following purpose, namely,

Thirdly, The CAPACITIES or *respects* in which Christ is to be received, namely, as a JESUS, and a LORD. There are three letters of Christ's name here that point him out beyond all other names in the world. I have formerly told you that Christ is offered in these capacities, and I have just now spoke of the first letter of his name, *viz.* CHRIST, the *Anointed* of God; and indeed it is not found faith that doth not take him as the Sent of God, and qualified of God for the whole redemption work. But the other two letters of his name remain yet to be touched at. And you may consider them under this view as the two-fold capacities in which we are to receive Christ, namely, as *Jesus the Lord*. 1. As he is *Jesus*. 2. As he is the *Lord*.

1. As he is JESUS, that is, a *Saviour*. This is the first name given to Christ in the New Testament, Mat. i. 21. *His name shall be called* JESUS, *because he shall save his people from their sin*; and it is the best name that sinners can hear tell of; it is a name above all names, both for the glory of him that bears it, and the comfort of them that hear of it. Now, to receive Christ as a *Jesus*, is to receive him as a singularly mighty Saviour, that is able to save to the utmost, as appears by his doing, dying, suffering, satisfying, conquering; and surely, he that was able to atone God, and conquer the devil, is able to save sinners. To receive him as a Jesus, is to receive him as an universal Saviour; I mean, not only in the apostle's sense, 1 Tim. iv. 10. that he is the *Saviour of all men, but especially of them that believe*; but I mean in respect of the salvation that he brings to them whom he makes to believe in him; and so I mean, in the sense of the same apostle, Acts xiii. 39. *By him all that believe are saved and justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses.* What law of Moses? Why, as his ceremonial law could not do the business; for, *It was impossible that the blood of bulls or goats should take away sin*, satisfy offended justice, or pacify an wounded conscience; so his moral law could not justify; for we, having broken and transgressed it, instead of justifying us it condemns us; therefore, *What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, that* Christ by the gospel does; he *justifies from all things*; from all guilt, so as the believer can never become liable to the sanction of the law. Some would have the believer justified only from *some things*, as it were, and still liable to the lash of the law; but we maintain the apostle's doctrine, that the believer is justified *from all things*, so as nothing can be laid to his charge; and seeing *it is God that justifieth, who is he that can condemn*, or make him liable thereunto? To receive him as a Jesus, then, is to receive him as a complete Saviour, a perfect Saviour; that saves meritoriously, by the price of his blood and his mediation for us; and efficaciously, by the power of his Spirit and his effectual operation in us; that saves from the law as a covenant, both in its commanding and condemning power; that saves from death, hell, and wrath. But SALVATION is a great word that we cannot now enlarge upon; only, to receive Christ as a Jesus, is to receive and rest upon him alone for salvation, and all the salvation that we need, temporal, spiritual, or eternal, in a suitableness to his promise and offer in the word.

2. As he is the *Lord;* which imports a desire to be subject to him, as he is a King; and to be conquered by him, as well as saved by him. *Christ hath upon his vesture and thigh this name written,* KING *of kings, and* LORD *of lords:* He is the King and Head of his church; the government of all is upon his shoulder, particularly the government of Zion, where he hath left officers to rule under him, according to the laws of his kingdom, and in a suitableness to the liberties of his subjects, pointed out in his word; and to have any hand in marring the beautiful order of his government that he hath appointed, or incroach upon the liberties of his people, doth ill become any that profess to receive him as a Lord; as little doth it become them to say in effect, *Our Lord delays his coming*, and so begin to smite their fellow servants, and so fall out with one another, especially when a common enemy is creeping in that would

would ſubject the government of Chriſt's houſe intirely to a ſecular power, whether it be patrons or prelates, princes or popes. Surely they that receive Chriſt as a Lord and King over themſelves will not be careleſs or indifferent about his lordſhip and government over Zion as a King and Head of his church; for if they be careleſs about his government that way, whether it ſtand or fall, they give evidence of their never truly receiving him as a Lord.

But more particularly, to receive him *as a Lord*, is to cloſe with him for *ſanctification* as well as *ſalvation*, and to welcome him in his kingly office, to ſubdue ſin, conquer Satan, and deſtroy the works of the devil. A true believer does receive Chriſt not only as he is a Saviour, but as he is a Lord. Conſider both theſe capacities jointly, and they may ſearch every corner of your heart. The eye of a loſt ſinner is firſt upon Chriſt as a Saviour; ſo God propounds him, and ſo we may come to him; but notice, there may be much ſelf-love in ſeeking Chriſt, a Saviour, for ſalvation; for ſalvation may be deſired merely out of ſelf-love, which is evident, if we are for dividing Chriſt, for taking the *Saviour*, and leaving out the *Lord*. Many would divide between his ſalvation and his dominion; they would have Chriſt as a Saviour, to ſave from wrath; but not as a Lord, to deſtroy their luſts and ſins. But herein true receiving of Chriſt will diſcover itſelf; the Lord makes the man as weary of his load of corruption, as he is weary of his load of condemnation. The man that is weary of condemnation only, would have Chriſt as a Saviour; but he that is weary of corruption alſo, would have Chriſt as a Lord. But when the heart would have water as well as blood, then it is in a right temper; when the man would have water to purify the heart, as well as blood to pacify the conſcience. Our deſire of Chriſt for ſalvation, may be tried with this touch-ſtone, Whether we have the ſame deſire for Chriſt, *the Lord*; as for Chriſt, *the Jeſus*.

I think it is impoſſible there can be any more uprightneſs in your deſire after the ſalvation of Chriſt, than there is of a deſire after the dominion of Chriſt. Faith, whatever it is, will bring a man out from under the commanding power of ſin, as well as from under the condemning power of it. And however a believer may ly in darkneſs, yet I conceive, that ſoul is out of danger who is made willing to receive Chriſt both as a Saviour and a Lord; and ſo, willing to receive, out of his hand, poiſon to kill his luſts; as well as pardon to remove his guilt: the deſire of pardon of ſin, and the deſire of purification of heart, bear proportion; none can truly take Chriſt, as a Saviour for juſtification; but they will alſo truly take him, as a Lord, for ſanctification. This we maintain, let calumny ſay what it will; as if our doctrine were an *enemy to holineſs* *! What can be the ground of the calumny, I cannot know, unleſs it be that men cannot diſtinguiſh betwixt *ſaving* faith, and *juſtifying* faith; for ſaving faith (of which we are now ſpeaking) reſpects Chriſt in all his offices, as a Prophet, Prieſt, and King; but when we ſpeak of faith merely as it is juſtifying, we maintain, againſt all the ſubtil Popery in the world, that it reſpects Chriſt only as a Prieſt, as a ſacrifice, and propitiation; but not Chriſt as a King. For, to make that act of faith, that receives Chriſt as a Lord, to be the juſtifying act of faith, is the very ſoul of Popery, that builds juſtification upon ſanctification, or upon ſanctifying faith: whereas it is the receiving of Chriſt as a Prieſt, that alone juſtifies before God. It is true, faith in Chriſt as a Saviour and a Lord, go hand in hand together, they are inſeparably connected; even as the eye and the ear are both joined together in one head; yet it is not the office of the eye to hear, or of the ear to ſee, no; but it is the office of the eye to ſee, and of the ear to hear; even ſo, though faith in Chriſt as a Jeſus and as a Lord go together in one and the ſame believer, and at one and the ſame time, yet they have their different offices: Chriſt as a King and Lord is not the object of juſtifying faith, but only Chriſt as a Prieſt and Saviour. It is not Chriſt as the Lord, ſubduing my ſin, that is the *matter* of my juſtification before God; but Chriſt as a Prieſt paying all my debt: it is not my perſonal righteouſneſs, even in my gracious ſubjection to Chriſt as a Lord, that can be the ground of juſtification; but it is the righteouſneſs of Chriſt alone as a Prieſt, his doing and dying, that is the ground of juſtification. And therefore it is not faith dealing with Chriſt as a Lord that juſtifies, but faith's dealing with Chriſt as a Prieſt, a Saviour, and a complete Righteouſneſs. This is the doctrine of the word; which, when our Reformers began to publiſh, they were branded as enemies to holineſs and good works; and if ſomething of this be not at the root of many reproaches in our day, I know not what it is; and if this be the ground of theſe reproaches, we may gladly bear them as our glory.

But now, we are ſpeaking of the *object* of faith, more largely taken, in its latitude, as it is ſaving faith; which, we ſay, hath a reſpect to Chriſt in all his offices, and particularly, as in our text, it receives him as a Saviour and a Lord both; and truly, the receiving of Chriſt as a Lord, for ſanctification, is the beſt mark imaginable of right receiving of Chriſt as a Saviour, for juſtification. You may meaſure your faith and intereſt in Chriſt, not by the degree of your perſuaſion concerning him as a Saviour, but rather by the degree of his virtue and power in you as a Lord: it is better to meaſure it by the depth of his work in you, than by the height of your confidence in him, which may be too proud and bold. If you ſhould

* The riſe and foundation of this injurious accuſation may be ſeen narrated, p. 70, 129, 149, 150, 178.——It hath been the fate of the witneſſes for the truths of God, in every period of the church, eſpecially ſince the commencement of Chriſtianity, to be traduced and reproached with the moſt ſcurrulous epithets and approbrious names. The bleſſed Author of the Chriſtian religion himſelf did not eſcape the obloquy, contumely, and cenſures of the world; and his diſciples were accuſed with being *turbulent* and *peſtilent fellows*, and ſuch as *turned the world up ſide down*. When it fared ſo with them, we need not be ſurprized that their ſucceſſors ſhould be flouted at, mal-treated, and evil ſpoken of by thoſe who do not favour the truth as it is in Jeſus.—About the time when our Author delivered theſe diſcourſes, an irreligious diſpoſition, and legal ſpirit was like to ſpread univerſally, and had arrived to ſuch a pitch, that *many could not endure to hear ſound doctrine*; and the teachers and defenders thereof were the objects of the reſentment both of the infidel and legaliſt. As our worthy Author was ſincerely attached to the doctrines of the goſpel, he could not but be ſincerely affected and truly alarmed at every incroachment upon the ſacred truths of his ever glorious Maſter; ſo this led him frequently to notice, in his public appearances, the aſperſions caſt upon him and others, in inculculating the moſt important truths of the goſpel of Chriſt, particularly their being derided as *favourers of Antinomianiſm*, and *enemies to holineſs*, for their befriending the freedom of the doctrine of grace, in aſſerting the neceſſity of ſinners *dying to the law*, in point of JUSTIFICATION, in order to their *living to God*, in point of SANCTIFICATION.

meet a man travailing upon the way, and should ask him how many hours high the sun is, you needed not marvel, if instead of looking up to the sun to see how high it is, he should look down to your shadow to see how short it is; for he can tell that way better than looking upon the sun itself: even so, if a man would judge how much of Christ is in him, the best way to try is rather to look downward than upward: look in to your heart and see what dash your pride hath got, and what abatement your corruption is brought under; for the shorter these dark shadows are in you, the higher is the Sun of righteousness. Now, the grand corruption of the heart of man, the great root-sin, which sets itself against Christ, as a Lord, I will tell you what it is, it is that lord of all mis-rule SELF; that is the lord that lords it over you; and all other sins are but the brats of Self: they are but sub-servants, under-servants to this great lord of self-love, self-pride, and self-righteousness. Now, a true believer is righteous by the righteousness of another; he lives by the life of another; he is acted by the spirit of another; and therefore he, of any man in the world, should have least of self in him; because Christ, as Lord, doth absolutely set himself against this great corruption. And therefore, if you would know one excellent way of judging of Jesus Christ the Lord his being in you, it is by the breaking and casting down of self; for the more full that a man is of self, the more empty is he of Christ; and the more full he is of Christ, the more empty he is of self; for the Lord-self, and the Lord-Christ, cannot stand together: the lordship of Christ and the lordship of Self are inconsistent; when you receive the Lord-Christ, then the Lord-Self is unhorsed and thrown down.——Thus much of the believer's *character* and *dignity*, as a receiver of Christ Jesus the Lord.

II. The *second* general head is, To speak of the believer's *duty*, having received Christ Jesus the Lord, then to *walk in him*. You have heard of the two tables of the law, and if you never heard of the two tables of the gospel, you may see them in our text; the first is to *receive Christ*, and the second is to *walk in him*. Though I make not the gospel, strictly taken, to be a doctrine of commandments and precepts; yet, where the law is in the hand of Christ, and where Christ is the ALPHA and OMEGA, there we will find the two tables of the gospel; *Christ is All in all*; and these two ALLS make the two tables of the gospel. Or, if the two tables of the gospel must answer to the tables of the law, then consider the law as a covenant, or as a rule, and we get both fulfilled in Christ; the law as a *covenant* is fulfilled by *receiving Christ*; the law as a *rule* is fulfilled by *walking in him*: and so the two tables of the law, in either of these respects, are answered by these two tables of the gospel; for *Christ is the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believeth.*

I must only here touch a little, 1. At the *denomination* of the duty, it is a *walking*. 2. The *qualification* of it, it is a *walking* IN CHRIST. As to the

First, The *denomination* of this duty, it is a *walking*. I know many things might be said in running the parallel; but I do not design to squeeze the metaphor beyond the scope of the text, but just to notice what is intended therein. And there are these three things that I apprehend are intended. It plainly denotes, 1. Practice; 2. Progress; 3. Permanency.

1. It denotes *practice*, or practicalness. And this is opposed to a dogmatical faith, where there is no practical religion. These that have received Christ they ought to be practical Christians, practical believers; *As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so* WALK *ye in him*: let your faith be a working faith. As by the same hand that we receive a thing, by the same hand we work; so your faith, if it be saving, then as it receives Christ in the promise of the gospel, so it will work by love in the precept of the law: if it receive Christ in the covenant, it will work by love in the commandment; Gal. v. 6. *In Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but faith that works by love*: Why? his *commandments are not grievous.*

QUEST. *If we have received Christ, what need more; Christ hath done all, and therefore we need do nothing?*

ANSW. Indeed many good principles are abused in the world; *e. g.* Christ hath done all *for* his people in point of *merit*, and he does all *in* his people in point of *power*; and so *without him we can do nothing*: here is a good principle; but thence to infer, that the duty and lawful use of means is not ours, is to abuse this good principle to licentiousness.—*When sin abounds, grace much more abounds*; there is a good principle; but thence to infer, *Let us sin, that grace may abound*, is to abuse that good principle, and a *turning the grace of God to wantonness.*—We are *justified by faith, without the works of the law*; there is a notable gospel principle; but thence to infer, that a justified man needs not be conform to the law, here is a good principle abused; for, *Do we make void the law, through faith? God forbid; nay, we establish the law.*

There are two things concerning a justified person, which call for practical religion; the one is, God *glorifies him*, and the other is, he is to *glorify God*. God glorifies him; for, *Whom he justifies, them he also glorifies*, Rom. viii. 30. But then God is to be glorified as well as he, and will be glorified by all that are justified; and therefore, that they may glorify God, they are to bring forth good fruit. And, on this account, may the Lord deliver us from a dead, unfruitful, and unprofitable faith.

There are four great reasons why they that have *received Christ*, by a gospel-faith, should *walk in him*, by a gospel-practice; namely, because hereby the power of faith is seen; hereby the trial of faith is made; hereby the beauty of it appears to others; and the comfort of it accrues to ourselves.

1. Hereby the *power* of faith is seen, in that it leads to a gospel-practice How is it that its power is thus seen? Why, even in opposing many and strong lusts: though it should not conquer them, yet it opposes them; and to oppose and fight against sin, in scripture language, is to conquer it: this is a *fighting the good fight of faith*. The power of faith is seen in a gospel-practice, while faith is thus exercised in sowring the sweetest sin, in bearing the greatest burden, and making easy the hardest commandment. When Christ speaks of doing the greatest things, then he compares faith to the least things; when he speaks of *removing mountains*; then he compares faith to a *grain of mustard-*

muſtard-ſeed: and indeed faith makes a man to remove mountains of pride, and ſets a man's hatred upon that which he loved; and ſets a man's love upon that which he hated. How ſhall a heavy-weight of lead be made eaſy to a child? Why, if you do not pare the lead, to make the weight leſs, then you muſt add ſtrength to the child; and if he has more ſtrength, though the weight be not pared, yet it makes no matter, becauſe the child hath ſtrength to bear it: even ſo, God in the goſpel makes the command light and eaſy; how ſo? not by paring, or abating the commandment, or diminiſhing the rule, (that is our corrupt way;) but God does it by giving more of faith, and more of Chriſt.——And ſo the power of faith is ſeen in carrying a man through the greateſt duties and trials.

2. Hereby the *trial* of faith is made; I ſay, by a goſpel-practice. Many judge of the truth of their faith by the degrees of their confidence; but the beſt trial is by the degrees of their conqueſt; the degrees of their conqueſt over ſin; the degrees of their conqueſts over their luſts and corruptions. As I ſaid before, you may know the height of the ſun by the ſhortneſs of your ſhadow, more than by the degrees of altitude. How much doth a man believe? even as much as his faith *purifies his heart*, and *mortifies his luſts*; ſo much does he believe, and no more. It is true, a man may be believing in Chriſt for juſtification, and coming under the covert of his blood, while in the mean time he ſees no meaſure of ſanctification; but on the contrary his heart full of hell, and enmity, and corruption; yea, but in the mean time what is that light wherein he ſees his own vileneſs, but ſanctifying light? And what is that grace whereby he is loathing and abhorring himſelf, but ſanctifying grace? And ſo when juſtifying faith is buſy flying under the covert of blood, ſanctifying grace is not idle; nay, the more that faith acts upon Chriſt for juſtification, the more will it act in purification. Again,

3. Another reaſon why a goſpel-faith ſhould have a goſpel-practice is, becauſe hereby the *beauty* of faith appears to others, and *our light ſhines before men, ſo as they ſeeing our good works, do glorify God.* The beauty of faith is ſeen by others, not in faith itſelf, but in the goſpel-walk and practice that it produces. If a man would know in the morning whether the ſun be riſen in the eaſt, he will readily look to the weſt, and ſee whether he can notice the reflection of the ſun-beams upon the top of a houſe, or the top of a hill; he looks the quite contrary way from the ſun; and yet he does it ingeniouſly enough: even ſo here, if a man would know you to be a believer, he will not look in to your faith, but will look out to your life, or look back to your converſation, and ſee what marks your faith makes there; hence faith the apoſtle, *Shew me thy faith by thy works.* Faith and works are contrary in point of juſtification, and yet when a man would ſee your faith, he will look to the contrary part, and ſee how it appears in your walk and work; and if it appears not there, the beauty of faith is not ſeen.

4. Hereby the *comfort* of faith accrues to yourſelves: even by a goſpel-practice you have the comfort of faith; for, *Great peace have all they that love his law; the fruit of righteouſneſs is peace.* There is no greater comfort in the world than for a man to get, by faith, maſtery over ſin, and grace to do duty for God. Whatever a man does for God, leaving ſelf behind him, it carries the ſweeteſt reliſh in the world with it. All duties, and ſufferings both, are made ſweet by this, that it is done for God. Self, in any duty, doth ſowre the duty be it never ſo admirable; *Let every man prove his own work*, ſaith the apoſtle, Gal. vi. 4. *then ſhall he have rejoicing in himſelf, and not in another.*——Theſe are ſome reaſons why goſpel-faith, in receiving Chriſt, muſt be attended with goſpel-practice in walking in him.

Many talk of practical religion in our day, but few know what it is to walk in it; they are like the lark that ſings with the higheſt, but builds with the loweſt: ſome ſing with the higheſt, as if they were almoſt angels; but where do they build? where are their affections? where are their hearts, their aims, their ends? They are low, earthly, and ſenſual. You that profeſs to be friends to the goſpel, O let the mouths that reproach religion be ſtopped by the power of religion in your walk. If the world call us Antinomians; *It is the will of God that by well-doing we put to ſilence the ignorance of fooliſh men*, 1 Pet. ii. 15. We account them the greateſt ſtars that give the greateſt light; ſo men will account them ſtill the greateſt Chriſtians that give the greateſt light, by their goſpel-practice in holineſs toward God, and righteouſneſs toward men. If you be not a better ſervant, a better child, a better parent, a better maſter, than you were, or than others are, what credit will religion get by you. Therefore, ſeek a practical-faith, leading to a goſpel-practice.

2. This walk imports not only practice, but *progreſs;* to ſtand ſtill is not to walk. Walking imports progreſs and growth from faith to faith, from ſtrength to ſtrength, from glory to glory. For the truth is, by reaſon of corruption, we are like the boat in a ſtream; if we go not forward by the oar, we go backward by the tide: ſo if we go not forward, by the ſtrength of grace, we will go backward, by the ſtrength and power of corruption; even as the boat in the ſtream cannot ſtand, it muſt go backward. It is true, people may be at a ſtand in religion and yet ſeem to walk; men may go the round of duties, and yet not be walking; like a ſpinning wheel, it goes round, but yet it is in the ſame place ſtill. Many may be called old-job-trot profeſſors; they are the ſame now that they were twenty years ago; no more holineſs, no more knowledge, no more experience.——QUEST. *What is this growth and progreſs?* I anſwer, It is not like a wheel that runs round, and ſtands ſtill in the ſame place; but where there is more knowledge of Chriſt, more inſight into the myſteries of the goſpel, more feeling of the power of the goſpel, more victory over luſts and corruptions, *etc.* there is growth and progreſs. It is true, a child of God may fall, and he may relapſe, and fall again; his feet may be benumned that he cannot walk: but here is the happineſs of a true child of God, one that hath truly received Chriſt, that his ſins are always beneficial to him; he will gain more in holineſs by one ſin, than a natural man will gain by an hundred duties: for his fall is like the ſtumbling of a horſe that makes him ride the faſter; ſo the believer may ſtumble, but when he gets to his feet again,

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he runs the faster, makes quicker progress in the ways of God; his fall humbles him, and makes him more dependent, more watchful, more circumspect, *etc.*

3. This walk imports *permanency* both in the way and doctrine of Christ, according to the following verse, *Rooted and established in the faith.* A single step is not a walk, it is a permanent motion; therefore it is called a being *established in the faith, as we have been taught.* Why, how can a man *walk*, and yet be *rooted; walk*, and yet *stand stable?* these are very inconsistent; 1 Cor. xv. 58. *Be ye stedfast and unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord:* STEDFAST, and yet *abounding in the work;* MOVING, and yet *unmoveable:* like the two feet of a pair of compasses, the one foot of the compass stands fast in the centre, and the other draws the line, and goes round: so it is with the believer, his faith is like the foot of the compass, that stands fast in the centre, Christ and his doctrine; but his gospel-practice is the part that is like the other foot of the compass, it never stands, but ever moves in the way of the Lord. He *stands fast in the faith*, and yet *walks.* As in walking one foot stands while the other moves, or else a man is leaping and not walking; so while we go forward in the way of gospel-obedience, we must stand fast in the faith; that foot must stand while the foot of obedience moves, or else we are like them that leap rather than like these that walk: I mean, there are some who will leap out of one doctrine into another, not being *established in the faith of Christ*, which was a stedfastness which the apostle commends in the Colossians here, in the verse immediately preceding our text. But as a tree that is planted in one place to-day, and transplanted to another place to-morrow, and so on from place to place, cannot bear fruit; so the soul that doth not stand fast, but leaps from doctrine to doctrine; from principle to principle; from profession to profession; and is unsettled in the principles of religion, cannot be fruitful: Therefore the apostle exhorts, Eph. iv. 14, 15. *That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive: But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things which is the head, even Christ.* And Heb. xiii. 9. *Be not carried about with strange doctrines; for it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace.*——And thus you see what may be imported in *walking.*

Secondly, The *qualification* of this duty is, it is a *walking in* CHRIST. Here is a great word, and many things might be said upon it; but all that I offer shall be in two short words on it at the time. To walk *in Christ* is not to walk *in ourselves*, but *out of ourselves.* Now, there is a twofold self-denial; a self-denial in point of *sin*; that is, a *denying ungodliness and worldly lusts:* this the grace of God that brings salvation teaches effectively, as the law teaches preceptively. Again, there is a self-denial in point of *grace.* Now, there is a twofold denial of grace, the one is in point of justification, and the other is in point of sanctification. Consider these two a little in order to know what it is to walk in Christ.

1. There is a denial of grace in point of *justification*; a self-denial with respect to grace in point of subsisting with God in justification. I would ask you, How do you subsist in a justified state? Are you justified by faith in Christ without the works of the law? Doth your grace, or sanctification, justify you, or expiate your sin? Nay, that which brought you into the favour of God at first must keep you there still. You that are brought into the favour of God, how do you stand in favour with him? It is not because of your savoury venison, but your elder Brother's cloaths; it is not your graces or best holiness, but the garment of Christ's righteousness that brings you and keeps you in favour with God. Now, to walk in Christ in the matter of justification, or looking for acceptance with God, is to be denied to your graces in point of acceptance; but to let Christ have his proper room: put not grace in the room of Christ and his righteousness; be as holy as you can, but never a whit more justified are you thereby; grace hath its place in sanctification, and walking before God, but it must have no place here; for a man doth not subsist in a justified state by his graces, or holiness; hence though Paul could say, Rom. vii. *I delight in the law of the Lord after the inward man;* but behold how denied he is to this, saying, *O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of sin and death?* What then does he? *Thanks be to God*, says he, *through Christ;* for *there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ.* He sets not sanctification in the room of Christ's righteousness.

2. There is, in some sort, a denial of grace, even in respect of *sanctification*; that is imported in a walking in Christ thus; even because a believer doth not walk in Christ merely by the strength of habitual grace; nay, he cannot do it but by the operation and motion of the Spirit of Christ that cometh down from above: for as we use to say, the ship does not go by its sails, but by the wind; the sails indeed take in the wind, but it is the wind that makes the ship to go: so, when a believer walks in spiritual obedience, either active or passive, in doing or suffering, it is owing to grace that comes down like auxiliaries, which makes him walk in him. This is what the apostle calls *grace sufficient for him; My grace shall be sufficient for thee:* and this makes a weak believer strong, in a moment, both for work and warfare. *My grace shall be sufficient for thee;* why, had not the apostle grace within him? Yea, but the scripture gives ground for this distinction; there is grace *in* a man, and grace *with* a man; grace *in* the believer, that is, habitual implanted grace; grace *with* the believer, that is, actual assisting grace, that comes and carries him on in his course, and by this means he walks in Christ, being denied to his own habitual grace, and resting on him for actual constant supply.—— To walk in Christ in both these respects, is for a soul to say, *In the Lord only have I righteousness and strength: In the Lord only have I* RIGHTEOUSNESS, there is the denial of grace, in point of justification: *In the Lord only have I* STRENGTH, there is the denial of grace in point of sanctification. *

But that I may a little more fully consider the *qualification* of this duty of walking *in Christ*, we may consider, 1. What it supposes. 2. What it excludes. 3. What it includes. 4. What it infers.

* Here seemed, in the Author's notes, to be the end of the first, and the beginning of a new discourse.

1ſt, What this walking in Chriſt *ſuppoſes*. Theſe two things eſpecially are ſuppoſed to a walking in Chriſt. 1. That Chriſt is the way. 2. That we have got in to that way.

1. It ſuppoſes that Chriſt is *the way*. To walk in Chriſt ſays plainly that Chriſt is the way; and therefore Chriſt ſays himſelf, John xiv. 6. *I am the way*, etc. There was once another way to heaven before the covenant of works was broken, namely, perfect perſonal obedience; but now there is no other way to heaven but Chriſt, Acts iv. 12. *There is no name given under heaven, whereby to be ſaved, but the name of Chriſt*. What ſort of a way Chriſt is, we may afterward ſhew in purſuing of this text; but here I ſhall only add, that whatever elſe be called the way, ſuch as the commandments of the law, and holy obedience thereto; yet, take Chriſt out of that way, and behold it will never reach half way to heaven; take Chriſt out of the Bible, and you will find no way for a ſinner there, but what will land him in hell. Chriſt is the *good old way*, the *new and living way*, and the *way of holineſs* itſelf; for there is no holineſs but what is contained in him and derived from him: and hence ſome eminent divines explain that ſcripture of Chriſt himſelf, Iſa. xxxv. 8. *An high way ſhall be there, and it ſhall be called the way of holineſs*. There is no holineſs where there is no walking in Chriſt. Never believe the tongue that ſays the preaching of Chriſt is a diſcouragement of holineſs; for to walk in him is the only way of holineſs: it is a holy walk, for he is the holy way.—It ſuppoſes that Chriſt is the way.

2. Our walking in Chriſt ſuppoſes that we have *got in* to that way. We cannot walk in him unleſs we be in him. And therefore receiving Chriſt is here preſuppoſed to a walking in him. By receiving Chriſt we get in to him; and then, and not till then, are we in caſe to walk in him. The union of matter and form makes a body; the union of ſoul and body together makes a man; the union of a man and Chriſt together makes a Chriſtian; and till then empty is he of Chriſt, and of all true good works or ſpiritual walking. A man may bring forth the fruit of good works, morally good, and materially ſo, and may bring them forth as a tree upon his own root, upon old Adam's root; but he can never walk in Chriſt or bring forth fruit in Chriſt, till he be in Chriſt; for what is fruit that grows upon a tree but the ſap of the root concocted into fruit: ſo, what is walking in Chriſt, or working in him? it is juſt the ſap of the Spirit of grace putting itſelf forth into the fruit of new obedience; and this ſuppoſes union and implantation into the root. Many err in this matter; they reſolve to walk in the way of duty before ever they have received Chriſt, or got in to him; and by theſe means, they think they will get in to Chriſt and receive him; they will walk ſo and ſo devoutly that they may receive Chriſt. Thus they invert the order of the text, and put the plough before the horſe; for, receiving of Chriſt, muſt go before walking in him: yea, it is impoſſible there can be a walking in him, before there be a receiving of him. Walk as you will before you receive Chriſt, it is a walking on your own legs; and to think that theſe will bring you to Chriſt, is as if a branch, by bearing fruit upon its own tree, could be thereby tranſplanted upon another tree; no: it is not by bearing fruit upon its own tree, but it muſt be cut off from its own root, ere it can be ingrafted into, or bring forth fruit upon another: even ſo, it is not your bearing fruit on your own old ſtock, or doing many good works that will bring you to Chriſt; nay, you are miſtaken; you muſt be cut off from your old ſtock, and from your own works, and ingrafted into Chriſt.——Thus, this walking in him ſuppoſes union to him. Therefore,

2dly, What this walking in Chriſt *excludes*. It excludes ſin and ſelf; a ſinful walk, and a ſelfiſh walk. So far as a man walks in Chriſt he cannot walk in ſin, nor walk in himſelf.

1. It excludes a *ſinful* walk, a walking in ſin or in the fleſh; for, they that are in Chriſt, they *walk not after the fleſh but after the Spirit*, Rom. viii. 1. Though they have ſin in them, yet they do not walk in it, like the reſt of the world; becauſe ſo far as Chriſt comes in, ſin goes out. Some ſpeak of forſaking ſin, in order to, and before coming to Chriſt; but never will you forſake ſin evangelically, till once Chriſt come to you, and you come to him. When Chriſt comes in to the temple, he drives out all the buyers and ſellers; and therefore, let him in, and he will make the houſe clean. His coming is like the coming of light; as the light comes in to the houſe, the darkneſs goes out: even ſo, as the Sun of righteouſneſs ſhines in to the ſoul, the ſhadows of ſin and darkneſs evaniſh.—When a man walks, he leaves ſomething behind him, which he turns his back upon; ſo he that walketh in Chriſt, he turns his back upon his old maſter, the devil, ſaying, Wo is me that I have been ſo long led captive by him at his will!—He turns his back upon his old acquaintance, the world, ſaying, O vain world! I have ſeen ſomething of the matchleſs glory of the Son of God, and therefore look upon all worldly glory as nothing, and leſs than nothing and vanity.—He turns his back upon his old luſts and idols, ſaying, with Ephraim, *What have I any more to do with idols?* Fain would he be rid of ſin; Lord, take vengeance on this luſt and that luſt; give it a dead ſtroak that it may never revive again.—He turns his back upon his old religion, that he may *ſerve the Lord in newneſs of ſpirit, and not in the oldneſs of the letter*. He leaves his cradle-faith behind him, and gets a faith of God's operation: He leaves his old hope behind him, which had no foundation but ſand, and is begotten again to a new and lively hope: He leaves his old legal way of performing duty behind him, and learns a new obedience, influenced by new covenant grace, and by the love of Chriſt conſtraining him. And therefore,

2. It excludes a *ſelfiſh* walk. This walking in Chriſt excludes a walking in ſelf; for the more that a man walks in Chriſt, the more does he walk out of ſelf: as Chriſt comes in, ſelf goes out; when Chriſt is received, ſelf is expelled. The ſelf-righteous ſinner is like an empty bottle filled with nothing but air, but pour wine into the bottle, and as the wine goes in, the air goes out: ſo, the ſoul is filled with nothing but airy ſpeculations, and a light, vain eſteem of himſelf; but let Chriſt in, let the wine of the Spirit be poured in to the ſoul, as that wine goes in, the air will go out. The ſelfiſh ſinner is like an empty ſtomach, filled with nothing but wind; but if wholeſom food

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be received and digeſted; then the wind is gradually diſpelled: ſo here, the ſinner is filled with the wind of pride and ſelf; but if Chriſt, *the bread of life, and water of life*, be received and digeſted, then it diſſipates the wind of pride: his ſelf-eſtimation is turned to ſelf-abhorrence; his ſelf-juſtification is turned to ſelf-condemnation; his ſelf-love is turned to ſelf-loathing; his ſelf-dependence is turned to ſelf-renunciation; his ſelf-ſeeking is turned to ſelf-ſearching, and ſelf-examination, and to a ſeeking of God and his glory. Inſtead of ſerving himſelf, his deſire is now to ſerve God as his only Maſter: inſtead of exalting himſelf, his deſire is now to glorify God as his chief end: inſtead of pleaſing himſelf, his deſire is to pleaſe God, not to ſatisfy his juſtice, as a Judge, for that the Surety hath done, but to pleaſe his heart as a Father; he dares not venture on any thing that will diſpleaſe ſuch a kind Father: inſtead of reſting in himſelf, his deſire is to reſt in the Lord, and enjoy him, ſaying, O to enjoy him in his grace, and in his glory! to enjoy him in this and that duty; in this and that ordinance; until I enjoy him fully in heaven!

Now, when a ſelfiſh walk is excluded, it excludes at the ſame time, a natural walk, a legal walk, and a phariſaical walk.—It excludes a *natural* walk, which being grounded only upon the light of nature amounts to no more but a natural righteouſneſs.—It excludes a *legal* walk, which being grounded only upon the light of the law, and that as a covenant, makes but a legal imperfect righteouſneſs.—It excludes an *hypocritical* walk, which being grounded only upon the external light of the goſpel, makes only a phariſaical righteouſneſs, where the man hath *the form of godlineſs, but denies the power of it*.——Many things here might be added as to what this walking in Chriſt doth exclude, which may afterward fall in upon the application. I come, therefore,

3*dly*, To conſider what this walking in Chriſt doth *include*. Not to multiply particulars here either; there are two things more eſpecially that it ſeems to include. Walking in Chriſt is, 1. A walking in a conformity to him. 2. In the improvement of him.

1. It is a walking in a *conformity to him*, and ſo to walk in Chriſt is to be *like him*. In heaven the ſaints *ſhall be like him*, for they ſhall *ſee him as he is*: Even ſo here, when *we behold his glory*, and are *changed into the ſame image* then it is that we walk in him; even as the body walks where-ever the head walks; and where the head and the body walk, there the feet walk; all that is in the head walks. This then is a walking in him who is the glorious Head, when the members follow the Head, and walk in a conformity to him.—It is a walking in a conformity to his *nature*, being holy as he is holy, perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect, merciful as he is merciful, *etc.*—It is a walking in a conformity to his *way of walking*; 1 John ii. 6. *He that ſaith he abideth in him, ought to walk even as he alſo walked:* Did he walk in love to God and man? Did he walk in zeal, ſo as the *zeal of God's houſe did eat him up?* Did he walk in meekneſs, patience, humility, and activity, always going about doing good, never weary of well-doing? We are to walk as he thus walked.—It is a walking in a conformity to his *ends* that he ſet before him; his end was the glory of God, the advancement of his kingdom, the ruin of Satan's kingdom, and in all the praiſe of his rich and free grace; and ſurely we will walk in him, when we have theſe for our ends which were his ends.—It is a walking in a conformity to his *law*, which is a tranſcript of his communicable nature for our practice; he walked in a conformity to his own law, in all its holy, juſt, good, and merciful ways; and we walk in him, when we walk in a goſpel-conformity to the ſame.—It is a walking in a conformity to the *relations* that he comes under to us: and ſo it is a walking in him as our Redeemer, by price and power, which we do when we walk as theſe who *are not their own, but bought with a price*, therefore *glorifying the Lord in our ſouls and bodies which are his*.—It is a walking in him as our *Head*, by living as members of ſuch a Head, and deriving ſpiritual virtue from him.—It is a walking in him as our *Father*, depending on him as children upon their father.—It is a walking in him as our *Judge*, *Law-giver*, and *King*; and ſo a walking as theſe that are accountable to, and as we ſhall anſwer at the tribunal of this Judge; ſitting at the feet, and receiving the law from the mouth of this Law-giver; and yielding the tribute of praiſe, obedience, and ſubjection to this King.——In a word, it is a walking in conformity to the *privileges* we receive from him: Hath he *enlightened* us in the knowledge of himſelf? Then to walk in him, is to *walk as children of light*, and not as theſe that are in the darkneſs of ignorance.—Hath he *called* us effectually? Then to walk in him is to *walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called*.—Hath he given us *grace?* Then to walk in him is to walk, not as graceleſs, but as gracious perſons; not as theſe that are in a ſtate of nature, but in a ſtate of grace.—Hath he pardoned our ſins, juſtified our perſons, brought us into peace with himſelf? Then to walk in him, is to walk ſo as to *ſtand faſt in the liberty wherewith he hath made us free*.—Hath he poured in the *promiſe* into our hearts? Then to walk in him, is to walk ſo as *having theſe promiſes, to cleanſe ourſelves from all filthineſs of the fleſh and ſpirit, perfecting holineſs in the fear of the Lord*.—Hath he made us *heirs* of glory? Then to walk in him, is to walk as candidates for heaven, as *pilgrims and ſtrangers in the earth*, and ſo having our *converſation in heaven*.

2. It is a walking *in the improvement of him*. To walk in Chriſt is to improve him by faith, as we receive him thereby. It is to improve and make uſe of him for light, life, ſtrength, motion, acceptance, and all in him.—And ſo to walk in him, is to walk as theſe that have their *life* in him, and cannot live without him, no more than the body can live without the head; *Without me ye can do nothing*, John xv. 5.—To walk in him, is to walk as theſe that have their *light* in him, ſaying, *The Lord is my light*; and *though I walk in darkneſs, the Lord will be a light to me*.—To walk in him, is to walk as theſe that have their *ſtrength* in him, ſaying, *Not that we are ſufficient of ourſelves to think any thing of ourſelves, but our ſufficiency is of God*; and, *I can do all things, through Chriſt ſtrengthening me:* hence they are called to *be ſtrong in the grace that is in Chriſt*. Art thou in Chriſt? Then the grace that is in him is forthcoming for thee: as the life that is in the heart is in the toe, the foot, the outermoſt member of the body; ſo is the believer's grace in Chriſt; and the grace that is in Chriſt

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is in the believer: if the grace that is in Chriſt were not in the believer alſo in his meaſure, how could he be ſtrong in the grace that is in Chriſt?—To walk in Chriſt, is to walk as theſe that have their *acceptance* in him; *we are accepted in the Beloved;* not merely for his ſake, but in him as our Head; who having fulfilled the law, and ſatisfied the juſtice of God, his doing is ours, becauſe we are in him: the Head having done it, the body is reputed as having done it; and ſo we are accepted in him.—To walk in Chriſt, is to walk as theſe that have their *motion* in him: we cannot move ſpiritually, but by the Spirit of Chriſt; and indeed if our life and ſtrength be in him, our motion muſt be in him alſo.—To walk in Chriſt, is to walk as theſe that have their *fulneſs* in him; their wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification, and redemption; and are complete in him by virtue of their union to him.——You ſee what a vaſt field is here, and how much lies in this walking in Chriſt. It is an improvement of him for all, as having our all in him.

And yet further, this walking in Chriſt imports ſuch an improvement of Chriſt by faith, as I told you before this walking did import. Walking, I ſaid, did import theſe three things eſpecially, namely, practice, progreſs, and permanency: ſo here, this walking in Chriſt imports a practical improvement of Chriſt; a progreſſive improvement of him; and a permanent improvement of him.

(1.) A *practical* improvement of Chriſt; that is, not only a receiving of Chriſt, and then ſuffering it to ly ſleeping, as it were, in the dull habit; but it implies faith in practical actings and vigorous exerciſe of it, and laying faſter and faſter hold upon him; and reducing your faith unto practice, that you may *adorn the doctrine of God, our Saviour, in all things.*

(2.) A *progreſſive* improvement of Chriſt; a *following on to know the Lord.* It is not a ſtanding ſtill, a ſitting down, or going back, but a walking in Chriſt, a going forward; *Forgetting the things that are behind, and reaching forth to the things that are before, and preſſing towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God,* Phil. iii. 13. The man that walks in Chriſt can never get enough of him.

(3.) It is a *permanent* improvement of Chriſt. A man that takes a ſtep or two forward, and then ſits down again, he cannot be ſaid to walk: ſo, ſome take a ſtart of devotion, a fit of zeal and concern for religion, perhaps about a communion, but it dies out. Theſe cannot be ſaid to walk in Chriſt; for walking in him is a conſtant, permanent, perſevering, and continued improvement of him. It is true, this conſtant progreſs is not always diſcernable; ſaints themſelves may have their winter-withering, as well as their ſummer-fruit: and we are not to judge of the growth of a tree by looking to it this day from what it was yeſterday; for there may be no ſenſible alteration; but ſtay till the ſpring come, and then you will diſcern the flouriſh and the fruit; yea, let ſome years paſs, and then you may ſee ſome ſenſible growth of the whole tree: ſo, the children of God are not always to judge of their continued growth, by comparing what they are this day, with what they were the former day; or what they are this month, with what they were the former month, leſt there be no diſcernable advance; but let them (at leaſt if they be of any ſtanding in Chriſt) judge by what they are now, from what they were at their firſt ingraftment into Chriſt, and they will find that they have attained more knowledge of Chriſt than at firſt, more experience of his favour, more outlettings of his grace than they underſtood before; more inſight into the goſpel, more ſtroaks that their corruptions have got, and ſo more fruit and growth.

This improvement of Chriſt is permanent; it is a walking in Chriſt, and abiding in him; John xv. 5. *He that abideth in me, and I in him; the ſame bringeth forth much fruit; for without me,* [or, SEPARATE FROM ME,] *ye can do nothing.* And ver. 6. *If a man abide not in me, he is caſt forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and they are caſt into the fire, and are burnt.* To receive Chriſt, is to enter upon the bridge; and to walk in him, is to keep the bridge: for a downfal on either ſide is dreadful. Some fall down, as it were, on the right ſide of the bridge, as hypocrites and ſelf-righteous perſons; ſome on the left ſide of the bridge, as theſe that give themſelves over to profane practices. There is a few that keep the bridge, and theſe are true believers and receivers of Chriſt; or if they happen to fall, they are like a man that falls half down, as it were, and is kept up by a chain faſtened to his body; he may get a hurt by the fall, and put to a terrible fright by it, leſt he drown and periſh; but the chain pulls him up again: even ſo, the believer, he is tied, as it were, to the bridge by a chain, a double chain, namely, the ſpirit of faith dwelling in him, and the grace of faith wrought in him; for, *He that is joined to the Lord is one ſpirit;* and of this faith Chriſt hath ſaid, *I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not:* yea, there is the chain of a ſure promiſe, the chain of divine faithfulneſs, the chain of an everlaſting righteouſneſs. However, if he do not keep the chain, he may fall ſo as to be put in fear of periſhing in the gulf of everlaſting wrath; and he may hing at the chain, as it were, betwixt hope and deſpair: he may hurt his peace and comfort by his unwatchfulneſs; and God may *viſit his iniquity with the rod,* and hing him over the gulf, till the chain pull him up again. It is therefore dreadful in any caſe not to keep the bridge. I come to conſider,

4*thly*, What this walking in Chriſt doth *infer*. It infers and brings along with it eſpecially two things, namely, a walking with his Father, and a walking in his Spirit.

1. A walking *with his Father*. *Enoch walked with God. Walk humbly with thy God.* And what is it to walk with God, but to walk in communion with him, and comfortable enjoyment of him? In *communion* with him; in a conſtant contemplation of him, *ſanctifying the Lord in our hearts;* in a conſtant affection to him, having *his love ſhed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghoſt;* and in a conſtant dependence on him, receiving our all from him by faith, and returning our all to him in duty and gratitude.—It is a walking in the comfortable *enjoyment* of him, as all our portion and happineſs, all our ſalvation, and all our deſire; renouncing all things in heaven and earth, as our portion, but a God in Chriſt alone: and indeed to enjoy God, is to enjoy all, and more than words can expreſs, or thought conceive; it is to enjoy BEING itſelf, in whoſe nature is ingroſſed all poſſible perfections.

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2. It infers a walking *in his Spirit*; Gal. v. 16. *Walk in the Spirit, and ye ſhall not fulfil the luſts of the fleſh.* And to walk in the Spirit is, in ſhort, to walk in the *light* of the Spirit, as a *Spirit of wiſdom and revelation in the knowledge of Chriſt.*—It is to walk in the *love* of the Spirit, as a Spirit of love in the ſoul, working love towards God and man. It is to walk in the *liberty* of the Spirit, with enlarged hearts towards God, and the things of God. In the *comforts* of the Spirit, Acts ix. 31. In the *ſtrength* and *power* of the Spirit, Rom. viii. 2. And in all the *graces* and *fruits* of the Spirit, Gal. v. 22, 23.

III. The *third* general head of the method is, To ſpeak of the *rule* of the believer's duty, and the *proportion* it ſhould bear to his reception of Chriſt, namely, That he is to *walk in Chriſt* AS *he hath received him.* There are two things which the ſcriptures principally teach (as you may all know by your Catechiſm) namely, "What we are to believe concerning God, and "what duty God requires of man." *Faith* and *practice* are the two great things in it; what we are to believe, and what we are to do. This text then is a ſhort compend of the whole ſcripture; for it contains all that concerns firſt our faith, and next our practice: yea, it not only teaches *what* we are to believe, and *what* we are to do, or practiſe, but alſo *how* we are to believe, and *how* we are to practiſe. How are we to *believe?* Even by *receiving Chriſt Jeſus the Lord;* for *believing* and *receiving* is the ſame thing, John i. 12. *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the ſons of God, even to them that believe on his name.* And ſo to believe aright is to receive Chriſt, and to receive him aright is to receive him as a Jeſus, and as a Lord; as a Jeſus, that we may be ſaved by the price of his blood; and as a Lord, that we may be governed by the power of his Spirit. Again, how are we to practiſe? Even by *walking in him;* and walking in him *as we have received him.* Now, as to the *rule* of the believer's walk, it lies moſt emphatical here in the AS and the SO in the text; *AS ye have received, SO walk:* which, in the general, imports, that a goſpel-walk is a walking by faith; for, AS *we receive Chriſt Jeſus the Lord* by faith, SO *we are to walk in him,* namely, by faith. There can be no right walking, or working, but by faith; this is the ſpring of the ſpiritual life; *The juſt ſhall live by faith,* Rom. i. 17. Hab. vii. 4. Gal. iii. 11. Heb. x. 38. And this walk is expreſly called a *walking by faith,* 2 Cor. v. 7. *We walk by* FAITH, *and not by ſight. As ye have received Chriſt, ſo walk in him:* Did you receive him by faith? So walk in him by a continual receiving of him, and drawing virtue from him to enable you to hold on your way.

More particularly, ſeeing the great emphaſis of the text lies in the AS, and SO, importing, that the walk is to be ſuitable to the reception, we would enquire what *proportion* and *ſuitableneſs* this walk ſhould have to the receiving of Chriſt: And here conſider, 1. The proportion and ſuitableneſs of this walk to the *act* of receiving, or the *manner* wherein we receive Chriſt. 2. The proportion and ſuitableneſs thereof to the *object* received, or to the capacities wherein we received Chriſt, namely, as he is *Chriſt Jeſus the Lord.*

Firſt, The *proportion* or ſuitableneſs of this walk to the *act* of receiving; or the *manner* wherein we received him. Here then I muſt addreſs the believer, who only is capable of this work, becauſe he only hath received Chriſt, and muſt enquire at him how he hath received Chriſt, that he may be directed how to walk in him.

1. Then, Did you receive Chriſt *obedientially,* and *warrantably,* upon the warrant of the call and command of God, requiring you to come to him, and receive him? Did you not ſee the authority of God interpoſed, ſaying, *This is his commandment that ye believe in the name of his Son?* And to this authority you was made to ſtoop in a day of power. Why then, as ye have received Chriſt *obedientially,* ſo walk ye in him, namely, obediently; from a regard to the ſovereign will and authority of a God in Chriſt. And this is the will of God in Chriſt concerning you, even that you receive the law from Chriſt's mouth, and out of his hand; *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleaſed, hear ye him.*

2. Did you receive Chriſt *humbly* and *meekly?* Was your ſoul humbled to the duſt when you received him? Did you ly proſtrate before him, under a ſenſe of your own emptineſs, weakneſs, and wickedneſs? Did you trample upon yourſelf as a beaſt, a dog, a devil, a lump of hell, having *no confidence in the fleſh?* Well, as ye have received him *humbly,* ſo walk in him; *Walk humbly with thy God,* Micah vi. 8. Walk in a humble dependence upon him, receiving your all from him by faith, and returning your all to him in duty and gratitude.

3. Did you receive him *deliberately* and *reſolutely,* with due deliberation, judgment, and conſideration, reſolving to take your hazard with him, to part with all for him, and to follow him whitherſoever he goes, to welcome his croſs and his crown? Why then, ſo walk ye in him, namely, with deliberation; weighing the advantages in one ſcale, and the diſadvantages in another, of walking in him or not. You will meet with nothing in this way, but what you was made to weigh, if you righly received him. Even though loſſes, and croſſes, and martyrdom ſhould be in the ſcale where Chriſt was; and the world, and all the profits, pleaſures, and preferments of it, in the other ſcale; yet you was made to chooſe Chriſt. Why then, ſo walk in him, by evidencing it in your life, that whatever reproaches you ſuffer for his name, or whatever trials you may ſuffer, you are at a point. Having deliberately received, deliberately walk.

4. Did you receive Chriſt *uprightly,* with the utmoſt integrity, ſincerity, and exactneſs? Why then, ſo walk ye in him, evidencing in your life the ſame uprightneſs and integrity: *He that walketh uprightly walketh ſurely,* ſaith Solomon: *See then that ye walk circumſpectly,* ſaith the apoſtle, Eph. v. 15. the word is ἀκριβῶς, that is, *exactly, accurately,* and *preciſely.* Some are cenſured as if they were too preciſe in their religion; but it is the command of God, that we be as exact and upright in the way of walking in Chriſt, as in the act of believing in him, and receiving of him.

5. Did you receive Chriſt *cordially, chearfully,* and *lovingly?* Did you receive him with the heart, and with a thouſand good-wills? And, oh! how ſweet was he to you in the day that God revealed him in you, and that you was made to ſtrike hands with him. Then *ſo walk*

ye in him; that is, endeavour, through grace, to keep up that frame of heart that you had in closing with him, and to bring up your conversation to the way and manner in which ye received him, by walking in him cordially and chearfully; having the *joy of the Lord for your strength*; rejoicing in Christ Jesus; for, *he meeteth him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness*; and entertaining a sense of his love which you had in the day of believing, so as his love may constrain you to obedience; and you may *fear the Lord his goodness*. In the day of believing was you not more elevated, and more chearful, than ever the bird that sat upon the brier? Was you not filled with *joy unspeakable and full of glory?* Away then with sinful discouragement in your walk, saying, *Why art thou cast down, O my soul? why art thou disquieted within me? hope in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God*, Psal. xliii. 5.

6. Did you not receive him *spiritually*; that is, in the strength, and under the conduct of his own Spirit, without whose influence and assistance you could do nothing? Then, *so walk ye in him* spiritually, depending on the grace, strength, conduct, and influence of his Spirit, for strengthening you both for your work and warfare; and so, with the true circumcision, worshipping God in the Spirit, praying in the Holy Ghost, and walking in the Spirit of Christ. The Spirit is in every believer according to his measure; and when the believer is in the Spirit, then it is well with him; Rev. i. 10. *I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day*. The man that walketh in Christ as he hath received him, walketh not carnally but spiritually, just as he received him; and hence he cries for the Spirit, saying, *Lord, hold me with thy free Spirit*; and *take not thy holy Spirit from me: Thy Spirit is good, lead me to the land of uprightness*.

7. Did you not receive Christ *speedily?* Yea, none can tell how speedily the poor soul that saw himself ready to drop into hell doth flee to Christ in a day of power. Oh! with what eagerness, and earnestness doth the convinced sinner flighter after him? and how actively he runneth in to him? Well, did you receive him speedily and actively? *So walk ye in him*, by endeavouring, through grace, to be speedy in your motion, ready and active in his service. This is to have a walk suitable to the manner of your receiving of Christ. To be lazy and unactive doth not answer the right reception; but to *run in the way of his commandments*, and to *run without wearying*, this is suitable; for in a day of believing, the soul is far from wearying, nay, then he flies on the wings of faith and love.

8. Did you not receive him *fiducially* and *confidently*, having *boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus*, and drawing near with *full assurance of faith*, and with some measure of application, appropriation, and persuasion? Whatever unbelieving diffidence took place, yet, according to the measure of faith, such was the measure of holy confidence, trust, and persuasion, founded upon the truth and veracity of God in the promise. Well then, *so walk ye in him*, whatever opposition be in the way; saying, with Job, *Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him. Cast not away your confidence*, saith the apostle to the Hebrews, *which hath great recompence of reward*, chap. x. 35.; and *hold fast the confidence*, chap. iii. 6. for, *we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end*, ver. 14.

9. Did you not receive Christ *wholly* and *undividedly*, in all his three offices, and in all the four excellencies that the apostle puts together, 1 Cor. i. 30. for *wisdom, righteousness, sanctification*, and *redemption?* Did you receive him for WISDOM, to make you *light in the Lord?* for RIGHTEOUSNESS, to make you *accepted in the Beloved?* for SANCTIFICATION, to make you *holy?* and for REDEMPTION, to make you *happy?* Why then, *so walk ye in him*. Ye cannot walk *wisely* if ye do not improve him for your wisdom; ye cannot walk *acceptably* unless ye improve him for righteousness; nor *holily*, unless ye improve him for sanctification; nor *safely*, unless ye improve him for your complete redemption.

10. Did you not receive Christ *orderly* and *evangelically*, or in the gospel-order, namely, as the *Lord your righteousness and strength*; first, to be your *righteousness* for your *justification*; and then to be your *strength* for *sanctification?* The legal order is just the reverse of this; the man would do by his own strength, and then be justified by his own doing. But true faith receives Christ in the gospel-order; that is, first to be justified, by his righteousness; and then sanctified, by his grace and strength; knowing that his performances cannot be accepted, nor acceptable service, until his person be *accepted in the Beloved*. Now, have you received Christ orderly, then walk in him orderly; for, *To him that ordereth his conversation aright, will I shew the salvation of God*, Psal. l. 23. And walk in him evangelically as ye have received him; that is, from a gospel-principle; the love of Christ constraining to a gospel-end, *the glory of a God in Christ*; and in a gospel-manner, going on in *the strength of the Lord, making mention of his righteousness, and his only*.

In a word, Did you not receive him *irreversibly*, so as never to part with him? Why then, *so walk ye in him*, saying, as Ruth to Naomi, *Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee; for, whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people; and thy God my God: Nothing shall part thee and me*, Ruth i. 16, 17.——And thus we see the *proportion* that this walk should bear to the receiving of Christ, with respect to the manner of receiving him.

Secondly, The proportion or suitableness of this walk to the *object* received, or, to the *capacity* wherein we receive him, comes next to be spoke to. Here we may consider, 1. The three generals mentioned in the text, CHRIST, JESUS, the LORD. 2. The manifold particulars that are comprehended under, and deduceable from these; and in all these we may view the proportion that our walk should bear to our faith objectively considered.

1st, Notice the three generals in the text holding forth the object of faith, CHRIST, JESUS, the LORD. And,

1. Have you received him as the CHRIST the Anointed of the Father? *so walk ye in him*; even in him as the Christ. Now, as I noticed in the former part of the doctrinal heads, Christ is to be considered both doctrinally, and personally.

Consider Christ *doctrinally*; that is, the doctrine of Christ, which you, believer, have received, while you received Christ in his word and in the doctrine of the gospel. As ye have received,

ed, or believed the doctrine of Christ, or the truth of the gospel, so walk ye in it. If you consider the text, with the context, both preceding and following, you will see that Christ, doctrinally considered, is particularly here intended, not excluding, but including Christ personally considered. And indeed none can receive Christ, and reject his doctrine: If a man profess to take Christ, and yet neglect the gospel, he is a liar; for he that will have the treasure, must buy the field where the treasure is, Mat. xiii. 44. Now, did you receive Christ *doctrinally*, by receiving the truth as it is in Christ? then *so walk yē in him*; that is, walk in the truth; 2 John ver. 4. *I rejoiced that I found thy children walking in truth. I am the way and the truth*, says Christ: If we walk in this way we must walk in the truth. And this intimates to us,

(1.) That they cannot be walking in Christ, who are not *zealous for truth, and against error*; zealous for Christ, the Truth, in opposition to all error; and so to walk in Christ, is to *contend for the faith once delivered to the saints*; for, if we have received the truth, as it is in Christ, then to walk in him, as we have received him, is to maintain his truth, and persevere in the true doctrine of the gospel, in opposition to all error on the right and left hand, *not holding the head*, Col. ii. 19. If a man be careless whether truth sink or swim, he is not one who walks in Christ, or holds the head. Some instead of holding by the head, they hold by the foot; it is enough to them, that such a good man, or such a learned man says so and so, concerning this or that truth; and so they let the head go, and hold by the foot, not regarding the truth as it is in Christ, but the truth as it is delivered by such a man, whom they esteem, and such another man, that hath this and that good character. Why, Sirs, if ye have received Christ as the Truth, then ye are to walk in him as the Truth; as the head and the heart of the Truth, and not to hang your faith on the belt of any man or angel; for, *If we, or an angel from heaven, preach another gospel, let him be accursed.* Again,

(2.) It intimates to us, that they cannot be walking in Christ, who are not *zealous against all abolished ceremonies*; for Christ is the Truth, in opposition to types and ceremonies: these were *shadows of things to come, but the body is Christ*, ver. 17,—23. The false apostles joined the doctrines of Christ with the ceremonies of Moses; but the Colossians are exhorted, that as they have received Christ, the substance of all the shadows and ceremonies, so they should walk in him, not in Moses; *The law came by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ:* And if they that profess to receive Christ, as the substance and body of all the ceremonies, and yet do walk in conformity to the Mosaical ceremonies that were institute of God, do not at all walk suitably to their profession of receiving Christ; much more they that profess to receive Christ, and yet conform themselves to ceremonies that were never institute of God at all, but are the mere inventions of men; such as, the abjured ceremonies of the church of Rome and England. Though ceremonial service and superstitious worship had never been abjured, by solemn National Covenant, as it was; yet we stand obliged, by the word of God, to renounce and reject the same; because we are obliged to *walk in Christ*, and to walk in him as we *have received him:* and if we received him aright, we have received him *doctrinally* as he is the Truth; the Truth, in opposition to error; and the Truth, in opposition to shadows and ceremonies. Again,

Consider Christ *personally*, as he is the Anointed of the Father. Now, believer, have you received Christ as the Anointed of God? that is, not only have you been made to believe that he is sealed and authorized of the Father to his mediatorial work, and qualified for it of the Father by the supereminent unction of the Holy Ghost; but also, have you, by faith, gone in to him, and closed with him as such, and so art made a partaker of the same anointing of the Holy Ghost, by virtue of union to Christ; for, *He that is joined to the Lord, is one spirit?* Why then, so walk ye in him; that being in him, you may abide in him by a lively faith; John xv. 5. be *rooted* and *built up in him*, and *established in the faith*, ver. 7th of this chapter where the text lies, *Even in Christ in whom ye are builded together, for an habitation of God, through the Spirit*, Eph. ii. 22.—Have ye received him as the Christ, the Anointed of God? Then so walk in him, by improving him and employing him still to anoint you with the same anointing.—Have ye received him as the Christ, the Authorized of the Father? Then so walk in him, by employing him as one that hath a warrant and authority to save, to heal, and help you in time of need.

2. Have you received him as a JESUS, a Saviour? This is another title he hath in the text; as one that saves from the *guilt of sin*, the *wrath of God*, the *curse of the law*, and from *all things from which ye could never be justified by the law of Moses.* Why then, *so walk ye in him;* even in him as a Jesus, in which capacity ye have received him. Be daily looking to him for daily salvation; and daily flying in to his saving arms, and taking shelter under the shadow of his blood and righteousness; and let your walk and conversation before God and the world, evidence that you have received him as a Jesus, a Saviour.

(1.) Have you received him as a Jesus? so walk in him *before God*, by resting on him for complete salvation; and rejoicing in him as God's Salvation, as old Simeon called him; *Now mine eyes have seen thy Salvation.* Look not for any salvation you need from God, by any other means, but only in and through this Jesus; for the excellencies and perfections of God do all stand against you and your salvation by any other way: but in this Jesus he can save you to the honour of all his attributes; to the glory of his justice, the honour of his truth, and the praise of all his other perfections; *I am the way*, says Christ, *no man cometh to the Father but by me:* and to walk in this way, as ye have received him, is just, having received him to be the way to the Father, to be still coming nearer and nearer to God in this way, till salvation be complete, and till you come to *the end of your faith, the salvation of your soul.*

(2.) As ye have received him as a Jesus, so walk in him *before the world*, by giving evidence in your conversation that this Jesus hath *saved you*, and *called you with a holy calling*; and by setting him forth, as you can, to all that are about you, that he is an excellent Saviour, *the chief among ten thousands*; that he is an able Saviour,

viour, *mighty to ſave;* and that he is a complete Saviour, a perfect Jeſus. Tell your children, families, friends, and all that you can have regular acceſs to do good unto, that religion is no fancy; but that *which you have heard, and ſeen, and handled, of the word of life, declare you unto them,* that they may have fellowſhip with you, if they hear; that you have ſeen a glory in Chriſt that they never ſaw; and felt a ſweetneſs that they never felt, a *joy unſpeakable,* and a *peace that paſſeth all underſtanding,* which they are ſtrangers unto: it may ſtir them up to ſay, as it is, Zech viii. 23. *We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.* Sirs, a ſervant will commend his maſter that may be little worthy of commendation; and will not you commend a Jeſus who have received him as ſuch, and walk in his name? Micah iv. 5. *For all people will walk every one in the name of his god, and we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever.* Again,

3. Have you received him as a LORD? This is another letter of his name in the text; and theſe three letters of his name, Chriſt, Jeſus, the Lord, point him out beyond all other names in the world. Have you, I ſay, received him as a LORD? Then walk in him as a Lord, otherwiſe you walk not in him as you have received him. The true believer doth not only receive Chriſt as a Jeſus, and Saviour; but alſo as a Lord, and Governor. Many would divide betwixt his ſalvation and his dominion; they would have Chriſt as a Saviour, to ſave them from wrath; but not as a Lord, to deſtroy their luſts and ſin: but the true receiver of Chriſt is as weary of the load of corruption, as he is weary of the load of condemnation; and therefore not only being weary of condemnation, would he have Chriſt as a Saviour, but being weary of corruption, he would have Chriſt as a Lord: and indeed when the heart would have water as well as blood, then it is in a right temperature; when the man would have water to purify the heart, as well as blood to pacify the conſcience, this argues honeſt receiving; for Chriſt comes by *water* and *blood,* 1 John v. 6. He comes not only to juſtify, but alſo to ſanctify; he comes not only as a Jeſus, to ſave by price; but alſo as a Lord, to ſave by power.

Now, have you received Chriſt in the capacity of a Lord? Then ſo walk in him as he is a Lord, and as ye have received him. The reſt of the world give evidence that they never received him as a Lord, by their practical ſaying, that they *will not have this man to reign over them:* but know, man, that he will never be a Jeſus to ſave you, if he be not alſo a Lord to conquer you, and reign over you; and you can never receive him as a Jeſus, and reject him as a Lord, without being rejected of him in both theſe capacities; for he will not be a Jeſus where he is not a Lord. But you, believers, who have received Chriſt as a Lord, are you walking in him as theſe that have thus received him, and giving evidence that ye have received him as a Lord, before *God* and the *world?* Surely, if it be ſo, it will ſome way appear by the language of your *hearts,* and the language of your *lives.* The language of your hearts will be, *O Lord, other lords have had dominion over me; but now by thee only will I make mention of thy name:* Oh! may Chriſt be the Lord of my heart, and of all the thoughts of my heart, ſo as they may be captives to the Son of God; and of all the affections of my heart, ſo as they may terminate upon him alone; and of all the deſires of my heart, ſo as they may go out after him. Why, the reſt of the world ſhew they never received him as a Lord, becauſe the devil, the world, and the fleſh, have the whole of their hearts, their thoughts, affections, and deſires, being wholly taken up with evaniſhing worldly luſts, idols, and trifles. But though the world may have much of a believer's heart ſometimes, yet it hath but the white of the egg, as it were, Chriſt hath the yoak of the heart of that man; his top and ſuperlative thoughts and deſires, becauſe he hath taken Chriſt for the Lord of his heart.—Again, if you have received Chriſt as a Lord, then you will ſo deſire to walk in him, by ſaying, O let him be the Lord of my *tongue!* while others are ſaying, *Our tongues are our own, who is Lord over us?* and ſo looſing their tongues againſt heaven, by curſing, ſwearing, railing, reproaching: but, O ſays the man that hath received Chriſt the Lord, May Chriſt be the Lord of my tongue, and may it be occupied in his ſervice, in praying, praiſing, and edifying diſcourſe upon all occaſions, Sabbath and working days. Many by their carnal diſcourſe and converſation, and by their evil and unprofitable communication, give evidence that it is not Chriſt, but the devil, that is lord of their tongues.—Again, if you have received Chriſt as a Lord, then you will ſo deſire to walk in him as to make him Lord of your *time,* ſo as not to ſquander it away with idle company, idle viſits, idle diverſions; as if it were good for nothing but to be caſt away upon any trifle; but you will deſire and endeavour to *walk circumſpectly, not as fools, but as wiſe, redeeming the time.* Many ſhow that Chriſt is not their Lord, by living as if they were lords of their own time and talents, which yet are but lent of the Lord, who ſays, *Occupy till I come.*—If you have received him as a Lord, then ſo to walk in him, is to make him Lord of your *life,* ſo as to live to him; the Lord of your ſouls and bodies, ſo as to glorify him in your ſouls and bodies which are his. Others live as if they were lords of their own life, lords of their own ſouls, and might caſt them away at random; and lords of their own bodies, and might defile them with drunkenneſs and whoredom as they pleaſe; an evidence that Chriſt is not their Lord.—If you have received him as a Lord, then ſo to walk in him, is to make him Lord of your *conſciences,* and the Lord of your *light,* ſo as not to enſlave your light and conſcience to any man on earth, any devil in hell, or any idol in the world. Many give evidence that Chriſt is not their Lord, by croſſing their light and conſciences for a trifle; whereas if Chriſt were the Lord of their light and conſciences, they would die in his cauſe rather than put out his candle which he hath kindled in their breaſt.—Again, if you have received him as a Lord, you will ſo walk in him as to make him the Lord of your *wills,* he having made you willing in the day of power; whatever remaining enmity or rebellion of will take place, yet your habitual deſire will be to have your will in ſubjection to his will, whether preceptive or providential, without fighting againſt his precept, or fretting againſt his providence; at leaſt every fighting and fretting thought will be matter of exerciſe to you, while your ſoul's deſire will be to have a due ſubjection

to

to his precept, and submission to his providence. The rest of the world give evidence that Christ is not their Lord, because they are such as carry as if they were lords of their own wills; their wills were never subdued.—Again, if Christ be received as a Lord, you will so walk in him as to make him the Lord of your *comforts* and *enjoyments* in a world, so as to bless him when he gives or takes, saying, *It is the Lord that giveth, the Lord that taketh, blessed be the name of the Lord.* Take worldly comforts away from a man that never took Christ for his Lord, he will cry, O *ye have taken away my gods, and what have I more?* But the believer will say, even with respect to spiritual, as well as outward comforts, *It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth good to him*; if he himself be my Lord, let him dispose of me and mine as he will.—If you have received Christ as your Lord, then so walk in him as to make him Lord of your *graces*, who gives grace, and the exercise of it, as he pleases; and so your desire will be to be strong, not in yourselves, or your own grace, but *strong in the grace that is in Christ*, saying, if you want any grace in exercise, O! he is the Prince exalted by the right-hand of God, to give it, and therefore to him will I look for it; or if you have any grace, O! it is not of me, it is *by grace I am what I am.* —You will own him also as the Lord of your *duties*, and the Lord of *ordinances*, that only can put a blessing in them for your good; and as the Lord your righteousness in whom alone you can have acceptance; and the Lord your strength, from whom alone you can have assistance: they that perform all their duties in their natural strength, and so think to have acceptance of God, and favour with him upon their doing so, they both put themselves in the room of the Lord their strength, and their duties in the room of the Lord their righteousness.—— In a word, if you have received Christ as the Lord, you will walk in him by making him the Lord of your *faith*. The false apostles made Moses the lord of their faith and obedience, equal with Christ; and therefore they joined the Mosaical ceremonies with the doctrine of Christ; but the Colossians had received Christ Jesus the Lord, and so they are called to walk in him as they had received him. Some make the church the lord of their faith; they believe as the church believes, or as this or that man believes, which shews that Christ is not their Lord. Some make the devil the lord of their faith, they believe the devil rather than the God of truth, and the devil the father of lies learns them to believe a lie: see 2 Thess. ii. 11, 12. Some make their reason the lord of their faith, they believe no more than their carnal reason can digest. But the true believer makes Christ the Lord of his faith; and the veracity of Christ the ground of it, and the doctrine of Christ the rule of it: It is true, the devil, and the believer's remaining unbelief, wage war against his faith, and seek to be lords of his faith; and it is a shame that the believer in the day of battle should yield to any other lord, and let his faith, hope, and confidence fall to the ground: It is a marvellous fault in believers to call the love of God, and the truth of God in question upon every occasion by unbelief. Faith is the believer's shield, and hope his helmet, Eph. vi. 16. Now, would they not be very foolish who would wear their shield and helmet when there is no war nor stir; and as soon as ever they see an adversary coming, or a battle beginning, then to cast away their shield and helmet, and to do so usually? Why, even so it is with many, perhaps true believers; they will talk of their faith and hope in a time of prosperity and ease, when all is in peace, and no seeming war from heaven or hell; then they wear their shield and helmet: but when war comes, when affliction comes, and temptation comes, then they childishly cast away both their faith and hope, both their shield and helmet; and till their sense and reason be satisfied, they will not be persuaded. Oh! how dishonouring is this to the Lord whom ye have taken to be the Lord of your faith, the Captain of your salvation. To walk in Christ as ye have received him for a Lord, is to make him the Lord of your faith in spite of the devil and the world, who seek to lord it over you and your faith.——Finally, if you have received him as your Lord, you will so walk in him as to make him the Lord of your *obedience*. Others by obeying the devil, and obeying their lusts and idols, and obeying the sinful commandments of men, show that Christ is not the Lord of their obedience. But, believer, if you walk in Christ, as you have received him, give evidence that he is the Lord whom you obey and serve, saying, with Joshua, *As for me, and my house, we will serve the Lord.* And then, let it be the language of your life and conversation before the world, that Christ is your Lord. If you would judge of yourselves that Christ is your Lord, it is even to be tried by your subjection unto him, and his subduing of sin in you. The higher the Sun of righteousness is risen, the shorter will the shadows of your sin and corruption be. If the world judge of your receiving of Christ, as a Lord, and of your faith, they will judge it by your walk and conversation, and by your works, as I said above, upon the second head.

2*dly*, I come, as I proposed, to notice all the *manifold particulars* comprehended under, and deduceable from, these generals in the text; and in all these we may further view the proportion that our walk should bear to our faith *objectively* considered. Now, these generals in the text comprehend all the particular capacities wherein he is held forth in the gospel; and to name all these, at present, were impracticable; we offer but some of them for instances, and yet shall endeavour, through grace, not altogether to scrimp or scroof over the matter, that we may hold forth this Lord Jesus Christ as a full Saviour, answering all the cases that any poor sinner can be into.

Now, you know, that Christ is to be received *as he is offered in the gospel*, according to your Catechism, which says, "That faith in Jesus Christ, "is a receiving and resting upon him alone "for salvation, as he is offered in the gospel:" The *receiving* relates to an *offering*; and he is to be received *as* he is offered, and then walked in as he is received. The question then is, *How he is offered in the gospel*, or *in what capacity*, that we may know further how he is to be received, that so being thus received, he may be thus walked in? Well, his being offered as a CHRIST, a JESUS, a LORD, as I have shewed already, comprehends these following particulars; (and while we are telling you in what capacity Christ is offered, O look to the Lord to give you grace to receive him as he is offered;

that having received him in these capacities, you may so walk in him.

1. Christ Jesus the Lord is offered in the gospel in the capacity of a *Prophet* and *Teacher*, that being thus received ye may so walk in him. Is there any poor, blind, ignorant souls here, that know nothing of God, or Christ, or the covenant of grace? Behold, Christ is offered to you in the capacity of a Prophet that hath *compassion on the ignorant*, saying, *Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart*, Mat. xi. 29. Never will you learn till you be bound and entered to Christ; for, *Who teacheth like him?* Job xxxvi. 22. Ministers may preach, but they cannot give you a capacity to learn; but a Christ can give you a heart to know, as well as an ear to hear; for he gives eyes to the blind, ears to the deaf, and understanding to the simple. What is the reason that there is so much preaching, and so little spiritual profiting and spiritual life? It is even because Christ, the great Prophet, is so little with us, 2 Kings iv. 31. *There was neither voice nor hearing* by the prophet's staff, until the prophet came and stretched himself upon the dead child: even so it is here, the staff of a preached word does not the business, till the great Prophet come. Now, have you entered yourselves to be his scholars? Have you received him as a Prophet? Then, so walk in him by daily improvement of him in that capacity, to enlighten your understanding, saying, *Lord, I have heard much of thee by the hearing of the ear, but little have mine eyes seen of thee:* I have been long in Christ's school, but made little proficiency: O come and teach me to profit! let my eyes be opened, that, in the ordinances of thy institution, I may see the glory of God, the vileness of sin, the beauty of Christ, and the excellency of his righteousness.—Thus having received him as a Prophet, so walk ye in him, by coming always for more and more instruction from him.

2. Christ Jesus the Lord is offered in the gospel in the capacity of a *Priest*, that being thus received ye may so walk in him. How sweet is this offer of Christ to all poor things that are wrestling with the guilt of sin, and the debt they owe to the justice of God! for it is only in Christ that God is well-pleased, even in him *whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of them that believe in Jesus.* They that believe in Jesus, the propitiation, have gotten all their debt paid, and God's honesty and fidelity is such, that he will never crave the debt over again. Christ is offered as a Priest for reconciliation, and a Priest for intercession. They that take hold of Christ as a Priest, they have nothing ado in heaven but they are sure to have it done; for, there *he makes continual intercession for us.* Are you so vexed with temptations that you cannot get a composed thought in duty? Here is refreshment from the presence of the Lord, even a Friend in heaven, who never gives over to make intercession.—Now, have you received Christ as a Priest? Then, so walk in him, by daily improving him, his satisfaction and intercession, as the ground of your peace with God, pardon of sin, and acceptance in every performance.

3. Christ Jesus the Lord is offered in the gospel in the capacity of a *King* and a *Captain*, that being thus received, ye may so walk in him. Behold! he is held forth as a King, to subdue, by his power; to conquer, by his grace; and defend, by his providence, from all temptations without, and corruptions within: and as a Captain, even the Captain of our salvation, who hath good skill to lead on in the battle, and victory is still upon his side, Psal. xci. 4. there you see he hath *wings* wherein you may trust, and *his truth shall be thy shield and buckler; thou shalt not be afraid of terrors by night, nor for the arrows that fly by day.* He is a Captain whose name is, the *Lion of the tribe of Judah*, the *mighty God*, the *Prince of peace*; a *Prince exalted by the right-hand of God, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins.* Now, have you received him thus as a Prince, a Captain of salvation? So walk in him, by employing him still to subdue all your sins, and to defend you from all spiritual and temporal evils. To defend you from all *spiritual* evils; for, you *wrestle not against flesh and blood, but principalities and powers, and the rulers of the darkness of this world, and spiritual wickednesses in high places*; therefore, *be strong in the Lord*, Eph. vi. 10, 12.; *For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds*, 2 Cor. x. 4, 5. To defend from all *temporal* evils: But here a question may be moved, How doth this Captain defend his soldiers from temporal evils, calamities, and afflictions? To which we reply, It is even by taking away the sting of them. Some may think, how are the Lord's people supported under the temporal evils they are meeting with! Why, the everlasting arms are underneath them, and that is enough. If the Lord see fit that temporal goods be taken from them, he makes it up an hundred fold in giving them spiritual goods. They would count it good interest who get ten of the hundred; but behold! the people of God get a hundred fold in this life, and for any loss in temporals they get it repaired in spirituals, as in the intimation of the pardon of sin, and there is gold for copper. Many know not how the Lord supports his people under the difficulties they are brought into in this world; but he hath pledged his word to defend them from all temporal and spiritual evils, and he never failed in his word, wherein he hath said, *The place of their defence shall be the munition of rocks.*—Now, to receive Christ as a King and Captain to rule and defend, is to receive him as he is offered; and to improve him daily for this end, is to walk in him as we have received him.

4. Christ Jesus the Lord is offered in the gospel in the capacity of an *Ark* and a *Refuge*, that being thus received, we may so walk in him. He is held forth as an Ark and a Refuge. Now, have you received him as an Ark, that only can save you from drowning by the flood of God's wrath, saying, "Lord, there is no other "ark to save me but thee, for I am shipwreck-"ed in Adam, and there is no plank, but Christ, "to bring me to shore!" Have you therefore clasped to him by the hand of faith, saying, *Lord, save me, or else I perish?* Why then, having thus received him, do you so walk in him; keep within your Ark, and abide in him, seeking no other ark, and reposing confidence no where else; this is to walk in him as ye have received him.—Have you received him as a Refuge and hiding-place, Isa. xxxii. 2. saying, "Lord, I flee to thee to hide me; for the aven-"ger of blood, the law and justice of God, are

"at

" at my heels purſuing me; and if they find me " afar off from thee, I am ſlain without mer- " cy; the clifts of the Rock are my only hiding- " place, which I take to be a ſafeguard to me?" Well then ſo walk ye in him, by taking ſhelter ſtill in this ſanctuary.

5. Chriſt Jeſus the Lord is offered in the goſpel in the capacity of a *Cautioner* or *Surety*, that being thus received we may ſo walk in him. There are two things requiſite in a cautioner, and both are to be found in Chriſt: The one is that he be *ſolvendo*, able to pay all the debt; and the other is that he be willing, as well as able, to undertake the debt. Now, Chriſt is *able to ſave to the uttermoſt all that come to God by him*, Heb. vii. 25. and all comers are welcome; *Whoſoever will let him come*: q. d. the will ſhall not be wanting on my ſide. Now, have you, as a bankrupt-debtor, received Chriſt as a Surety, ſaying, " Lord, I owe many thouſands " more than I can pay, but thou haſt a ſuffi- " cient ranſom to pay all my debt; and I flee " to thee as my Surety, that I be not ſeized by " juſtice, and dragged to the priſon of hell."— Have you thus received him as a Surety? Then ſo walk in him by employing him ſtill as a Surety for debt and duty both; for clearing your conſcience with reſpect to all your debt, and for carrying your ſoul honourably through every duty, and doing all your works in you and for you.

6. Chriſt Jeſus the Lord is offered in the goſpel in the capacity of an *Advocate*, that being thus received we may ſo walk in him; *Theſe things I write to you, that ye ſin not; but if any man ſin we have an Advocate with the Father, Jeſus Chriſt the righteous*, 1 John ii. 1. Well is it with the poor ſoul that hath many challenges for ſin and guilt, and is ſadly exerciſed therewith, when yet it can put its caſe in the hand of him who is an Advocate with the Father; he can fully anſwer and propoſe able defences againſt all challenges from conſcience. But, alas! I fear there are many ſleeping conſciences among us. However, freedom from all challenges is only by the blood of Chriſt, and the faith of his advocating our cauſe with the Father; and well is it with us that we have a righteous Jeſus, a ſinleſs Jeſus, for our Advocate, who can comfort under the ſaddeſt diſcouragement, and relieve from the ſaddeſt intricacy; for, he underſtands all heart-ſecrets, his underſtanding being infinite: and he is not lordly in his employment. There is much lordlineſs among earthly advocates, and great men of that profeſſion; you muſt come and wait at their gates, with hat in hand, and perhaps never be the better; for advocates with us may be honeſt, and yet loſe a good cauſe: but here is an Advocate in your offer, to be received by you, who never loſt a cauſe that was put in his hand.—Now, have you received him as an Advocate? Then ſo walk ye in him by ſtill employing him in that capacity, ſaying, " Lord, my crimes are great, my " cauſe is bad, but never a cauſe miſcarried " that thou took in hand: Oh! let every one " of thy wounds be as ſo many open mouths " to plead for me; let thy blood ſpeak, that " *ſpeaks better things than the blood of Abel.*"

7. Chriſt Jeſus the Lord is offered in the goſpel, in the capacity of a *Phyſician*, that being thus received we may ſo walk in him. We are full of plagues, maladies, ſores, and ſpiritual diſeaſes. Chriſt is exhibite to us as a Phyſician that hath ſkill of all diſeaſes, and can heal them all be what they will; Pſal. ciii. 3.—*Who healeth all thy diſeaſes:* he knows the right time of applying the healing word; Pſal. cvii. 20. *He ſent his word, and healed them, and delivered them from their deſtructions:* He heals with his own blood, and mixes his own blood with the word, a ſtrange mixture and compound to be a healing potion; for, he ſeals the word with his blood. Many are whole, and ſee no need of the Phyſician; they are whole-hearted, their hearts were never pierced with an arrow of legal conviction. But, if you have ſeen your malady, and prized the remedy; if you have received Chriſt as a Phyſician, then ſo walk ye in him, by coming ſtill with your broken bones to his door, ſaying, " Lord, here lies a Job full of " boils, a Lazarus full of ſores at thy gate; " here a paralytic hand; here a blind eye; here " a hard heart; here is a plague and there is " a wound; here is my atheiſm, ignorance, " enmity, unbelief; oh! heal, heal; let me " have a touch of thy garment, and I ſhall be " whole."—Now, if you have received Chriſt as a Phyſician, to continue in the improving of him thus, is to walk in him as ye have received him.

8. Chriſt Jeſus the Lord is offered in the goſpel in the capacity of a *Head* and *Husband*, that being thus received we may ſo walk in him. Chriſt is offered in the goſpel as a friend in the room of all friends, a *friend that ſticketh cloſer than a brother*; a huſband to the widow, a father to the fatherleſs, and a ſtay to the orphan; *When my father and mother forſaketh me, the Lord will take me up*, Pſal. xxvii. 10. And Jer. xlix. 11. *Leave thy fatherleſs children upon me, I will preſerve them alive; and let thy widows truſt in me*; and again, *Thy Maker is thy husband.* Our Lord hath a kind heart to the widow and orphans; for, he is an ocean of love, and a fountain of mercy, and he hath a liberal hand towards them; for *he gives durable riches and righteouſneſs*; and *I will fill their treaſures*, Prov. viii. 21. All the ſilver and gold in the world cannot fill one's heart; but ſays Chriſt, *I will fill their treaſures.* Let a graceleſs man have the greateſt ſubſtance in the world, he is but a poor miſerable wretch; but the pooreſt ſoul married to Chriſt hath *durable riches*, yea, *unſearchable riches*, Ephef. iii. 8. Take the greateſt prince and monarch in the world, a few figures in arithmetic will count all his wealth, and all that he is worth; but all the arithmetic in the world cannot count the believer's ſtock, who hath Chriſt for his Friend and Huſband; for, it is the *unſearchable riches of Chriſt.* They that are ill-friended in the world, may be ſupplied here; Chriſt is offered as a Friend, a Head, and Huſband.— Now, have you received him as a Head, and Huſband? Then ſo walk in him. Have you received him as ſuch ſome time a-day when you was brought to ſay, " Lord, though I be " the moſt deformed, black, and unworthy " bride that ever was, having nothing but po- " verty, debt, and danger to recommend me " to thee; yet ſince thou, who art the chief a- " mong ten thouſands, art content to match " with me, behold! I ſay, AMEN to that mar- " riage-covenant, deſiring to aſſent to all the " articles of it."—Have you thus received him, I ſay, as a Head and Huſband? Then ſo walk ye in him by maintaining the relation, and ſaying, *My Beloved is mine, and I am his*; and again,

I am

I am my Beloved's and my Beloved is mine, Song vi. 3. Let me ſee more and more, that neither death nor hell, ſin or Satan ſhall be able to looſe the marriage-knot; and let me have ſweet communion and fellowſhip with this glorious Head, and love-communications, and love-viſits from this glorious Huſband.—Thus you may come to walk in him as ye have received him.

9. Chriſt Jeſus the Lord is offered in the goſpel in the capacity of a *Helper* and *Reliever*, that being thus received we may ſo walk in him and improve him. He is offered, I ſay, as a Helper of the needy, and a Reliever of the burdened ſoul; he is therefore declared to be a *preſent help in time of trouble*, who gives grace to help in time of need; and with reſpect to all burdens ſays, *Caſt thy burden on the Lord, and he will ſuſtain thee.* Now, have you received him as a *Helper?* Then ſo walk ye in him by ſtill taking his help, and employing him to help you, ſaying, "Lord, I have deſtroyed myſelf, but in "thee only is my help; help me in reſpect of "deliverance from the mire of ſin and miſery "into which I have caſt myſelf; help me in re"ſpect of ſupply out of thy fulneſs, for never "a poorer wretch came to thy door than I; not "a penny of grace is there left to help me, "not a crumb to keep in my life; oh! let me "not go from thy treaſure-houſe without an "alms; for *there is bread enough in thy houſe and* "*to ſpare*; though I be a dog, let me not go "without a crumb." Thus by faith and prayer you may walk in him as a Helper if you have received him as ſuch.—Again, have you received him as a *Reliever?* (to put both theſe together that are ſo nigh of kin) Then ſo walk in him by employing him ſtill to relieve you of your burdens, ſaying, "Oh! ſin is heavier "than a milſtone, and how many of theſe "milſtones are on my back! Angels cannot "free me of my burdens; for the burden of "one ſin ſunk many thouſands of them to the "bottomleſs pit: ſaints cannot do it, they have "burdens enough of their own; nay, the "whole creation cannot bear my burden; for "it groans under the weight of me and it: but, "Lord, art not thou the Rock, the mighty Rock, "on whom God hath laid the help of poor "ſinners? *The Lord hath laid on him the ini*"*quity of us all*; and there I roll my burden, "even upon this Burden-bearer: let me be "eaſed, for the Rock can bear it without any "difficulty."——In this way, having received him as a Reliever and a Burden-bearer, you are to improve him, and ſo to walk in him.

10. Chriſt Jeſus the Lord is offered in the goſpel in the capacity of a *Shepherd*, that being thus received we may ſo walk in him. See Iſa. xl. 11. *He ſhall feed his flock like a ſhepherd; he ſhall gather the lambs with his arms, and carry them in his boſom, and gently lead thoſe that are with young.* Chriſt is held forth in the goſpel as the *wiſe* Shepherd that knows his ſheep, and puts his mark upon them, and ſeals them; *The foundation of God ſtandeth ſure, having this ſeal, The Lord knoweth them that are his*; they are ſealed by the holy Spirit of promiſe.—He is the *careful* Shepherd that hath a fold for them; *Other ſheep I have that are not of this fold, them alſo I muſt bring, and they ſhall hear my voice.*—He is the *faithful* Shepherd, that rejoiceth in the thriving of his flock, and will give an account, a good account of all the ſheep; hence he ſays, *This is the will of my Father, that of all he hath given me I ſhould loſe nothing, but ſhould raiſe it up at the laſt day*, John vi. 39.; and he will at that day ſeparate the ſheep from the goats.—He is the *kind* Shepherd, that feeds, and leads, and heals, and watches, and waters, and defends, and gathers his flock. —Now, have you received Chriſt as a Shepherd to perform theſe kind offices toward you? Then ſo walk ye in him by depending on him for the continual communication of that paſtoral care. Faith is called a returning to the Shepherd of our ſouls, 1 Pet. ii. 25. *Ye were as ſheep going aſtray, but are returned to the Shepherd and Biſhop of your ſouls:* Now, the life of faith and walking in him in this capacity is juſt a remaining with him, and depending on him as a Shepherd. It is a depending on him as a Shepherd to *feed* you; for, he feeds his flock as no other ſhepherd doth; he feeds them upon a green paſture, and the paſture is himſelf; John x. 9. *I am the door, by me if any man enter in, he ſhall be ſaved, and he ſhall go in and out and find paſture*; compare this with John vi. 51. *I am the living bread that came down from heaven; the bread that I give is my fleſh, which I give for the life of the world.*—It is a depending on him as a Shepherd to *lead* you; *The Lord is my Shepherd, I ſhall not want. He leadeth me by the ſtill waters; he leadeth the blind in a way they know not:* He maketh darkneſs light before them; he guides them by his counſel, and brings them to his glory; and if you walk in him, you take him for your guide, and follow him as your guide, and employ him as your guide to give you counſel, becauſe he is the *wonderful Counſellor.*—It is a depending on him as a Shepherd to *heal* you; but of Chriſt as a Phyſician I ſpoke already.—Again, it is a depending on him as a Shepherd to *watch* over you; for he is the watchful Shepherd that watches his flock night and day; *the watch-man of Iſrael ſlumbers not nor ſleeps:* he never gives ſo much as a nap, for then we were undone, in regard Satan never ſleeps, and enemies are never idle.—It is a depending on him as a Shepherd to *water* you; he waters his flock as well as feeds them; and as he feeds them with his fleſh, ſo he waters them with his blood, and with the influences of his Spirit: here is the *river the ſtreams whereof make glad the city of God:* he *pours water on him that is thirſty, and floods upon the dry ground.*—It is a depending on him as a Shepherd to *protect* you; for he defends his flock from all wolves, from all harm and injury: know you what the devil ſaid of Job? though he be the father of lies yet he ſpake a truth, when he would gladly have had God's hand of protection removed from Job, chap. i. 10. *Doth Job ſerve God for nought? haſt thou not made an hedge about him and his houſe, and all that he hath on every ſide?* I believe there are many of you know not that the devil is going about your doors ſeeking to devour you; but here is the mercy of all the flock of Chriſt, that their Shepherd hath ſet an hedge about them, that nothing may harm them; neither can violence touch them without his ſpecial permiſſion and order, and that for their advantage; for, *all things ſhall work together for their good.*—Finally, it is to depend upon him as a Shepherd to *gather* you; *He gathers the lambs with his arms:* they go aſtray many times, and wander ſo far away that they ſeem to be quite loſt; but *he ſeeks and ſaves that which is loſt*; and he hath a long arm to gather them, and bring

bring them back to himſelf, that they may get a mark anſwerable to his gracious care in reducing them; Iſa. lxii. 12. *Thou ſhalt be called, Sought out, a city not forſaken.* Have you received him then as a Shepherd? So walk ye in him as to employ him to gather you from all your far wanderings; your wandering thoughts, your wandering words, your wandering affections, your wandering converſations, ſaying, with the pſalmiſt, Pſal. cxix. 176. *I have gone aſtray like a loſt ſheep, ſeek thy ſervant;* and ver. 10. *O let me not wander from thy commandments;* and if I wander, O bring me back, and *let thy hand be upon the man of thy right-hand, the Son of man whom thou haſt made ſtrong for thyſelf; and henceforth I will not go back: turn thou me, and I ſhall be turned; draw me, and I ſhall run after thee.*

Have you received him in the capacity of a *Mediator* and *Peace-maker?* Then ſo walk in him, by employing him ſtill to take up all quarrels between God and your ſoul, ſaying, "Lord, "ſtand betwixt me and the flaming ſword; "and let me have the ſenſe of the Father's love "the atoning blood of the Lamb; and bring "the news of peace to my ſoul."

Have you received him as the *Ranſomer* of captives? Then ſo walk in him, by employing him ſtill to aſſert your liberty, to knock off your fetters, to looſe your bands, and to bring your ſouls out of priſon, that you may ſerve him and praiſe him.

Have you received him as a *Saviour?* Then ſo walk in him, by employing him to carry on your ſalvation to perfection; and to ſave you from ſin, from the law, from death, and wrath.

Have you received him as a *Sun*, as the *Sun of righteouſneſs?* Then ſo walk in him, by rejoicing in his light, and ſhunning all the darkneſs of ignorance and error; *O houſe of Iſrael, walk ye in the light of the Lord.*

Have you received him as your *righteouſneſs* and *ſtrength?* Then ſo walk in him, by going in the *ſtrength of the Lord, making mention of his righteouſneſs, and of his only.*——You may ſee what a large field of matter is here; there would be no end of ſpeaking of the way or the walk here, becauſe Chriſt is the way, and the walk ſuitable thereto is accordingly moſt extenſive.

Thus you ſee the *rule* of the believer's walk, and what *proportion* and *ſuitableneſs* his walk ſhould have to his receiving of Jeſus Chriſt the Lord, and ſuitable to all the *capacities* wherein he receives him.

I may add to all that has been ſaid, that Chriſt is offered as a *pattern* and *example.* Have we received him in that capacity? then let us ſo walk in him. The body muſt walk where the head walks; the head and body muſt walk where the feet walk; and the head having influence upon the body, the feet muſt walk in a conformity. They that have received Chriſt as a pattern and example, if they walk as they have received him, muſt, through grace, follow his example; that is, they are to follow him in his *faith*; for, he truſted in his Father; ſo muſt we beware of caſting off the profeſſion of our faith, or deviating to error and hereſy. They are to follow him in his *love*, Eph. v. 2. *Walk in love, as Chriſt alſo loved us; being followers of God as dear children.*—They are to follow him in his *holineſs*; *Be ye holy as I am holy.*—In his *zeal*; *The zeal of God's houſe hath eaten him up*, even his zeal for the glory of God.—He walked in a conformity to the *will* of God; did always the things that pleaſed him; ſought the glory of his Father in all he did:—In his *activity*; he went up and down doing good; never reſted till he ſaid, *I have finiſhed the work which thou gaveſt me to do.* So we are not to *weary in well-doing.*—In his *meekneſs*, *patience*, and *humility*; *Follow me for I am meek and lowly.*—In his *boldneſs* and *conſtancy*, in adhering to the truth in ſpite of all oppoſition; *For the joy that was ſet before him, he endured the croſs, and deſpiſed the ſhame.* So we are to *take up the croſs and follow him.*——This is to walk in him as we have received him.

IV. The *fourth* general head propoſed in the method was, To ſpeak of the *connexion* betwixt the believer's *character* and the believer's *duty*, or betwixt *receiving Chriſt*, and *walking in him*; where we promiſed to enquire into the *order* of the connexion, and the *reaſons* of it. Now, in ſpeaking to this head we may conſider, *firſt*, in general, how this *text*, and the *duties* therein called to, are *connected* with the *context*; and *ſecondly*, in particular, how the *parts* of the text are connected one with another, and ſo come more cloſely to the *order* of this connexion.

Firſt, Let us conſider, for clearing this matter the more evidently, how this *text*, and what we are called to therein, are *connected* with the *context*. The ſhort text is ſome what longer, if you take it with what went before, and what follows; for, texts of ſcripture are like the links of a chain that are faſtened together, ſome before, and ſome after. Look *before*, and then you will ſee, that the apoſtle ſpeaks to believers; in whom he notices their *order*, and the *ſtedfaſtneſs of their faith in Chriſt*: look *after*, and then you will ſee, that this *receiving of Chriſt*, and *walking in him*, are joined with a being *rooted and built up in him*, and *eſtabliſhed in the faith*. And thus looking to the ſcope round about the text, and viewing both ſides of it, I notice theſe two remarks for your edification.

1. *Remark*, That thoſe whom the apoſtle commend, for their *ſtedfaſtneſs in the faith*, yet he doth exhort to *walk in Chriſt*. See ver. 5. compared with the text. And this teaches us this excellent leſſon, That Chriſt is to be lived, as well as known; to be lived in, as well as believed in. The beſt of believers hath need of the ſpur of exhortation ſtill to walk: proportionable to the knowledge and faith that a believer hath in Chriſt, anſwerably will he find a need of Chriſt, and of living and working in him: and ſo proportionable to his knowledge and faith, ſhould this living and walking in Chriſt be. A man may have much of the knowledge and faith of the Son of God, and yet walk very anſwerably to that meaſure of faith and knowledge that he hath; and a man may have a little meaſure of faith and knowledge of Chriſt, and yet live in very much of that little knowledge and faith, by walking in Chriſt proportionably thereto. There are luſts to be mortified in the believer, as long as he lives; there are paſſions to be ſubdued by the Spirit, and graces to be quickened and blown up by the Spirit, that they go not out: This may take up the whole man, and there is no end of this work, till ſin be quite aboliſhed, and grace be perfected. And

ſo there is work enough for the believer all his days: though he be eſtabliſhed in the faith, he will find work enough ſtill to be working and going on. Therefore, the beſt believers need the ſpur of exhortation, to quicken them to practical obedience. Suppoſe a man be highly advanced in the knowledge of Chriſt, ſurely the more knowledge he hath, the more doth he ſee into himſelf, and the more corruption will he ſee in himſelf than he ſaw before: as by the bright ſun that ſhines in at the window, we will ſee thoſe motes fly up and down, that we cannot ſee by the clear day-light. The more light, the more a man ſees into himſelf, and ſo the more corruption doth he find in him, than before he thought of. Yea, take any man that walketh in Chriſt, and he hath this property, the further he goes, the leſs he thinketh he hath gone: and it is a certain truth, a man that hath gone a great way forward in religious exerciſes, the leſs he thinks he has done: for the nearer he comes to God, the greater doth he find this God to be, and the knowledge of him ſtill the more myſterious; and the farther he dives into this deep, the deeper doth he find it to be. And therefore, even thoſe, that are commended for their *ſtedfaſtneſs of faith*, need to be exhorted to *walk in Chriſt:* here is walking, and walking further and further. If any man ſhould ſay, I care for no more than will bring me to heaven; this very thought ſhews the corruption and rottenneſs of his heart; and that he ſeeks grace to be ſaved, and not to be fruitful. It is a great flaw in a man's heart, in the very deſiring of grace itſelf, when he deſires grace to be ſaved, ſo as he may be glorified in heaven; and not grace to be fruitful, ſo as God may be glorified on earth. I ſhall not ſay but ſomething of this naughtineſs may be in the heart of a true believer; but ſurely, wherever it is in its full power and dominion, it evidences the man to be no believer, to ſeek grace merely as it is a beneficial grace, to get heaven for himſelf; but not as it is a ſerviceable grace, to be laid out in the ſervice of God in Chriſt.—This is one remark from the precedent text.

2. *Remark* is from the ſubſequent context, That *walking in Chriſt*, and *being rooted, built up in him*, and *eſtabliſhed in the faith*, are coupled together: compare the text with ver. 7. And ſo we are taking a look of the other ſide of the text, *walk in him, rooted, built up in him*, and *eſtabliſhed in the faith.* And theſe are coupled together two ways, both as to the *manner* of walking, and as to the *end* of walking: the *manner* of *walking in him*, ſo as to be alſo ROOTED *in him;* and the *end* of *walking in him*, ſo as to be ESTABLISHED *in the faith.*

(1.) They are coupled as to the MANNER of *walking in Chriſt;* for it is a *walking in him* ſo as to be alſo *rooted* and *eſtabliſhed in him.* Why, here is walking, and yet a ſtanding ſtill, a being *rooted.* It is here juſt as it is with the foot of the compaſs; the one foot of the compaſs ſtands faſt in the centre, and the other goes round, and draws the line: ſo it is with the believer; as to his faith, he ſtands faſt and unmoveable in the matters of doctrine, that is the foot of the compaſs that keeps the centre and ſtands faſt; but as to his goſpel-obedience, or obediential walking, according to the command in the law, in the hand of Chriſt, that is the part that moves forward, and indeed never ſtands. And thus the believer moves, and yet ſtands faſt; walks, and yet is rooted and eſtabliſhed. As it is with a man in walking, there is ſtill one foot ſtands, while the other moves, or elſe a man does not walk, but leap: ſo, many do not ſtand faſt in the faith, with one foot; nor walk in the truth, with the other foot, as it were; but they leap out of one doctrine to another, not being eſtabliſhed in the faith, nor walking in Chriſt, ſo as alſo to be rooted in him. And thus we may underſtand the ſcriptures that ſometimes injoin us to go forward, and ſometimes command us to ſtand faſt: you may thus reconcile the ſcripture that ſays, *ſtand faſt in the faith;* and another ſcripture that ſays, *Run the race ſet before you:* why, in the *way*, run; in the *truth*, ſtand. If a man ſtand ſtill in the way of obedience, ſuch a man ſtands when he ſhould run; but if he runs out of the faith or doctrine of the goſpel, this man runs when he ſhould ſtand. If a tree be removed to-day from this place, and tranſplanted to-morrow to another place; and ſo on from place to place, it drys, and cannot bear fruit: even ſo, the Chriſtian that changes from doctrine to doctrine, decays in fruitfulneſs; he is looſe, and not eſtabliſhed in the faith, and ſo cannot walk in Chriſt; for theſe two are coupled together, namely, *walking in him*, and being *rooted and eſtabliſhed in the faith.*—Thus they are connected as to the *manner* of walking in Chriſt.

(2.) They are coupled as to the END of *walking in him;* for, the end of *walking in Chriſt*, is to be *rooted and eſtabliſhed:* It is a remarkable promiſe made to the poor feeble ones in Chriſt's houſe, John 7. 17. *If any man will do his will, he ſhall know the doctrine whether it be of God:* This doctrine is not man's, but God's. Now, how ſhall I know whether the doctrine be of God, or not: why, if you *do his will*, you ſhall know it; that is, by walking in Chriſt he ſhall get much experience: for, as true knowledge makes way for practice; ſo, goſpel practice makes way for more knowledge and experience. O but a practical Chriſtian, is the moſt experienced Chriſtian in the world! You may very eaſily obſerve, that a tree is not rooted in a day; but the more it grows upward, the more it is rooted; and the more it is rooted, the better it is: ſo, they that walk in Chriſt ſhall be confirmed and eſtabliſhed in the faith. You will never find a man of mere notional knowledge, that hath any rootedneſs or ſtedfaſtneſs; nay, but the practical Chriſtian comes to be more and more an experimental Chriſtian. He that *doth his will, ſhall know the doctrine:* the meaning is not, that our knowledge and experience is owing to our work; but that, where a man, through grace, is helped to practical religion, ſo as not to ſatisfy himſelf with notions and ſpeculations, but ſo as to ſubject himſelf to the preceptive will of the Lord, that man is in the high way of growing in knowledge, and further experience.—Thus the text ſtands *connected* with the *context.*

Secondly, Let us conſider how the *parts* of the text ſtand *connected with one another: As ye have received Chriſt Jeſus the Lord, ſo walk ye in him.* Here you ſee, *receiving of Chriſt*, and *walking in him*, are coupled together: what God hath joined, no man ſhould put aſunder, otherwiſe it is at his peril. And though theſe two cannot be ſeparate in reality, yet the moſt part of people

people separate them in effect: some pretend that they receive Christ, and yet certainly they do not walk in him; and some, on the other hand, seem to walk in him, in some outward good life and works, and yet certainly do not Christ. Now, if you sever these two sorts of professors from the rest in the visible church, those that profess to receive Christ, and yet do not walk in him, and those that seem to walk in him by their good works, and yet have not received him, you will find, that those that truly receive Christ, and walk in him, are very thin sawn: for, as few of those in scripture, that called Abraham, Father, were indeed his children; so our Lord tells us, as few of those that pretend to Christ, are indeed Christians. Look upon the greatest part of the world this day, it is unchristian; because they receive not Christ: look to the greatest part of Christendom, and they are unchristian too; because they walk not in him, though they pretend to receive him: these two must be coupled, and the dividing these two, mars the whole. He is no Christian that does not receive Christ; and he is no receiver of Christ, that doth not walk in him: and therefore he is no Christian that doth not walk in Christ: in a true Christian both these meet, receiving and walking. It may be said of many, *The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau:* Their voice is the voice of a Christian, but their hands are the hands of an atheist, or an infidel. Where Christ is most named and professed, without being truly received, there he is dishonoured. Search the whole world over, and where will you find the most proud, the most cruel, the most selfish, the most carnal, wicked, and worldly persons? it is even among notional and nominal Christians, who, hearing of Christ, either profess to receive him, but never walk in him; or, fancy they walk in him, and yet never receive him.

If you ask me, *Where is the most unsavoury dung-hill?* I answer, It is where the sun shines hotest: so, in these days of the gospel, where in the world will you find the greatest sins committed, or the most nauseous dung-hill of sinful corruptions? it is even where the sun shines hotest, and where the gospel shines brightest: think not strange to see, that where the gospel shines most brightly, there the devil works most spitefully, that he may break this chain, *viz.* the *receiving of Christ*, and *walking in him:* when these two are cut asunder, it spoils all.—Thus much for the connexion.

But now, the *order* of this connexion follows to be considered: it is first a *receiving of Christ*, and then a *walking in him;* receiving is first, in as much as the branch must first be in the vine, before it can bear fruit: there must be an inbeing, before there can be a fruit-bearing, John xv. 1.—5. There it is Christ's doctrine, and here it is the apostle's. Now, we must enquire into the *reasons* of this order, that there must be a *receiving* BEFORE a *walking*, and a *walking* AFTER the *receiving*. We would therefore shew, 1. Why there must be a *receiving of Christ*, BEFORE there can be a *walking in him.* 2. Why there must be a *walking in him*, AFTER the *receiving him.*

1st. Why there must be a *receiving of Christ*, BEFORE there can be a *walking in him.*

1. Because *receiving of Christ* is that which *constitutes* and gives *being to a Christian.* Now, we have a common rule, that *esse* must go before *operare;* that *being* must go before *working; life* before *walking.* Now, if you ask, *What it is that constitutes and gives being to a saint, to a Christian, to a believer?* I reply, It is this *receiving of Christ;* it is by this means that we *become the sons of God;* John 1. 12. *But as many as received him, to them gave he power,* [or PRIVILEGE,] *to become the sons of God; even to them that believe on his name.* It is by this means, that, we having union with Christ, have the righteousness of Christ; Phil. iii. 9. *That I may be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, but the righteousness of God by faith:* first, we must be *found in him,* before we can have any thing from him; and this union is by a faith of his own operation: this gives the being and constitution; for, till we receive Christ, we are not unite to him, and so have no spiritual life or being. It it true, in regeneration, the Spirit of life comes in to the soul; but the first act of spiritual life is faith, whereby the soul closes with Christ, and so becomes a Christian indeed. As the union of matter and form, makes a body; the union of body and soul together, makes a man; and the union of a man and Christ together, makes a Christian; and sap from this root, makes him a growing one: so, it is not good fruit, that makes a good tree; but the good tree, that makes the good fruit: and as it is sap from the root, and the reception of it, that makes the branch to bring forth; so it is not the fruit of works and obedience that constitutes a Christian, or gives him a being, but it is the reception of Christ, the receiving of him as Jesus the Lord; and therefore that must be first.

2. Because *receiving of Christ* is the *rise* and *ground* of *walking in him;* and therefore receiving is first, as the cause before the effect. A man may bring forth the fruit of works morally good, and may bring them forth upon his own root, as a natural man; but he can never *walk in Christ*, until he do it in virtue of receiving Christ, and receiving sap from him. As the fruit of a tree is the sap of the root concocted; so walking and working in Christ, is just the sap of the Spirit of grace, putting forth itself into obedience; and that sap must be received from the root, ere it can be produced in fruit; and therefore receiving must go before walking. None can walk in Christ unless they be in him: as the branch cannot bear fruit in the tree, unless it knit to the stock; so we cannot walk in Christ, without being united unto him. Works and duties though they be performed in a conformity to the law, as the rule; yet this is not walking in Christ, unless it be done by virtue from Christ, and drawn out of him. Conceive it thus; a man may write a copy by his own art and skill, and a man may write with his hand by another man's guiding it; even so, out of moral principles, a man may shape his actions according to the law and rule; he may write this copy with his own hand: but then, as one that writes with his hand in another man's hand that guides it, so one that is in Christ, walks indeed in a conformity to the law as a rule, otherwise it is no walking aright in Christ; but he walks in the life and Spirit of Christ, he writes after the copy with his hand in the hand of Christ, being acted by these influences and graces of the Spirit, that, through his union with him, are always flowing to him. And thus a believer's walk-

walking is distinguished from all other walkings in the world, he being acted by the very Spirit and life of Christ: he bears fruit by the sap and life, which he receives from the tree of life, to which he is united; and not upon the old stock from which he is transplanted.

3. The *third* reason, why *receiving* of *Christ* goes BEFORE *walking in him*, is, because receiving of Christ is one of the *principal things*, whereby any soul can *honour God*. The world little considers this, how God is honoured by their taking Christ off his hand; how he is honoured by this act of faith in receiving of Christ: for, by receiving him, we renounce ourselves, all confidence in the flesh. Now, while a man hath any thing to trust to in his own opinion, he will never seek after Christ the Saviour; but when a man begins to count all his gain loss, and can throw himself over board, that he may come to Christ only; how doth this glorify and honour God!—Again, when a *great sinner*, that lies under an infinite load of sin and guilt, notwithstanding all discouragements from the multitude and magnitude of his sins, though infinitely great, yet doth so value the truth of God's word, and lay such stress upon the veracity of his promise, as to break through all discouragements, and throw his soul upon God's promise, saying, *If I perish, I perish*; what infinite honour doth this bring in to the crown of heaven!—Again, when a *benighted soul* sees no light of comfort in all the world, and yet can throw himself upon a God in Christ, saying, *Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him*; this honours God greatly: for, still we may mark this at any time, the faith that carries the soul through the greatest difficulties and cotrarieties to God, doth bring the greatest glory and honour to him. Men do not think they honour God, but by outward works of piety, equity, charity, and the like; but, however we ought to glorify God that way; yet God gets the greatest glory by the strongest faith. *Abraham was strong in the faith, giving glory to God*: How did he honour God this way? Even by trusting God, notwithstanding all unlikelihood, Rom. iv. 19, 20, 21. Yea, by faith God is so much honoured and glorified, that nothing pleases him without it; *Without faith it is impossible to please God*, Heb. xi. 6.

4. The *fourth* reason is, because before a man receive Christ, he hath neither *power* nor *will* to *walk in him*; but by receiving of him, he hath both: before receiving of Christ he hath no power nor ability; but he is acted and enabled by receiving of Christ to walk in him. As it is impossible for a dead man to walk; so it is impossible for a man that hath not received Christ to walk in him. No unbeliever, no unregenerate man ever did, or can walk in Christ; such a man is not in him, all his works are out of him. But, on the contrary, every man that hath received Christ by faith, is in Christ; and being in him, he hath all righteousness and strength in him, and so ability to walk in him; and he may *be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus; strong in the Lord*: he hath also a new principle; *the seed of God in him*. And as he hath a power, so he hath a *will* to walk in him; for his enmity and antipathy against God and Christ is broken; so that it becomes as easy and pleasant to walk in Christ, as before it was uneasy, unpleasant, and hateful. If water be poured out, it will run downward to the centre; but water metamorphosed and transformed into air, would mount upwards, because of its new principle; and it is impossible for it to come down: so here, before you receive Christ by faith, whereby you are united to him, it is impossible but that you should go downward to your own centre, to seek yourselves in what you do; but when a man hath another principle, he goes the quite contrary way, with as much easiness as he did the other way; so it is with every believer, as far as he is under the influence of the new Spirit, that is put within him. And so you see why *receiving* is first.

2*dly*, Why there must be a *walking in him*, AFTER the *receiving of him*; and so we are come to the reasons, why believers should *walk in Christ as they have received him*; or why a GOSPEL-FAITH must have a GOSPEL-PRACTICE*. Why it is every way reasonable and necessary, and that in respect of God, and man, and ourselves, and our faith.

1. The *first* reason, why they that *receive Christ* must *walk in him*, is in respect of GOD, that he may be glorified; and CHRIST, that he may be honoured. It is by walking in him that we glorify and honour him: the glory of God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost is concerned here; for the glory of the FATHER, as the *end*; the SON, as the *way*; and the HOLY GHOST as the *guide*, are all honoured by this gospel-walk; John xv. 8. *Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit*. John xvii. 10.—*And I am glorified in them*, says Christ. And the believer being the temple of the Holy Ghost, surely he is glorified when his temple is not defiled, by a sinful walk. In a word, it is a great affront upon Christ, not to walk in him as we receive him: it is the greatest injury done to Christ; *By this they give great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme*, 2 Sam. xii. 14. A wrong step in a believer, is very dishonouring to God, and makes enemies to blaspheme the name of the Lord. Therefore,

2. The *second* reason, why they that *receive Christ* are to *walk in him*, is in respect of MAN, that they may be edified, and brought to glorify God: also, *Let your light so shine before men, that others, seeing your good works, may glorify God*. Men will not look in to your heart, to see your faith; nor up to your head, to see what knowledge you have; but down to your feet, to see what for a walk you have: they cannot look to the sap that is within, but they will look to the fruit that is without, and judge of the tree by the fruit, and of your faith by your works.

3. The *third* reason, why they that *receive Christ* are to *walk in him*, is in respect of YOURSELVES, who are believers, and receivers of Christ, that you may be confirmed; for you are to judge the truth of your faith, not by the degrees of your confidence, but by the degrees of your conquest over sin, Satan, and the world, in a gospel-walk; even as you may know the height of the sun by the shortness of your shadow, rather than by the degrees of altitude; if the shadow be short, the sun is high; if the shadow be long, the sun is low: so here, if the shadow of sin and corruption be long, your faith is low; but if it is short, your faith is

* See what was said on the *second general head*, page 199, 200. Hereby the *power* of faith is seen, the *trial* of faith is made, the *beauty* of faith appears to others, and the *comfort* of faith accrues to ourselves, *etc.*

in

in a more lively exercise. How can you have the comfort of faith, if you do not rise and walk, as you have received him? If you do not walk, it is a sign you never *received light*, 1 John i. 7.

4. The *fourth* reason, why they that *receive Christ*, are to *walk in him*, is in respect of FAITH itself: faith, where-ever it is, brings in this walk in point of necessity, congruity, obligation, and encouragement.

(1.) In point of *necessity*: It is native, as I said, for a man that hath received Christ to walk in him; it implys a contradiction, not to walk in him, and yet to receive him; *How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?* Rom. vi. 2. The believer is *dead, and his life is hid with Christ in God*, Col. iii. 3. If ye be dead and buried, united to Christ, in his death and burial, how can ye live in sin? You can no more live therein, than a dead man can come back, and eat and drink in the world. Therefore, if you do not walk in Christ, ye plainly declare that your pretending to receive him, was but a cheat and a sham; for, he that receiveth him must walk in him, and will walk in him, and cannot but walk in him. Why? he that receiveth Christ, receiveth him as a Jesus and as a Lord: which infers two parts of practical religion; the fiducial part, which is a receiving him as a Jesus, a Saviour; and the obediential part, which is a receiving him as a Lord, and so walking in him as a Lord and Law-giver: so that they who receive him, must walk in him.

(2.) In point of *congruity*: Is it not congruous to the soul's *deed* in receiving him? Did you not receive him as the way to the Father? Why then, if you walk not in him, you take another way, and look to another airth.—Is it not congruous to the *end* for which you received him? Did you receive him only to look to him a while, and then to let him go? No; if ever you received him, it was that you might abide in him.

(3.) In point of *obligation*: there is the strongest obligation upon any man that receives Christ, to walk in him; even as in marriage, when two are married together, there is a mutual obligation they come under, to those duties that are required of each of them: so, a man when he receives Christ, he is married to him, and so comes under the strongest, and yet the sweetest obligations: for, in the day of espousals, the soul is made to say, as Jer. l. 5. *Come and let us join ourselves to the Lord, in a perpetual covenant, that shall not be forgotten:* It is a joining to the Lord as our strength, to carry us on in the way wherein we should go; so that we may be exalted to *mount up with wings as eagles, run and not weary, walk and not faint.*

(4.) In point of *encouragement*: the man that receiveth Christ, hath the greatest encouragement, and incitement in the world, to walk in Christ: for, he, receiving Christ, receiveth all things that can contribute for carrying him on in this way and walk. What does a man receive, when he receives Christ? 1. He receiveth the *pardon* of all his sins; *In him we have redemption through his blood, even the remission of sin*, Col. i. 19. And what encouragement is this, to walk in Christ! May not a man love much, who hath so much forgiven him? 2. When you receive Christ you receive *peace* and *reconciliation with God*; *We have peace through the blood of his cross*, Col. i. 19. And what encouragement is this, that you have to do with a reconciled God! O strong encouragement to walk in him! 3. When you receive Christ, you receive grace; for, *Out of his fulness we receive, and grace for grace.* And what encouragement is this to walk in him, that you receive grace from him! Do you not receive him for this end, that you may have grace in him, and grace from him? And why then not walk in him as ye have received him? 4. When you receive Christ, you receive the *promise*, yea, all the promises of the new and well-ordered covenant; for, they *are all Yea and Amen in Christ.* He hath *given us exceeding great and precious promises*, saith the apostle Peter, 2 Pet. i. 4. And now, *Having these promises*, saith the apostle Paul, *let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God*, 2 Cor. vii. 1. 5. When you receive Christ, you receive the *Spirit*; and here is the principle of a holy walk: *I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes.* Is not this encouragement, to walk in him as ye have received him, that you have the Spirit dwelling in you as an inhabitant? 6. When you receive Christ, you receive the *adoption* of *children*; Rom. viii. 15. *Ye have received the Spirit of adoption.* And again, Gal. iv. 4, 5. *Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying*, ABBA, *Father.* John i. 12. *To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God; even to them that believe on his name.* Is not this encouragement to be *followers of God as dear children?* 7. When you receive Christ, you receive a *right* and *title* to *eternal glory*; John xiv. 2, 3. *In my Father's house are many mansions:—I go to prepare a place for you, and I will come again, and receive you to myself, that where I am, there you may be also.* And what encouragement is this to walk in him, in the joyful hope of walking with him in white for ever! 8. When you receive Christ, you receive *all things in him.* I cannot tell what you receive, or how much you receive, when you receive Christ; for he is *all in all*: and *in him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily*, Col. ii. 9. *It pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell*, Col. i. 19. *And in him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*, Col. ii. 3. He is all for present support, and all for after happiness: and if he be yours, *all is yours.* What more encouragement can be given to walk in him, and improve him as your all?——Thus you see, why *walking in him* must go AFTER the *receiving*; and why believers in Christ are to walk in him.

Now, what say you of your Christianity, man? you that profess to be a Christian, that is, a receiver of Christ Jesus the Lord, do you so walk in him? I believe it to be a needful work to Un-Christ many that pretend to be in Christ: you know Christ, in his preaching, went about to Un-Moses some; to bring the Jews from under the wings of Moses, under whose name they did the works of the devil; and from under the wings of Abraham: he shows whose children they were, indeed not Abraham's, but the devil's. Even so, it were a needful work to Un-Christ some persons, that pretend to be Christians, and to bring them from under the wings of Christ, under whose wings they do the works of the devil: Surely, if ever Christ was received by you, so as to be in you, he would produce these graces in you, which he himself had, and which he himself preached,

while he was here: but while men bring arguments from Christ, to shelter their base lusts and idols, their base ends and purposes, it is the greatest dishonour done to the name of Christ; for, *The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his*: and, *Let every one that nameth the name of Christ, depart from iniquity.*——Thus much for the fourth general head, *viz.* the connexion between the believer's *character* and the believer's *duty*; or, between *receiving Christ* and *walking in him.*

If believers, who have received Christ, do not walk in him, none in all the world will; if they stand still, who will go forward? Many there are in our day, that are like the sun in Joshua's time, that *stood still*; nay, many worse, like the sun in Hezekiah's time, that went *backward ten degrees*; they have gone backward many degrees: few there are like the sun in its ordinary course, still going forward; still walking in Christ, as the sun doth run in the firmament. It is true, as the sun once stood still, and another time went backward; so the saint may stand still, and through temptation, be driven backward: but his denomination is to be taken, from his ordinary course, and habitual walk. It was the commendation of Enoch, that he *walked with God*: and how shall one walk with God? It is by walking in Christ. And how shall one come to walk in Christ? It is by the means of receiving him, under the influence of heaven; *As you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.*

V. The *fifth* thing was the *application* of the doctrine. Is it so, that it is the great and indispensable duty of all true believers, who have received Christ Jesus the Lord, to walk in him as they have received him? then hence many things might be in inferred, and many uses deduced: I shall confine myself to these four in a special manner. 1. For *information*, to instruct us in some precious truths. 2. For *reproof*, to convict us of some errors, both doctrinal and practical. 3. For *examination*, to try our faith and obedience. 4. And more especially, for *exhortation*, to excite and direct us, both to receive Christ and walk in him.

First, The *first use* is for *information*. Is it so, that a gospel-principle, or a gospel-faith is the foundation of a gospel-practice, then hence see,

1. The *nature* and *excellency* of the *gospel*; it is just that whereby God makes an offer of Christ to us, and all salvation in him; for the receiving of Christ here, hath a relation to the offer. A receiving faith presupposes an offering hand: now, Christ is offered to us in the gospel; there is God's offering hand: but where is our receiving hand of faith? Alas! whence is it, that we cannot take Christ that is offered to us? Even because our hand is full: the empty hand is a receiving hand; but our hands are so full of sin, so full of the world, so full of self-righteousness, that we have not an empty hand, to receive what is offered to us by the hand of free grace, in the gospel: and we have no will to quit our hold of that, with which our hands are full, and hence cannot take a grip of Christ offered to us. However, herein lies the excellency of the gospel, that it is a Christ, a Jesus, a Lord that is offered to us therein: and the gospel is to be pressed on this account, because, as all that reject it rejects Christ; so, all that receives it truly doth receive Christ in it. Human doctrine, however true, brings nothing but, at best, knowledge and speculation to us; but gospel-doctrine brings salvation to us: yea, the Saviour himself to our hand, to be received: and, when the offering hand of the gospel, and the receiving hand of faith meets together, then the good work is begun.

2. Hence see the *nature* and *excellency* of *faith*; it is a receiver of *Christ Jesus the Lord*, as he is held forth in the word and sacrament. It is true, there is a difference between the receiving of Christ in the word, and the receiving of him in the sacrament, *i. e.* in the Lord's supper. More generally, in the word, all sinners are welcome to Christ, as a Saviour and Lord; and in the sacrament, all believers are welcome to come to him anew. But more particularly, in the word we receive Christ under an offer and a promise; but in the sacrament, we receive him under a pawn, a pledge, and a seal. However, herein lies the nature and excellency of faith, that it is a fiducial reception of Christ Jesus the Lord. You say you believe, man; but, what is it that you do believe? Is it only that God offers Christ to your faith? Why, surely there is more than a believing that Christ is offered to you: what is a poor man the richer for believing, that one offers him a shilling? What is a condemned man the better for believing, that a pardon is offered to him? But, do you receive the offer? It is true, many come not this length to believe truly, that God offers Christ to them in particular; and yet where it is without any more, it is but the faith of the truth of the offer: you believe this to be a truth; and if you believe no more, that faith doth but serve to your just condemnation: it is not merely the truth-acknowledging, but the Christ-receiving faith that bringeth salvation. A woman may believe a man to be rich and honourable, and real in his suit; yet, that believed, doth not make marriage, but actual consent to take him for a husband: Even so, a man or woman may believe Christ to be a full, glorious, and suitable Saviour and Lord, and real in his suit and offer; but, that believed, doth not make marriage and union to Christ, but actual consent, to take him for your Saviour, and your Lord.

3. Hence see, what is the glorious *object* of faith; and, therein also the difference between *saving* and *justifying* faith. Christ Jesus the Lord is the object of faith; and faith, as it is saving, doth embrace Christ in all his offices, and in all these capacities, as Christ Jesus the Lord. But now, there are two special branches of salvation, namely, *justification* and *sanctification*; and these being two different things, faith acts upon Christ for them, in a different manner. Faith acts upon Christ for *justification*, as he is a JESUS; or by receiving him as a Jesus: faith acts upon Christ for *sanctification*, as he is a LORD; or by receiving him as a Lord. In justification we receive him as a Jesus, to be saved from the *guilt* of sin; in sanctification we receive him as a Lord, to be delivered from the *power* of sin. Now, though both these acts of faith goes together, to make up saving faith; though they be inseparable from one another, in the same faith; yet they differ, as the eye and the ear in the same head: for, as we do not see with the ear, nor hear with the eye; so, neither are we justified by that act of faith, that

that receives Christ, as a Lord, for sanctification; but by that act of faith that receives him, as a Jesus, for justification: we are not justified by that act of faith that receives Christ, as a King; but by that act of faith that receives Christ as a Priest *. However, when we speak of salvation in general, which respects both justification, sanctification, and all; the object of it is a whole Christ, both as a Jesus and a Lord; to be redeemed by him as a Jesus, and governed by him as a Lord. It is not true faith that blows hot and cold out of the same mouth; that cries, HOSANNA *to the Son of David*; and yet says, *We will not have this man to reign over us.*

4. Hence see what is the *root* of *right religion*, and where it begins; and what is the root of true obedience, and the principle of it: It is rooted in union to Christ by the faith of God's operation; for, there is no walking in him, till once there be a receiving of him. Men may have a moral walk, a fair outward life, a good complication of many excellent beautiful virtues, and the matter and metal of them may be very good; but, like coin that does not pass, they want the king's superscription upon them; having nothing of Christ in them. Yea, these moral virtues that some boast of are, many times, the greatest obstructions against Christ, that can be; while the man is puft up with his self-fitness, and self-righteousness. A bottle stopped with gold receives not so much, as an empty shell will do: even so, some may be filled and stopped with golden virtues; and hence they receive not so much as an empty soul, destitute of all these, will do. But here perhaps you will say, *Is there any need that a change be wrought upon a virtuous man, one that has lived a virtuous life all his days?* Yea, surely there is; for, there is as great a difference between a life of *moral virtue*, and a life of *true grace*, as there is between the *light of the stars*, and the *light of the day*: and, when grace changes such a man, it is a change from star-light to day-light: let him have never so many virtues, all these stars will not make a day. It is true, religion is under a great eclipse in our day: and, as a bright star will shine and make a figure, in the eclipse of the sun; so will moral honesty, when true Christianity is under such an eclipse: but yet, let me tell you that this is not a gospel-state: The true invisible church is a *woman clothed with the sun*, the Sun of righteousness. There must be an implanting into Christ, a receiving of him; before there can be any true gospel-walk. Religion must begin at receiving; and the walking that goes before receiving, is but morality at best; and whatever use it may be of to others, it is not what will be for your comfort or salvation.

5. Hence see, that the *doctrine of the gospel*, doth give no room for *licentious walking*. They reproach the gospel, who slander it as a doctrine of carnal liberty and licentiousness: for, it calls to *receive Christ*, and then to *walk in him*. GOSPEL-LIBERTY, is not a *liberty to sin*, but a *liberty and freedom from sin*. True believers are practical Christians: as by the same hand we receive a thing, we also work; so faith is the receiving hand, that receives Christ in the promise; and it is a working hand, that *works by love* in the commandment: and *love makes his commandments not grievous*. Why? because faith's receiving Christ and the promise, is first: for, in the law, the obedience to the command is first, and this engages the promise; *Do this, and live:* but, in the gospel, Christ and the promise is first received, and this brings in gospel-obedience to the law, and that in all duties, both of humility towards God; and righteousness, towards man. In *humility towards God*; or, *walking humbly with him:* What a scandal is it, to hear it said, There goes a proud professor; there goes a drunken professor of religion, or the like; but a humble walk before God, adorns religion; and self-denial is the glory of all our duties. The doctrine of the gospel is a doctrine *according to godliness*; it gives no toleration to sin, or impiety toward God.——In righteousness towards man, doth this gospel-obedience also vent itself: duties of religion, without righteousness towards man, are hateful to God; *I hate your sacrifices*, saith the Lord; *they are full of blood.* True religion is practical; it doth not ly in profession, but gospel-practice; not in talking of Christ, but walking in Christ. Many, as I said before, are like the lark that sings with the highest, but builds with the lowest; they sing with the highest, as high as angels, in their profession, but they build with the lowest, as low as devils in their practice: in their profession they sing and mount toward heaven; but in their practice they build upon the earth, and their affections are low, earthly, and sensual: they build their nest in the earth. —Gospel-liberty doth not ly in some *faint resolutions*; but *real performances*, through the grace of Christ. Many, under convictions, will flee to their good purposes and resolutions; like a mariner in a storm at sea, who, for the time, will do any thing; but when the danger is blown over, he is just where he was. A man that hath the falling sickness, in his lucid intervals may resolve to fall no more; but it is to little purpose, without some application to the disease, that lies within: so it is with resolutions, upon convictions of conscience; without application to Christ, for mortifying grace, to subdue their corruptions; and purifying grace, to wash away their pollutions. —Gospel-liberty doth not ly in *legal conviction*; for, without union to Christ, by faith, there is no true sanctity, or gospel-walking; whatever way a man may be bruised, in the mortar of legal conviction and humiliation, and broken with the hammer of the law: cut a bee in pieces, yet she puts forth her sting; so here, still the sting of enmity remains: let iron be broken into pieces, yet still it remains hard; so, a heart may be broken in pieces, and yet remain hard and unhumbled. But true humility is, when the soul is melted, so as to run into this gospel-mould; so as to receive Christ, and walk in him.

6. Hence see, that *true religion* is a *qualified motion*; for it is a WALK. It is a *progressive* motion, a moving forward; a *pressing toward the mark*; a *going from strength to strength*; from *glory to glory*; from *faith to faith*: We are like the boat in the stream, if it goes not forward by the oar, it will go backward with the tide; it cannot stand still. Many, as I noticed before, are like a wheel, they go round, yet still keep the same place; they go the external round of duties, but having no union to Christ, make no progress in the way of holiness. But this walk is progressive; the man *grows in grace*, and

* See this important point of doctrine more copiously handled above, at the close of the first general head, page 197, 198.

and in the knowledge of Christ.—It is a *permanent* motion: it is a motion, and yet a ſtedfaſtneſs, as I ſaid before; for, the man *ſtands faſt in the faith*, and yet walks faſt in obedience: he walks in Chriſt, *rooted and eſtabliſhed in him*, as ye have been taught. The apoſtle guards the Galatians from declining from the *ſimplicity of the goſpel*, upon this argument, Gal. i. 8. There is not another Jeſus, than he whom we have preached; there is not another Spirit, than he whom ye have received; there is not another goſpel, than that which we have publiſhed; if there were another, then ye might receive it; but becauſe there is not another, therefore keep by this Jeſus: there is but one Chriſt, and truth cannot be but one; if there were more truths than one, or more goſpels than one, the apoſtle could not have ſaid there, *If we, or an angel from heaven, preach another goſpel, let him be accurſed.* Whatever manifold articles of truth there be, yet truth itſelf is but one; and Chriſt the centre of truth is one: if there were any more truths or goſpels but one, why would the apoſtle curſe the angels, that ſhall preach another? for that which they preach may be truth too: no, ſays he, ſpeaking of juſtification by Chriſt, and not by the works of the law, *If any man, or angel from heaven, preach another doctrine, let him be accurſed*; this doctrine we are to hold faſt. It is a permanent walk.—And again, it is a *perpetual* motion; a perſevering thing; a conſtant motion: to walk is not to make a ſtep or two, but imports conſtancy; *The righteous holdeth on his way.* It is true, his ſin may make him go halting; and this is what makes a ſaint continually jealous, that he knows nothing of walking in Chriſt; becauſe he thinks, it is not a conſtant motion that he makes; but is many times and ways interrupted. But I would ſay, for the encouragement of the weak believer, that ſin may be felt, and yet the walk in Chriſt may be conſtant; a man may be lame, and halt in his walking, and yet go on; Jacob *wreſtled with God*, and yet *went away halting*; Paul had a *thorn in the fleſh*, that made him halt; however, he ſaw the uſe of that thorn, like a corroſive to eat away the proud fleſh growing: *Leſt I ſhould be exalted above meaſure, there was given me a thorn in the fleſh.* Hence, ſays one of the fathers, "Proud hearts have need of ſins, as proud "ſores of eating plaiſters:" in this caſe it is better to feel a corruption, than to be quite of it. A child of God will ſometimes ſee his grace, by looking to his ſin: To apply to this a ſimile that I uſed for repreſenting another thing: A man may look for the ſun's riſing in the eaſt; but he that looks for it toward the weſt, on the top of a high tower or ſteeple, may ſee it firſt: Even ſo, a man may ſee and know his grace ſooner many times, by looking to his ſins, than to his graces, though they be contrary one to another: grace is more apt to ſee ſin than to ſee itſelf; for, the eye that ſees other things, doth not ſee itſelf: ſo, grace may not ſee itſelf, but it ſees ſin and corruption; and thus humbles, and ſo carries the man forward.——Finally, it is a *regular* motion; it is a walking by rule; a *walking in Chriſt, according as we have received him*: of which I ſpoke at large, in the doctrinal part.

7. Hence ſee what is the *way to heaven*: Chriſt is the way, and holineſs is the walk in it; and ſo, holineſs is as neceſſary to heaven, as a man's walking in a way, is neceſſary to come to his journey's end: hence, *Without holineſs no man ſhall ſee God*; for, it is juſt a walking in the way to heaven: and the excellency of holineſs lies in this, that it is a *walking in Chriſt by faith.* Chriſt is the only way: he that thinks to reach to heaven out of this way, ſhall wander like a blind man, and never come there. The text ſhews, how faith and manners all centre in Chriſt. In our RECEIVING Chriſt, is the *act* of faith; in our WALKING in him, is the *life* of faith: He is the all of our faith and obedience. In our *receiving*, he is the *object* to be received; in our *walking*, he is the *way* we are to walk in. Many pretend to be Chriſtians; but, being ſtrangers to Chriſt, they are monſters: for, to be a Chriſtian without Chriſt, is like a body without a head.

8. Hence ſee, that *true faith* is never alone, but ſtill joined with *goſpel-obedience*; *As ye have received, ſo walk.* He that would disjoin faith from obedience, endeavours to walk with one foot, which is impoſſible. Faith and works, faith and holineſs, are the two feet, by which a man doth walk in Chriſt: and when the Spirit of Chriſt doth promote the one, he doth promote the other alſo. If a man ſhould eſſay to go upon one foot, he could not walk, but only hap, which would be impoſſible for him to continue long in: neither can obedience be without faith, nor faith without obedience; but according to the meaſure of the faith, ſuch will be the meaſure of the goſpel-walk. As the fuller a veſſel is, the faſter will it run over at the top; ſo, the fuller views a man gets of Chriſt, by faith, the faſter will he run in the way of evangelical obedience. When Jacob had ſeen the ſweet viſion in Bethel, he *lift up his feet*, Gen. xxix. 1.: it put mettle into him. So here, when the poor ſoul hath once received Chriſt, and got the faith of his own operation, he is made chearfully to run the way of his commandments. Therefore,

9. Hence ſee, that the *believer hath always much ado with Chriſt*; having received Chriſt, he is ſtill to make uſe of him, by walking in him: habitual grace will not do his buſineſs, without actual grace. The believer is like the ſhip; it is not enough that he have the ſails of grace implanted, but he muſt have the wind of the Spirit filling his ſails, otherwiſe he cannot make way towards the heavenly port. The believer is like a branch, that hath nothing of its own, but what it receives from the root, even as itſelf doth ſo ſpring from the root: he is like the moon which, as appeareth from the eclipſe, hath no light of itſelf, but increaſeth, and cometh to full, as it receiveth from the ſun. Let none think, that believers have no further uſe for Chriſt, after their firſt believing and receiving of him; nay, as Chriſt is *the author*, ſo is he *the finiſher of faith*: Therefore, *As ye have received him, ſo walk ye in him.*

10. Hence we may ſee, what is the *beſt fortification againſt all ungodlineſs*, and *antidote againſt apoſtaſy*. This inference I deduce from the text, compared with the whole context; for it comes in with an antidote againſt defection: for he tells, there were ſome that went about, to *burden them with vain philoſophy, human propoſitions*, and *ſuperſtitious ceremonies*, ver. 8, 16, 17, 18, 20, 23. You ſee then, I would not go off from the ſcope of my text, to ſpeak upon this ſubject; for, how doth the apoſtle fortify them againſt theſe evils? It is even by this; *As ye have receiv-*

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ed Christ, so walk ye in him: So that receiving him and walking in him, is the only way to be kept from defection. Let a man receive Christ, and he will reject these things; let a man walk in Christ, and he will go out of the way of these dangerous rocks; if a man receive Christ, and walk in him, he will abandon and slight all the trash of hell and Rome. He that hath enough ado to get food for his family, he will not bestir himself, to take in chaff and trash; but, if a baker come with an armful of bread, he will take in somewhat from him: so it is here, they that see a need of Christ, and receiving of him into their house, their heart, as the *bread of life*, they will not be careful to take in empty chaff, and superstitious trash. They that take in Christ, the body, the substance, will not regard the shadow and ceremony, ver. 17. *And why are ye subject to ordinances, or burdened therewith?* saith the apostle, ver. 20. Men will not willingly suffer under impositions in their free-holds in the world; and far less should they suffer the world to impose burdens upon their souls; such as the burdensom worship of antichristian, prelatic, abjured ceremonies. You heard the last Lord's day, of the evil of such superstitious ceremonial worship, as it is a breach of Scotland's Covenants, and a profanation of God's name, and an incurring the judgment threatened in the third command: nay, as my reverend brother * told you the danger of it, so I would tell you the antidote against it; and it is just in my text, to *receive Christ*, and *to walk in him.* As Christ and Antichrist are opposites; so, if you receive Christ, you cannot but reject the trash of Antichrist. To walk in Christ, and to walk in the road of superstition, is irreconcilable: let Christ in, and Antichrist will out: let faith take place, and superstitious fancies will evanish.

In a word, O see that your faith be a *Christ-accepting faith*, so as to *receive him*; and a *Christ-improving faith*, so as to *walk in him:* If your faith be not of this kind, it is not a saving, but a damning faith. Many have a faith that keeps them from faith; a believing that holds them fast *in unbelief.* All the terrors of the law draws no blood, all the invitations of the gospel moves you not; why? because you ly under the canopy and shelter of this faith and believing, which defeats the operation both of law and gospel, till God open your eyes to see through it. O seek, that the Lord may bring you to a faith, that receives Christ indeed, and so walks in him! The life of believers, after conversion, is an active life: none of them can say, Now I have no more ado, having received Christ; I may walk at random, and live as I list; no, by no means: after Israel were come through the Red-sea, they had a wilderness to walk through; and so it is with every believer, while here in this world: but though he hath a journey to go, yet he hath the greatest encouragement to walk forward; for, he is in Christ, in whom he hath all fulness; and therefore let duties be never so difficult, and his emptiness and insufficiency for them never so great, yet no ground of discouragement, while he is in Christ, and complete in him; and called to walk in him in the whole course of his progress; yea, to *walk in him as he hath received him.* And if believers were walking in Christ, so as to keep up the the same frame of heart in their walk, that they had in their closing with Christ, it would be the sweetest and pleasantest life imaginable: O what a holy, humble, sensible frame of spirit, took place when you were receiving Christ! how precious! how sweet! how lovely was Christ every way to you then! what strong desires after him, and ardent love to him, and joyful delight in him, took place, in the day when you joined hands with him! And now, what a sweet life would you have, if this frame of soul was maintained, through grace, in your walk and conversation? Why, this is what you are here called to; *As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.*

Secondly, The *second use* is for *reproof* and *refutation* of errors, both doctrinal and practical. I begin with the former of these, namely,

1st, DOCTRINAL *errors*, which this doctrine doth refute and reprove. And,

1. It refutes the error of these, who take *fiducial application* out of the *nature of justifying faith*, while our text makes faith to be a *receiving of Christ Jesus the Lord.* It is not only an *assenting to the truth of the gospel*, but a "receiving "and resting upon Christ, and his righteous-"ness, therein held forth, for pardon of sin, "and for the accepting and accounting of a "man's own person righteous, in the sight of "God for salvation;" as our Larger Catechism describes *justifying faith*, and confirms their description from, Acts xv. 11. *We believe that, through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved.* So that, a *man's believing that he shall be saved, through the grace of Christ, and receiving and resting on him, for this end*, is made the very essence of justifying faith, by the purest standards of this church, in a conformity to the word of God: so much assurance and appropriating persuasion belongs to the nature of faith, according to the doctrine of all our Reformers, that take away unbelief from faith, and not a single doubt will remain behind. Whatever doubts may be in the believer, there is no doubt in his faith: it is his unbelief that creates his doubts, and not his faith. The general doubtsom faith of the Papists, is not faith but unbelief: and therefore no wonder that our forefathers abjured it, in our National Covenant. It is not a woman's believing a man to be rich and honourable, but her actual consent to take him for her husband, that makes marriage; so, it is not people's believing Christ to be a great and glorious Saviour, but actual reception of him for theirs, that makes a spiritual marriage and union to Christ: the receiving of Christ, hath as close and particular an appropriation of Christ to ourselves in it, as a man's receiving of the meat and drink, whereby his body is nourished; and therefore it is called an *eating and drinking of the flesh and blood of the Son of God*; John vi. 53,—57. *Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day*, etc. What is more ours than the meat we eat? Yet know, the best meat and drink doth no good, except you make it your own.

2. This doctrine refutes the error of these, who confound the *covenant of works* and the *covenant of grace*; the *law* and the *gospel*; *justification* and *sanctification.* The gospel-order of things

* The Rev. Mr. JAMES WARDLAW, our Author's Colleague.

things described in our text, while it makes justifying faith, in receiving Christ, to go before sanctification or walking in him, doth refute the legal mixture that many make in our day, while they put DOING in the same room it had in the covenant of works; for the legal order was, *Do, and live*; first the duty, and then the promise; and so, the promise was made to doing and walking uprightly: but the gospel-order is, first the promise, and then duty; first Christ is received, and the promise of life in him, and then the duty of walking in him follows; the soul being sweetly encouraged, by the promise, to the duty. The inverting of this order is *legal doctrine* with a witness. For men to make a promise of life to any duty or work of ours, though wrought by grace, is to turn the gospel-covenant to a covenant of works; where the promise of life was made to man, upon his doing, by the grace and strength he had received from God in his first creation: It is a new mould of a covenant of works, to make the promise of life to our duty and work, wrought by the grace of God, in the new creation: nay, the promise is not made to our working now, but to Christ, and in him to us; and this promise of life being made, and apprehended and received in Christ, then, and not till then, can a man evangelically work and walk in Christ, as he hath received him.

With the same breath, it refutes the *inverting of the gospel-order of justification and sanctification*: for, whereas our text makes justification by faith, in receiving Christ, to go before sanctification or walking in him; some now-a-days will tell us of *gospel-repentance*, which is a special part of sanctification, going before faith and justification; yea, necessary in order to it. The repeating of our text is refutation enough to such doctrine: For, it plainly informs us, that justifying faith, receiving Christ Jesus, is requisite first, in order to sanctification or walking in him; and so to actual holiness: for, habitual grace is infused by the Spirit, in regeneration, at the same time that the Spirit enables the soul to receive Christ; but actual holiness cannot take place, till after this reception; and to this agrees the antient saying of some of the fathers, *Fides fœta justificat ante partum*; i. e. "Faith, however fruitful and big with child "of good works, yet, it justifieth before it "bring forth any." All the *promises are Yea and Amen in Christ*, and made to him. It is true, *godliness* is said to have *the promises of this life and that which is to come*, 1 Tim. iv. 8.; but it is not to godliness of itself, but godliness in Christ. *All that live godly*, do it *in Christ*, 2 Tim. iii. 12.: no godly walking but in Christ; and therefore no promise to a godly walk, but in Christ: To make a promise belong to our doing then, or to make our works have a *federal causality*, or *conditionality*, in obtaining life, is erroneous legal doctrine.

3. This doctrine refutes the error of those, who bring the BELIEVER *under an obligation, to obey the law as in the hand of God Creator, out of Christ*: Whereas, here he is laid under obligation only to *walk in Christ*; that is, to obey the law in Christ: not to have any thing to do with an absolute God, but a God in Christ; *As ye have received Christ, so walk ye in him.* The believer hath nothing to do with a God out of Christ: the authority and majesty of *God is in Christ, in whom all the fulness of the Godhead dwells.* And by the authority of God the Father, we are obliged to take the law, only out of the hand of Christ, who, in regard of essence, is one with the Father; and who, as Mediator, God-man, is not divested of his essential glory: *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased, hear ye him: My name is in him*, saith the Father: my authority, supremacy, sovereignty, and all: and we dishonour the Father, if we put not this honour upon the Son, to receive the law from his mouth. It is so far from derogating from the honour of the Father, that we cannot honour him any other way, than in Christ; for there is no coming to the Father but by him; and no right walking but in him.

4. This doctrine refutes the error of those, who would bring the BELIEVER, in any respect, *under the yoke of the law, as a covenant of works*; while, "being in Christ, he is wholly "and altogether delivered from it; so as his "person is not under it, either as to its com-"manding or condemning power, so as it can "neither justify nor condemn him," as our Confession and Standards assert. It can neither justify him for his obedience, nor condemn him for his disobedience: Why? he is justified by faith, in receiving Christ, before ever he can obey by walking in him; and so cannot be justified by his obedience to the law: and being justified, his justification is perfect in Christ, and his perfect righteousness: he is freed from condemnation, and no more liable to it for his disobedience, whatever contrary apprehensions he may have, than those that are already in heaven are liable to condemnation. It is true, he is liable to fatherly wrath and chastisement, while here, but being in Christ, his glorious Head, and a part of Christ mystical, he is no more liable to condemnation, so long as he remains united to Christ, which is to eternity. When a man receives Christ, and rejects the law as a covenant; when he is married to Christ, he is divorced from the law, Rom. vii. 4. *Ye are dead to the law, by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that ye should bring forth fruit unto God.* Where also you see the believer's freedom from the law, as a covenant, strengthens his obligation to it as a rule; *For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believeth.* His righteousness of *merit*, for justification, is the end of the law as a *covenant*; his righteousness of *Spirit*, for sanctification, is the end of the law as a *rule*: and both these are reached by receiving Christ, and walking in him.

5. This doctrine refutes the error of those, who make the believer's obedience to be influenced, by the *legal hopes of heaven*, or *slavish fears of hell*. Why, to receive Christ as a Jesus, is to receive him as a Saviour, to save from hell, so as to bring the man to heaven; and to walk in him as we receive him, is to walk in him as a Saviour, and so to improve him for that salvation; both negatively, in delivering from hell, and all things that lead to it; and positively, in bringing him to heaven, and to all the means that lead to it: and therefore, as far as we do not improve him, for both these ends, we do not walk in him by faith, but depart from him by unbelief. To walk in Christ, as we have received him, is to obey him as a Saviour; and to obey him as a Saviour, that

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hath purchaſed heaven for us, and ſatisfied vindictive juſtice in our room: and yet to obey from a legal hope of heaven, as if our obedience was to obtain it; or from a ſlaviſh fear of hell, as if our obedience could procure freedom from it; I ſay, to walk in him, and obey him as a Saviour, and yet to be influenced by ſuch a legal hope or ſlaviſh fear, is inconſiſtent; for the one is the believer's duty, the other his ſin: the believer may be guilty of it through his unbelief, but it can never be his duty. To have the faith of hell, is the believer's duty; but to be moved by the fear of hell, is his ſin, and makes his obedience ſo far ſlaviſh and ſervile, not filial: to fear hell is to fear vindictive wrath, or the wrath of a terrible judge, which is oppoſite to the holy fear of him as a loving Father, which is always his duty. And ſurely, to walk in Chriſt, and yet to fear the wrath of a God out of Chriſt, are contrary; for, to fear God in Chriſt, is to fear him as a God reconciled in Chriſt, and not as a judge dealing with us, according to the tenor of the covenant of works, which is in vindictive wrath. There may be the fear of hell, where there is not a ſpark of grace, or true faith; as we ſee in devils and reprobates; their fear of the puniſhment of ſin may take place, while their willingneſs to ſin lives: and ſo this fear no more changes the inclination of their wills, than the whip or chain doth the nature of the fox or wolf. It is holy fear that works a godly ſorrow, and it is this godly ſorrow that brings forth theſe ſeven fruits you read of, 2 Cor. vii. 11. And thus godly ſorrow, which is the happy mother of ſo many good children, is cauſed, like Peter's weeping, by the looks of Chriſt; the reproofs, the frowns, the offences of a gracious God thaws the heart into melting fears, and would do ſo though there was no hell; as a meek child needs no other houſe of correction than his father's looks.—Again, hope of heaven is the believer's duty, when it is looked upon as a reward of grace; for, he is to have *reſpect to the recompence of reward;* and may excite and influence him in his obedience; but the legal hope of heaven, ſo as to expect to obtain it, by our obedience and good works, is a Chriſtleſs doctrine: for, to ſay that our works doth ſave us, is to deny that Chriſt is our Saviour. How is he your Saviour, if you might ſave yourſelves by your works? Or, wherefore ſhould he die to ſave you, if any works might have ſaved you? Nay, ſays the Apoſtle, *If righteouſneſs come by the law, Chriſt is dead in vain.* If you do good works, to get the inheritance of heaven thereby, you do not walk in Chriſt; for, *eternal life is the gift of God, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.* And if you ſeek to attain ſalvation that way, you would receive the good, not as the gift of God, but as a debt unto you; and make yourſelf fellow with God, becauſe you will take nothing from him for nought.

6. This doctrine refutes the error of thoſe, that make *good works and holineſs* the product of *man's free-will, natural power*; or, at leaſt of the *common and general aſſiſtance of God*; or to proceed from him only as the moral cauſe, and not by way of powerful efficiency. Surely ſuch do alſo herein err, that lay ſo much ſtreſs upon natural endeavours, and moral ſerioufneſs, as to connect the ſame infallibly with ſaving grace: ſurely none of thoſe duely ponder, that *faith is the gift of God*, and the *work of God's almighty power*, requiring the ſame powerful efficiency, that *raiſed Chriſt from the dead*; and that true obedience and good works, is a walking in Chriſt; and that walking in Chriſt, is a walking by the ſtrength and power of the Spirit of Chriſt, who ſays, that *without me ye can do nothing.* Paul tells us, in his own name, and in the name of all believers, that they are *not ſufficient of themſelves, to think any thing, as of themſelves, but that their ſufficiency is of God*; and that *it is God that worketh in us, both to will and to do of his good pleaſure.* All the working and walking that men are capable of, before they receive Chriſt, is but evil works before God; for, *without faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe God*; and *whatſoever is not of faith is ſin.* "And ſurely evil works never make a "good man; for good works themſelves do "not make a good man: no works, good or e-"evil, makes a man either good or evil. As "good fruit makes not a tree good, nor is it "evil fruit that makes a tree evil; but a good "tree bears good fruit, and an evil tree evil "fruit: ſo, good works make not a good "man, nor evil works an evil man; but a "good man bringeth forth good works, and "an evil man bringeth forth evil works. For, "as the tree is good, ere it bringeth forth good "fruit; and evil, ere it bringeth forth evil "fruit: ſo, a man is good, ere he bring forth "good fruit; and evil ere he bring forth evil "fruit. So that our works make us neither "good nor evil*."

If a man hath not received Chriſt, he is not a good man, and cannot walk in Chriſt, or do any good work; but if a man hath received Chriſt, then, and not till then, is he a good man, and ſo is capable of walking in Chriſt, and bringing forth good works: yea natively doth this good tree bring forth good fruit.

Thus you ſee, how this doctrine ſets itſelf in oppoſition to manifold *erroneous principles*: theſe are only a few of many that might be named, which this text and doctrine doth refute; and too many of them are either directly, or indirectly countenanced in our day, even by public acts †, and thoſe that ought to contend moſt zealouſly for the truths of Chriſt.

The doctrine of the goſpel is like a bridge, by which alone men can go from this valley of miſery, to the regions of bliſs and happineſs; and the principles of religion, or truths of the goſpel, are like ſo many arches which, joined and united together, doth make up this bridge: and therefore, theſe errors that doth overturn any of theſe principles, do, as it were, cut out an arch from the bridge, whereby a breach is made, and the paſſage by it unto heaven, is either cut off, if the error be fundamental; or greatly obſtructed, if it nearly concerns the

* Theſe are the words, and part of the articles of that valiant and heroic champion for the truth, and famous martyr for the cauſe of CHRIST, the Rev. Mr. PATRICK HAMILTON, who was raiſed up by God to be a happy inſtrument of our reformation from popery, in contending zealouſly againſt the abominations of Rome, till he at laſt fell a ſacrifice to his cruel and mercileſs enemies, by chearfully yielding his body to the tormenting flames at St Andrews, while in that fiery chariot, through the aerial region, his ſoul aſcended to the celeſtial country, to poſſeſs eternal bleſſedneſs, on the laſt day of February 1527.—The famous Mr. GEORGE WISHART, ſuffered for the ſame good cauſe, in the very ſame place, and in the ſame manner, on the firſt of March 1546.

† Our author here has his eye upon the acts of aſſembly 1720. and 1722. condemning the *Marrow of Modern Divinity*. See above p. 70, 149, 150.

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fundamentals of religion. Some perhaps will think, Whether or not am I making all these fundamental errors, and so all that maintain them to be cut off from heaven; and consequently accuse the most part of the ministers of this church, except a very few? To which I would reply, That, as I do not desire to be like those, that think all Blackamoors except themselves; so I presume, that the judgment of the generality of the church of Scotland is to be gathered from the the public Standards of doctrine, in our Confession, and Catechisms, deliberately enacted by this church, and to which all profess adherence; and not from any particular Acts relative to doctrine, either made by an oversight, or maintained by mere human authority. And therefore, whatever may be the dangerous consequence of public deeds of that nature; yet, I entertain charity for the most part of the ministers of the church of Scotland, that the later Acts, that seem to clash with our Standards, hath nothing of their deliberate approbation. However, the least truth ought to be sacred to every one of us, who are called to *prove all things, and hold fast that which is good:* For, the loss of the least truth, whether you reckon it fundamental or not, is of dangerous consequence: the loss of the least divine truth, is as the loss of a diamond out of a ring; or of a jewel out of the Mediator's crown. The gospel is like a ladder, that hath so many steps, or rounds; every truth is like a round of the ladder; and by these rounds we climb up to heaven: if you break off any round, you are in danger of falling; and your climbing up is rendered either difficult, or impossible. The truths of the gospel are like stepping-stones over a deep water; take away any of these stones, and you make such a wide and dangerous step, that you are in hazard of falling into the deep. I now proceed,

Secondly, To the other branch of this use of *reproof*, namely, to mention some *practical errors* that this doctrine doth reprove; as,

1. Those that walk in *darkness;* we read this of the wicked, Psal. lxxxii. 5. *That they walk on in darkness;* even in the darkness of ignorance, error, sin, and security. Can they walk in Christ who walk in darkness? No: *If any man say he hath fellowship with Christ, and yet walk in darkness, he is a liar,* 1 John i. 6.

2. Those that walk in *vanity*, Jer. ii. 5. *Thus saith the Lord, What iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they have gone far from me, and have walked after vanity, and are become vain?* O the vanity of mind, the vanity of thought, word, and action! Is this to walk in Christ? No, no: he says, *Follow me, for I am meek and lowly in heart.*

3. It reproves those that walk in *profanity* and *lasciviousness;* 1 Pet. iv. 3, 4. *For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquettings, and abominable idolatries: wherein they think it strange that you run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you.* Do these walk in Christ, that walk in drunkenness, whoredom, swearing, Sabbath-breaking, and such like abominations? Oh it is blasphemy to think it!

4. It reproves those, that instead of walking in Christ, do walk in *lies;* Jer. xxiii. 14. *I have seen also in the prophets of Jerusalem an horrible thing; they commit adultery, and walk in lies,* &c. They that walk in hypocrisy and lies, instead of walking in Christ, do rather walk in the *devil*, the *father of lies*, and who *was a liar from the beginning.* God's children are called *children that will not lie.*

5. Those that walk as *slanderers*, Jer. ix. 4, 5. *Every brother will utterly supplant, every neighbour will walk with slanders.* O slandering tongue! Is that the way to walk in Christ? No, no. See what is the character of a godly man, that shall abide in God's tabernacle, and dwell in his holy hill; he is one that *speaks the truth in his heart; he backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour*, Psal. xv. 2, 3.

6. Those that walk in *pride:* such a walk you have described in the daughters of Jerusalem, Isa. iii. 16. *Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks, and wanton eyes, walking, and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet.* And you see how Nebuchadnezzar learned to preach this doctrine, after the Lord had humbled him for his pride, as low as the beasts of the field: *Those that walk in pride, he is able to abase*, Dan. iv. 37.

7. Those that walk in *carnality*, or walk after the flesh, and after the imagination of their own evil heart, and so walk contrary to God: See such a walk described, Eph. ii. 2, 3. *Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience. Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past, in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh, and of the mind, and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.* To walk in Christ is a spiritual walk; and surely they do not walk in Christ, who *walk in the flesh*, 2 Cor. x. 3.

8. Those that walk in *superstition;* even in superstitious worship and *ceremonial customs*, Acts xxi. 21. We read there of some that *walk after the customs*, viz. the Jewish ceremonies, that were abolished: Those walk not in Christ the substance, who *walk in the shadow*, Col. ii. 17.

9. Those that walk in *self*, or self-righteousness; *Going about to establish their own righteousness, not submitting themselves unto the righteousness of God*, Rom. x. 3. Thus, some make works their righteousness; some make faith their righteousness; and they walk in this faith, not *in Christ by faith:* but it is not faith that saves merely, but Christ received by faith. As it is not the laying on the plaister that heals the sore, but the plaister itself that is laid on; so it is not our faith, or receiving of Christ, but Christ received by faith that saves us. It is not our looking to the brazen Serpent mystical, but the mystical brazen Serpent looked unto by faith, Christ received by faith, that saves us. O but self is subtile! But if we knew ourselves, self-knowledge would be a school-master of humility. One of the first works which the word and Spirit works in men, is to give them light to go down into the dark celler of their hearts, and make discoveries: we are proud because we do not know ourselves; he that knoweth himself, loaths himself; he that knoweth his wants, prays in earnest; he that knoweth his weakness, fears, and flies to the Rock; he that brings knowledge of himself to a sermon, gathers out of the garden those herbs, that are medicinal to him. It is true, the heart is deceitful, and who can know it? but as we need not taste all the water of the sea, or every drop thereof, to know

know that it is ſalt and brakiſh; nor taſte every apple of the tree, to know the tree: ſo, the taſting of ſome evils of our heart, may make us to know what we are; ſo as to make us flee out of ourſelves to Chriſt.

10. This doctrine, in a word, reproves all *Latitudinarians* and *Libertines*, who think they believe, and ſo that they may do what they pleaſe; having *received Chriſt*, they think there is no need of *walking in him*: they pleaſe themſelves with a ſuperficial, opinionative, inoperative faith. Know, Sirs, that men are not to judge of themſelves, either by their *faith without works*, or by their *works without faith*; but by their *faith, as it works by love*.—The legal hypocrite judges himſelf, by his *works without faith*. But, as by fair and beautiful children, we cannot judge of lawful marriage; ſo, neither by the fruit of good works, can a perſon judge of his marriage to Chriſt: where there was never a formal conſent, or receiving of Chriſt Jeſus, all the profeſſed walking in him, is but hypocriſy.—Again, the goſpel hypocrite judges himſelf, by his *faith without works*; he profeſſes to receive Chriſt, but he walks not in him. A man may have a ſound faith, and yet not a ſaving faith; he may be called an orthodox believer, but yet an heterodox practitioner, an erroneous walker; found in his principles, but not in his morals; and this diſcovers the noughtineſs of his faith: for, *true faith works by love*.——May the Lord bear home the *reproof* himſelf, and give us underſtanding in all things.

The *third* uſe of the doctrine is for *trial* and *examination*.

There is but one Being that we have moſt to do with, in all the world, who yet is moſt neglected by the generality of mankind, and that is God, the Being of all beings; Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, one God. There is one of theſe perſons of this glorious Trinity, that ſtands very nearly related unto man; and yet men are generally very little acquainted with him, and that is the ſecond perſon, the Son of God, who is God-man in one perſon. God and man cannot meet together in peace, after our fall into ſin, but only in this centrical place, this glorious perſon, God-man, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt: without union to him, and communion with him, we cannot meet with God in mercy: Now, the way to have union to him, is by receiving him; and the way to communion with him, is by walking in him: And ſo, the whole myſtery of true religion lies here before us; *As ye have received Chriſt Jeſus the Lord, ſo walk ye in him*.

There are two things that we all need to examine and try, namely, Our STATE, and our WALK; our ſpiritual being and our ſpiritual well-being: both theſe are before us in the text. The ſtate and being of a Chriſtian lies in this, that he hath *received Chriſt*: the behaviour, and well-being of a Chriſtian lies in this, that he is one that *walks in Chriſt*. And therefore let us try in both theſe particulars. 1. Let us try our *faith*, namely, if we have *received Chriſt Jeſus the Lord*; and ſo come to try our ſtate and ſpiritual being. 2. Let us try our *goſpel-obedience*; namely, if we be *walking in Chriſt*; and we may thus know our well-being.

Firſt, Let us try our FAITH, whether we have *received Chriſt Jeſus the Lord*, yea or not: And ſo, whether or not we be in a ſtate of grace. O man, woman, poor dying mortals; according as you have this faith or not, ſo will it fare with you through all eternity: if you die in unbelief, *you die in your ſins*, John viii. 24. And better die in a ditch, and die like a dog, than die in your ſins. If you die in your ſins, you will riſe in your ſins, and ſtand at the tribunal of God in your ſins: you can never receive remiſſion of the guilt of ſin, nor redemption from the power of ſin, ſo long as you have not received Chriſt; and therefore reflect ſolemnly upon this matter, man, whether you have received Chriſt or not. If all that you are worth in a world, lay in one precious ſtone, and that ſtone was to be tried by a ſkilful jeweller, whether it were true or falſe, whether it would fly or endure, under the ſmart ſtroak of his hammer; ſurely your thoughts could not be unconcerned, about the iſſue of ſuch a trial. Why, man, woman, all that you are worth in this world, and in the world to come, depends upon the truth of your faith, which now we call you to try, whether it will fly or endure the trying ſtroak of the hammer of God's word: Have you no concern in this matter? You would be loath to put to ſea, though it were but to croſs a ſhort ferry, in a rotten lecky bottom: and will you dare to venture into the ocean of eternity, in a falſe rotten faith. O man! can you be too exact and careful about that, on which the determination of your whole eſtate depends, and that for ever. Well then, ſay you, *How ſhall I know, if I have received Chriſt, by a ſaving faith?* I do not incline to multiply marks. There are two queſtions, I would have you to examine this great matter by; whether you have ſaving faith, or not, ſuch as hath received Chriſt Jeſus the Lord. 1. Enquire how it was *created* by the Spirit. 2. How it was *acted* in your ſoul.

1ſt, How was it *created* by the Spirit? Many pretend to faith, but can give no account, how they came by it, or where they got the hand to receive Chriſt withal: but it is Chriſt that receives and embraces the ſoul, before the ſoul can receive or embrace him. Faith is the fruit of the creating power of the Spirit of God: and hence, as it is called the *fruit of the Spirit*, Gal. v. 22.; ſo it is called the *faith of the operation of God*, Col. ii. 12. And ſuch a powerful operation, as is called the effect of the *exceeding greatneſs of his mighty power, which he wrought in Chriſt, when he raiſed him from the dead*, Eph. i. 19, 20. But ſome have experienced the powerful working of the Spirit in creating faith, that yet cannot give a diſtinct account of his operation therein; and therefore I will tell you of theſe two or three things, that the Spirit doth uſually in creating this faith, whereby the ſoul receives Chriſt.

1. He prepares his way by a work of *conviction*, John xvi. 8. and legal humiliation. The Spirit firſt *convinces of ſin*, and then of *righteouſneſs*: and ſurely the child of faith is not ordinarily born without pangs; ſome have greater pains than others, but all have their meaſure of conviction of ſin, and deep concern about their loſt ſtate by nature. Now, were you ever deeply convinced, and ſtabbed to the heart, by the ſharp ſword of the law; and put to that plight, *Men and brethren, what ſhall I do?* Were you ever put to your wits-end, ſo as you knew not what to do in all the world, or what hand to turn yourſelves to? Were you at that paſs, that

that you would have given a thouſand worlds for light and direction, where you might find outgate and deliverance to your weary ſpirit? Were you ever deeply weighted and affected, with your guilt, ſin, and danger, by the powers of the world to come; and the thoughts of your ſpiritual and eternal ſtate actuating upon your ſoul, with ſuch invincible force, that you could have no reſt, no ſatisfaction, no contentment, till you got ſome ſovereign outgate? Was you ever deeply wounded upon the account of your ſin? Was it like a ſword in your bones, and like a weight of iron, and a mountain of lead upon your ſoul? Surely, if ever you have received Chriſt, you have ſeen a need of him. When you are ſick, you will readily ſee the need of a phyſician; when poor, you will ſee the need of riches; when naked, you will ſee the need of cloathing: whatever temporal ſtraits ly upon you, you will find your need of ſuitable ſupply: Even ſo, if ever the Spirit of conviction hath come in, ſurely you have ſeen a need of Chriſt, a need of mercy and pity, and of a ſovereign antidote againſt your maladies and miſeries, which have been diſcovered to you.

2. The Spirit having convinced the ſoul of ſin, in order to make the ſoul ſee a need of Chriſt, having brought the man to conviction, doth next bring him to *deſperation;* I mean, to ſelf-deſpair: This is imported in the language of thoſe, Acts ii. 37. *Men and brethren, what ſhall we do?* They are at a total loſs about deliverance, and the way of eſcape. It is an emphatic word to this purpoſe, the apoſtle uſeth, Gal. iii. 23. *Before faith came, we were kept under the law, ſhut up unto the faith, which ſhould afterwards be revealed:* SHUT UP *unto the faith,* συγκεκλεισμένοι, as men BESIEGED and DISTRESSED in a garriſon, in time of a ſtorm, when the enemy pours in upon them through the breaches, and overpowers them; there is but one port or gate, at which they can eſcape, and to that they all throng, as deſpairing of life, if they take any other courſe: Even ſo doth convictions beſiege men, and diſtreſs them, beat them off from all their holds and entrenchments, and ſhut them up unto Chriſt, as the only way of eſcape. The man once thought his duties would ſave him; his reformation would ſave him; that a little repentance would ſave him, or that a ſtricter life would do the buſineſs: but now there is no hope appears in the whole horizon of ſenſe; there is no way but one, Chriſt or condemnation for ever. Now, the man is brought to ſay; Oh! I cannot deliver myſelf out of that wretched ſtate: men and angels cannot deliver me: all my former refuges will not ſecure me: I find the bed is too ſhort, the covering is too narrow; and if I truſt to theſe Egyptian reeds, they will not only fail me, but pierce and wound me too.

3. The Spirit, in working this faith, whereby the ſoul receives Chriſt, having wrought the ſoul to this conviction, this ſelf-deſpair, doth next bring the ſoul readily to the *greateſt pinch* and *ſtraits*, and *ſolemn concern*, that ever it was under about any thing in the world, as we ſee in the experience of the jaylor, Acts xvi. 29. He came *trembling*, and aſked, why the judgment of the great day was acted by way of anticipation in his conſcience? It is with no little concern, that people do revolve theſe and the like queſtions in their minds daily: *What ſhall I eat? what ſhall I drink?* and, *how ſhall I and mine be fed and cloathed?* But ſurely, much deeper impreſſions upon the heart, when the ſoul is under the awakening influences of the Spirit of bondage, do theſe queſtions make in the man's breaſt; *What ſhall I do to be ſaved?* and, *What ſhall come of me through eternity?* The man is brought to a ſolemn and awful concern about his everlaſting condition; and to be in ſad earneſt about his eternal ſtate. All frolics and frothineſs doth evaniſh, and here the man lies at God's mercy, unable to help himſelf, and unworthy that God ſhould help him; and owning that he deſerves to be thrown into the bottomleſs pit; and that it will be a wonder of grace, and a miracle of mercy, if God ſhall pity him. And then,

4. The Spirit, in working this faith, whereby the man receives Chriſt, doth come in to the ſoul by a *powerful, ſaving, conquering illumination;* even as a *Spirit of wiſdom and revelation, in the knowledge of Chriſt*, Eph. i. 17. Some enlightening work, ſetting home the law, and diſcovering ſin, makes way for what I have already mentioned: but now, ſaving, powerful, illumination takes place, for diſcovering the glorious object of faith, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; for there muſt be a *ſeeing of the Son*, ere there can be a *believing in him*, John vi. 40. As faith without works, ſo the conſequent of it is dead; as faith without light, ſo the antecedent of it is blind: faith is the hand whereby we receive Chriſt, but knowledge is the eye by which that hand is directed. Now, hath ever God opened your eyes, and given you a heartſom view of Chriſt, the *King in his beauty, as fairer than the children of men;* as *more glorious than mountains of prey;* as brighter than the firmamental ſun, in his meridian ſplendor and glory? Have you got ſuch a view of him, that, ſuppoſe God ſhould come to you with Chriſt in one balance, and ten thouſand worlds, full of all imaginable pleaſures and honours, in another balance; and ſaid to you, Which of them will you chooſe? You would have rejected all thoſe with diſdain and abhorrence, and your ſoul would have flightered after a Redeemer, ſaying, *I count all but loſs and dung for the excellency of the knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus my Lord?* Have you got ſuch glorious diſcoveries of the grace and love of God in Chriſt, in the goſpel, as hath drawn out your heart to the offer thereof? It is by the ſhining of the goſpel light, through the free promiſe, into the heart, that the man is turned from darkneſs to light. The higheſt natural light will leave a man ſhort of the diſcovery of ſin, in its *exceeding ſinfulneſs;* and of the riches of grace in Chriſt, for the recovery of loſt ſinners: theſe cannot be ſeen aright, till they be revealed by the divine Spirit; *Fleſh and blood revealeth them not*, Mat. xvi. 17. The heart ſtood immediately before, at an infinite diſtance from the Lord Jeſus, and was full of oppoſition againſt him: but now, a divine power being exerted, by the word of the goſpel, for drawing the ſoul off from all other objects, to pitch upon Chriſt alone for ſalvation, in the way of free grace; then it accepts of the bleſſed offer, when all arguments in the world before could not prevail with it. Hath the Spirit of God cleared up to you the goſpel-offer of Chriſt, in order to your receiving of him? for, *therein is the righteouſneſs of God revealed from faith to faith.* It is in a goſpel-glaſs, that the

the ſoul gains a right diſcovery of the excellency of Chriſt, and that righteouſneſs of his, without which there is no ſalvation. This firſt acquaintance with Chriſt doth make ſuch a powerful alteration, by diſcoveries above ſenſe, bringing the heart towards Chriſt beyond all other means, that it uſually hath a mark upon it, in ſo much that it is moſt evidencing, and carries its evidence along with it. Such firſt things have a mark upon them, and are of a moſt deſirable nature; the ſtate thereupon being ſo vaſtly different from what it was, how refined ſoever the nature was before.——Thus try your faith by the way how it was *created* by the Spirit.

2*dly*, How was faith *acted* in your ſouls, when Chriſt was received? or, how did it act? To be ſure, in general, faith acts under the influence of the ſame Spirit that works it; for, as he works it, ſo he draws it forth to act and exerciſe; and, under this conduct, the ſoul, in receiving Chriſt, acts in the following manner.

1. The ſoul, in receiving Chriſt, doth act *humbly*; Ezek. xvi. 63. *That thou mayeſt remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth, becauſe of thy ſhame, when I am pacified towards thee, for all that thou haſt done.* O but a ſoul convinced of its unworthineſs, and deſert of hell, and that ſcarce can expect any thing but utter damnation, how doth the firſt dawnings of mercy melt and humble it! O whence is this to ſuch a worm as I! He ſtands behind Chriſt weeping and waſhing his feet with tears. When one of the firſt works of the word and Spirit is, to give the ſoul a light, to go down to the dark cellar of his heart, and make diſcoveries, ſo as he is ſtanding amazed, and trembling at the ſight of himſelf: and the next work of the Spirit is, to lead him in to the lightſom chamber of the King of glory; to bring him *from darkneſs to light*; how is he melted with the ſenſe of mercy!

2. The ſoul in receiving Chriſt, doth act *vehemently*, and with ardent deſire after Chriſt, and *hungering and thirſting after righteouſneſs*; and crying for faith itſelf, which yet may be hid from the man's own ſight, ſaying, *Lord, I believe, help my unbelief:* he ſees his own inability to believe, and that the work of faith is wholly ſupernatural; and crys, O enable me to come to Chriſt! O give me Chriſt, or I periſh for ever! It is thy work, O reveal thy arm! O man, woman, where are the bed-ſides, and ſecret corners where you have beſieged heaven with ſuch a cry? ſaying, O for a drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem! O for a drop of that precious blood! O for a ſmile of a God in Chriſt! *As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, ſo panteth my ſoul after thee, O God,* Pſal. xlii. 1.

3. The ſoul in receiving Chriſt, acts *intirely* and *undividedly*; he receives him as CHRIST JESUS the LORD. As the three offices are undivided in Chriſt, ſo are they in the believer's acceptance: O my ignorance, ſays the ſoul, makes him neceſſary and deſirable as a Prophet! O my guilt makes him neceſſary and deſirable as a Prieſt! And my ſtrong corruption makes him neceſſary and deſirable as a King! To receive Chriſt as a Jeſus, in ſubmitting to his obediential righteouſneſs, for acceptation unto life, is faith unto *juſtification*, Rom. x. 10. And to conſent to have him for our Lord, to rule over us, by his Spirit dwelling in us, is faith unto *ſanctification*, Rom. viii. 9, 10, 11. Is it thus that you receive Chriſt?

4. The ſoul in receiving Chriſt, acts *confidently*; for, in him *we have boldneſs and confidence, through the faith of him*; for it acts upon an infallible teſtimony, the divine veracity and faithfulneſs; or, *Thus ſaith the Lord*, is the firm foundation upon which faith is built: faith is a *ſetting to the ſeal, that God is true.* When faith is acted, God gives the man a teſtimonial; Heb. xi. 5, 6. *Enoch had this teſtimony, that he pleaſed God: But without faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe God.* But what is yet more ſtrange, faith not only gets a teſtimonial from God, but gives a teſtimonial to him, as I formerly noticed; John iii. 33. *He that hath received his teſtimony, hath ſet to his ſeal, that God is true.* It is a receiving the record of God; here is the confidence and aſſurance of faith, according to the meaſure of it; and all acts of faith without this are but as ſo many arrows ſhot at random, into the open air.

5. The ſoul in receiving Chriſt, acts *violently*; *The kingdom of heaven ſuffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.* It acts *peremptorily*, ſaying, If I periſh, I periſh; at Chriſt I muſt be. It acts in a manner *wilfully*; *Although he ſlay me, yet will I truſt in him. I will not let thee go, until thou bleſs me.* The ſoul ventures upon the free grace and faithfulneſs of God, in the greateſt diſtreſſes; and here it lies, as it were, at anchor, in ſuch ſtormy days, Heb. vi. 19.

6. The ſoul in receiving Chriſt, acts *excluſively*, excluding all other ſaviours, all other helps, all other props; receiving him and reſting upon him alone; ſaying, *I will make mention of thy righteouſneſs, even of thine only*, Pſal. lxxi. 16. *And be found in him, not having mine own righteouſneſs, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Chriſt, the righteouſneſs which is of God by faith*, Phil. iii. 9. To depend partly upon Chriſt's righteouſneſs, and partly upon our own, is to ſet one foot upon a rock, and another in the quick ſands: Chriſt will either be to us, *all in all*, in point of righteouſneſs, or elſe nothing at all; as he did the whole work, ſo he will have the whole praiſe: If he be not *able to ſave to the uttermoſt*, why do we depend upon him at all? If he be, why do we lean upon any beſide him? If we lean partly on Chriſt, and partly on ourſelves, or our own good works, wiſhes, actions, or affections, we infallibly ruin ourſelves. If a man ſet one foot upon dry land, and the other upon deep water, and lean to them both with equal weight; yea, if he give any of his weight to the water, he will ſink there: So here, if a perſon reſt partly upon the merits of Chriſt, and partly, or in any degree, upon his ſelf-righteouſneſs for ſalvation, he will inevitably periſh. Man's righteouſneſs indeed was once in himſelf; and becauſe he was endowed at firſt with a perfect rectitude of nature, and ability ſufficient to have yielded perfect obedience to the law, and thereby to have obtained eternal life, had he perſevered in his integrity: ſo there is ſtill a mighty bias in his heart, though now depraved, to ſeek righteouſneſs by the works of the law; and all his beſt actions ſavour much of this legal turn of mind. It is with all Adam's poſterity as with bees, which have been accuſtomed to go to their own hive, and carry all hither; if the hive be removed to another place, they will ſtill fly to the old place, hover up and down about it, and creep about the ſides of it, and rather die there than go to a

new

new place: so it is with us, God hath removed our righteousness from ourselves to Christ, it is not now in ourselves but Christ; but, who is prevailed with to forsake self, and self-righteousness? Corrupt nature will venture to be damned rather than do it. The proud self-conceited heart will not stoop to live upon a stock of another's righteousness: but now, by faith, or in the day of believing, the man is brought to this; *Surely shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength;* and acts upon Christ exclusively, excluding all other Saviours, all other righteousness in point of justification; yea, and excluding all other Lords in point of sanctification: for, whereas unbelief says, *We will not suffer this man to reign over us;* and hypocrites say, We will have this man, and the world; this man, and our lusts both, to reign over us: Faith says, We will have none but this man, this God-man, to reign over us. A man may as lawfully join saints and angels, in his mediation with Christ, as his graces: "It is "gross idolatry, says one, [*viz.* Mr. Burgess,] "to make the works of God, a God; and it "is but a more subtil idolatry, to make the "work of Christ a Christ."

7. The soul, in receiving Christ, acts *regularly*; I mean, according to the gospel-rule, and suitable to the gospel-offer; *So we preached, and so ye believed*, 1 Cor. xv. 11. Faith answers the gospel-offer, as the impress upon the wax doth answer the engraving of the seal: so Christ offers himself, and so faith receives him, namely, for *wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.*

8. The soul, in receiving Christ, acts *methodically*, receiving first the PERSON and then the BENEFITS: God gives CHRIST, and then with him *all things*, Rom. viii. 32. And so faith receives Christ, and then, in and with him all things. It is true, salvation must be most of all in the sinner's eye, at his first believing; and thus many in their acting faith at first, may be filled with much confusion, and are not distinct in their actings of faith: but this is the proper order in believing, as will afterward be more and more clear to every believer, upon his repeated acts of faith, first to accept the person, and then the benefits.

9. The soul, in receiving Christ, acts *freely*; he receives the *water of life freely*, Rev. xxii. 17. Isa. lv. 1. The man comes to receive Christ with an empty hand, as to one that *justifies the ungodly*; Rom. iv. 5. *To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. To him that worketh not*, in the law sense; not to work, and not to work perfectly, is all one to the law. Now, the man is convinced that, as he cannot work perfectly, nay, cannot work at all, so he comes to Christ as one that is in himself ungodly, acknowledging that the righteousness, by which, he can stand before God, is only in Christ, and not in himself, in whole or in part. The man comes emptied of all qualifications, to recommend him to God; he sees himself qualified for nothing, but hell and damnation; and thus comes freely, to get all good out of Christ's fulness: he is an empty-handed sinner; but he comes to one who is a full-handed Saviour; for he hath such a stock of grace as cannot be exhausted: angels have a fulness of sufficiency, but they have none to spare; but Christ hath a fulness of redundancy, that hath been flowing over to sinners, near these six thousand years, and yet it is not lessened: and it is he that lets out of his grace with the word you hear, or else you get no good of the sermon.

10. The soul, in receiving Christ, acts *successfully* and *fruitfully*; and by its fruit you may know it: for true faith is a fruitful faith. It brings forth the fruit of gospel-repentance, Zech. xii. 10. *They shall look on him whom they have pierced and mourn.* O but the apprehension of grace and mercy in Christ, thaws and melts the heart! It brings forth the fruit of *love to Christ*, his ways, his people; *Faith worketh by love*, Gal. v. 6. Again, *To you that believeth he is precious.* O! *Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none in all the earth that I desire besides thee.*—It brings forth the fruit of *heart* and *life purity*; Acts xv. 9. *Purifying their hearts by faith.* Morality may hide corruption, but faith purifies the heart from it; and it cleanses the hands also; the man is sanctified by that faith which is in Christ.—It brings forth the fruit of *zeal*; zeal for the Lord's *name*, and *honour*, and *glory*: O the man could wish, that all the world would come and admire him; that all the world would come and adore him, and love him! The man is made content to do and suffer for him, to live and die for him, so as he is a witness for Christ, at least in the intention, and a martyr in resolution: this takes place when faith is up.—Zeal against sin: O the more sweet that Christ is to the man, the more bitter is sin! O that abominable thing that God hates! He now resolves to pursue it to death: he not only confesses, but forsakes; not only forsakes, but hates; and not only hates, but kills and crucifies; and not only kills it, but desires to bury his dead out of sight; to have his seed buried in Christ's grave; to be saved with him and rise with him.—Zeal for God's *house*, and love to the ordinances of his appointment: *O how amiable are thy tabernacles! Thy words were found of me, and I did eat them.* The word and ordinances are the very food of faith: and the desire of the believer's soul is after the same: and here he is painful and diligent in his attendance upon the same. If we weigh the pains for bodily food, with the pains that men take for their soul, in the balance of the sanctuary, many would discover their want of faith, or their faith to be lighter than vanity: how do men, even without all sense of pain, undergo sore labour and toil, for the matter of a shilling? How, in the time of harvest, will they even melt themselves in the heat, and yet are merry and pleasant? How will they in winter ride to markets, and stand in the open and cold air all day long, to vent their commodities without fretting? But now compare this to the other: see what vain and fleshly excuses men will have, about the hearing of the word; as, who can endure to go to church when the weather is so hot, there is such crouding? and what a misery is it to stand all the time of the sermon? and, who can endure to sit an hour in the cold church? truly, it is enough to make a man catch his death! Why, man, can you endure the summer heat and winter cold about your outward affairs, and stand a whole day in your shop, or in the market, in the coldest of winter? and do you excuse yourselves, or fret for an hour in the church? Can you be content to labour six days, for your bodily food; and think you it great pains, to bestow one

day

day in following the gospel-market for your souls! What does this argue in you, but that you have no faith to feed upon the word; no affection or desire after the bread of life, for your spiritual maintenance and sustenance? If you had a fervent zeal for the word, it would cool the heat of summer, and warm you against the cold of winter; you would little regard such trifles as cold and heat, wind and weather; these would evanish before this zeal, as the morning dew before the sun: these shifts and excuses could not stand the zeal of God's house; it would eat up and consume them. Now, try yourselves by these things.

It may be, some weak believer may be saying, *Some of these marks I know to my experience; but others are dark to me, therefore I doubt of all.* To which we reply, If indeed you have one saving solid mark, and can really close with it; it may satisfy you, though you be in the dark in others. If a child cannot go, yet if it can suck; if it cannot suck, yet if it can cry; if it cannot cry, yet if it can breathe, it is a mark of life: so, there may be breathings in the soul, that are evidential of life and faith, when other things are hid. O try yourselves, and look to God to search and try you! it is by his judgment you stand or fall.

Secondly, Let us try our GOSPEL-OBEDIENCE, or our *walking in Christ*. Christ is the way to heaven, and faith is the way to Christ: This faith hath two offices, the one is *acceptance*, and the other is *dependence*: O! what a mercy is it that we, who are by nature out of the way, have the way to heaven set before us, namely Christ; and the way to this way, namely, faith; and the nature and office of this faith: the first office of it, is acceptance, or the reception of Christ: the second office of it, is dependence on him, or walking in him; and both these are here before us in the text; *As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.* Here is a very large field, and it is not possible to travel through it all; for it concerns both the internal disposition, and the external conversation; and to both these we must have a view, in the progress of this tryal. This walk in Christ is just the *obedience of faith;* and when we propose to try this, it is all one as to try, whether ot not we be living the life of faith; for, as to *receive Christ*, is to *come* to him by faith; so, to *walk in him* is to *live* on him by faith; for to walk in Christ, is to walk by faith, as we have received him; or suitably to the reception of him; as I shewed at length in the doctrinal part, and might resume it by way of tryal: but because I enlarged so much upon it then, shall offer some particulars distinct, at least in the enlargement, from what I then proposed and prosecuted. To be sure those do not walk in Christ, whom I spoke of in the use of reproof, that habitually walk in darkness of ignorance and error; that walk in vanity and profanity; that walk in lies and slander; that walk in proud self and superstition; that walk in carnal liberty, in rioting and drunkenness, chambering and wantonness; yea, these that never received Christ, are not capable of this walking in him; and therefore the root of this walk, is the reception of Christ, concerning which I offered some marks last day. Now, I insist the longer upon this use of tryal, not only because we may thereby try ourselves, but also therein be further instructed, concerning the nature and excellency of this walk. There are two general heads I propose in this part of the use of tryal, whether we know or not, what it is to walk in Christ, namely, 1. To try by the *scriptural qualities* of it. 2. By the *gospel provision* for it.

1st, Try this Christian walk, or walking in Christ, by the SCRIPTURAL QUALITIES of it. And,

1. It is a *mixed* walk: this we may view concerning it more generally; it is a mixed kind of a walk, interwoven with a great many vicissitudes: as long as believers are in this valley of tears, sometimes they walk in the light of God's countenance, sometimes they walk in darkness; Psal. lxxxix. 15. *Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound; they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance.* Isa. l. 10. *Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his Servant, that walketh in darkness and hath no light?* It is a changable kind of walk, not in respect of the believer's state, nor yet his habitual tendency towards God and heaven; but in respect of his inward frame and outward condition; he is like a man that, in a journey, is sometimes going up hill, and sometimes down; sometimes in a valley, and sometimes on a mountain; sometimes meets with a piece of dirty way; sometimes a more plain and easy road. It is said of the wicked, *Because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God:* It is true, the wicked may have their outward changes, from prosperity to adversity; yea, and their inward changes, from an ill mood to a good mood; but as they are still always the same thing; so their most remarkable changes differ from the changes of God's people, whose mixed walk, and interchangable circumstances, do mainly consist, in their feeling sometimes the smiles, and sometimes the frowns of the Lord: now he shines and then he hides; now he is present and then he is absent: *I said, my mountain standeth strong; but lo, thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled.* The changes of the hypocrite, is like that of a stone put into the fire; it is changed from cold to hot, but it is a hard stone still: but that of a believer, is like gold put into the fire; it is tryed and purified thereby, and purged from some dross.

2. It is a *denyed* walk; to walk in Christ is as much as to walk, not in ourselves; the man is denyed to himself, and his own understanding and wisdom; to his own strength and righteousness. The disciple of Christ must *deny himself*, and have *no confidence in the flesh*: hence it is called, a *walking humbly with* OUR GOD, Micah vi. 8. Augustine being asked, what was the first grace? Answered, Humility: What is the second? Answered, Humility: What is the third? Answered, Humility. Indeed it is the varnish of every grace; and *God gives grace to the humble:* he loves to lay his wines in the lowest cellars. The motto of a humble saint is, *poor and needy; poor in spirit:* and here the poorest are the richest; the man is empty in himself, but full in Christ; hath nothing in himself, but hath all in Christ; and is filled with self-debasing, God-exalting, grace-admiring thoughts, saying with Jacob, *I am less than the least of thy mercies*, Gen. xxxii. 10.; and with Job, *I abhor myself, and repent in dust and in ashes;* and with Asaph, *So foolish was I and ignorant, I was as a beast before thee;* and with Heman, *I am more brutish than any man;* and with Isaiah, *I am unclean;* and with Paul, *I am the chief of sinners, and*

the leaſt of ſaints. It is a humble and denied walk, the man is denied to himſelf, brought out of himſelf.

3. It is a *dependent* walk; it is a living by faith in the Son of God, and dependence on him; like the ſpouſe, *Going up from the wilderneſs, leaning on the Beloved.* As it is with a woman, ſhe firſt gives her conſent, and becomes a wife; and then, being a wife, ſhe looks upon her huſband, as the only perſon to ſupply her, protect her, comfort her, and provide for her: ſo it is with faith, it firſt eſpouſes the ſoul to Chriſt, takes him as a Lord and Huſband; and then caſts all the proviſion of the ſoul upon him, all ſupplies and helps; truſts on him for righteouſneſs, for pardon of ſin, for grace, for ſtrength, for comfort, for eternal life; and commits all to him. 2 Tim. i. 12. *I know in whom I have believed, and I am perſuaded he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him againſt that day.* Though other things ſhould all fail, faith depends upon Chriſt: when the ſpider's web is ſwept down, yet you may ſee the houſe ſtanding ſure; even ſo, when the cob-webs of creature-confidences are ſwept down, faith will ſee a ſure foundation to reſt upon: *Though the fig-tree ſhould not bloſſom, neither ſhall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive ſhall fail, and the fields ſhall yield no meat, the flock ſhall be cut off from the fold, and there ſhall be no herd in the ſtalls: Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my ſalvation,* Hab. iii. 17, 18. He that hath crutches, if he lean not on them in his walking, take away his crutches and he will walk ſtill; but take away a cripple's crutches, that goes upon them, and he comes to the ground preſently: ſo, if we did not, like cripples, lean upon theſe outward things, or outward frames, we would not be ſo eaſy thrown down, in their removal. To walk in Chriſt is to depend upon him; it is a dependent, a believing walk; leaning upon the word of God, his bare word: and indeed, if a man of worth ſhould be aſked a pawn, and not credited upon his word, he would take it in ill part: what a ſhame is it, that we cannot credit God, without pawn and caution!

4. It is an *extenſive* walk: what is ſaid of the commandment of God, we may ſay of this walk; *I have ſeen an end of all perfection, but thy commandments are exceeding broad.* It is a narrow way indeed and ſtrait, in regard of its difficulty to nature, and the paucity of thoſe that walk in it; but it is broad in itſelf, in reſpect of its extent. This walk of Chriſt extends to all the commandments of God; for the man that walks in Chriſt, hath a *reſpect to all God's commands.* It extends to all the duties of religion; and to all the graces of the Spirit. It extends to all the motions of the heart, and all the actions of life; to every thought, word, and deed. In all theſe, we are called to walk in Chriſt by faith. Yea, it extends to all the circumſtances of the believer's life; to all the indigencies of his life; and all the exigencies of his ſoul; for, *the juſt ſhall live by faith,* Rom. i. 17. Where is the believer on earth, but hath the ſenſible feeling ſtill of ſome diſtreſs or other, inward or outward; whether it be ſenſe of ſin, or ſenſe of guilt, or ſenſe of corruption, or ſenſe of temptation, or ſenſe of deſertion, or ſenſe of wickedneſs, or ſenſe of want, or ſenſe of affliction from God, or ſenſe of contradiction from the world? Now, in all theſe, he is to live by faith, and to walk in Chriſt, knowing there is enough in him to anſwer all. The ſoul cannot be caſt into any ſea, but Chriſt is a ſure ſhip and ſafe harbour. To walk in him, is to improve him in every caſe, and to truſt in him for relief, in every exigency. A man is ſaid to walk, not merely when he hath feet to walk with, but when he is making uſe of his feet, to carry him on his way: even ſo, a man walks in Chriſt, not merely when he hath faith, and hath received Chriſt, but when he is by faith improving Chriſt, in every time of need, for pardon, light, life, liberty, comfort, and communication: the habit and quality of faith is one thing; the uſe and exerciſe of faith is another. A man is ſaid to live by bread, not when he hath it in his cup-board, but when he takes and eats it: ſo, to live by faith, is to put faith to exerciſe; to bring the pitcher to the well and draw water. Why, ſays the man, that is walking in Chriſt, there is corruption working again; but I will away to Chriſt again to ſubdue it: Satan renews his temptations, but I will renew my addreſs to Chriſt; he will again *bruiſe Satan under my feet:* my comforts are gone, but I will go to Chriſt; he *will come again, and my joy ſhall be full.* The life of faith is a multiplied work, and a repeated work; it leads the ſoul often to look, even for the ſame kind of ſupply. To live by faith, is to keep houſe with Chriſt, and to be his daily gueſt; to rely upon him as often as we have need, and to draw ſtill from the ſame fountain.

5. This walk in Chriſt, is a *goſpel-walk; Only let your converſation be, as it becometh the goſpel of Chriſt,* Phil. i. 27. It is under a goſpel-conduct; according to a goſpel-rule; from a goſpel-motive; in a goſpel-manner; to a goſpel-end; and by a goſpel-ſpirit, which were a large theme, if I could inſiſt upon it. This goſpel-walk hath *goſpel-holineſs* in it, and ſo it is a *holy* walk; *Be ye holy as I am holy: Holineſs becometh his houſe for ever: And without holineſs, no man ſhall ſee the Lord.*—It hath *goſpel-circumſpection* in it, and ſo it is called a *circumſpect* walk; *See that ye walk circumſpectly, not as fools, but as wiſe, redeeming the time, becauſe the days are evil.*—And a *watchful* walk, knowing that there is a deceitful heart within, a flattering world without, and a tempting devil going about us: therefore, what *Chriſt ſays to one, he ſays to all,* WATCH.—It hath a *goſpel-uprightneſs* in it; and ſo it is called an *upright* walk; *He that walketh uprightly, walketh ſurely: The way of the Lord is ſtrength to the upright: He will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold, from them that walk uprightly.*—It hath a *goſpel-order* in it; and ſo it is called a *well-ordered* walk; *To him that ordereth his converſation aright, will I ſhew the ſalvation of God.* And as a walk is orderly, when a man gives every duty its proper time and place, and ſuffers not one to claſh with another, or one to ſhuffle out another; ſo, goſpel-order in our walk, will make a man bring all from Chriſt, and then improve all for him: it makes a man live upon him as the ALPHA of his life, and to him as the OMEGA of it.—In a word, a goſpel-walk hath a *goſpel-ſpirit* influencing it; and ſo it is a chearful walk, according to the meaſure of the Spirit; *The joy of the Lord, is the man's ſtrength:* And this joy is not inconſiſtent with goſpel-ſorrow; for it may be, and frequently is, both a joyful and a mournful walk at once; for a man never begins to mourn as a child, till he hath faith to ſee God

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as a Father: the gracious looks of Christ are the springs of gospel-repentance; *And blessed are they that thus mourn, for they shall be comforted.*

6. This walk in Christ, it is a *heavenly* walk: the man that walks in Christ, hath his *conversation in heaven*, where Christ is, Phil. iii. 20. There is here a heavenliness of thought: the man in this walk comes to be heavenly-minded; at least he is burdened, that he cannot get his thoughts placed on heavenly things, and best pleased with himself, when he gets his heart set in heaven. There is a heavenliness of speech that he endeavours, when he is walking in Christ; a heavenliness of language; a heavenliness of affections: a heavenliness of trading by faith and prayer, drawing bills of exchange, as it were, upon Christ for whatever he stands in need of. How unsuitable is it for them, that have received Christ Jesus the Lord, to have an earthly walk! like the bird they call the lapwing, that hath a crown upon his head, and yet feeds upon excrements. Hath the Lord crowned you with loving-kindness, and yet do you live upon the dung of this world; made you an heir to a kingdom, and yet you ly tumbling among ashes? If God hath given you the fountain of living waters, and yet you are anxiously careful about the drops, that are in the broken cistern; surely you are not walking in Christ. The saint that doth not live above the world, he lives beneath himself.

7. It is a *stedfast* walk; *Be ye stedfast and unmoveable*, 1 Cor. xv. 58. It is progressive, and yet stedfast; for as I have formerly noticed, the very word WALKING, imports progress and permanency. There is a constant progress in it; *The righteous holdeth on his way, and he that hath clean hands, waxeth stronger and stronger. The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.* True grace is of a growing nature. It is true, the believer may not be sensible of his growth, as we do not see ourselves or others grow; but that we are grown, is plain; neither do we see how much the light increases, by every step of the sun's rising higher; it is by imperceptible instances or degrees. When power of resisting temptations, and mortifying lusts, which before were too hard for us doth appear, we may see our growth; as we see our shadows are shortened, when the sun rises higher, but how much in a minute, we see not; yet it is a progressive walk. If the believer be not walking forward, he is not walking in Christ; for, when he walks in Christ, he is always coming speed; and this walk in Christ, or living by faith on him, is the only stedfast and abiding life and walk. Though the mariners, when they put to sea, may quickly lose sight of land, yet they never lose sight of heaven; how far soever they sail, in whatever tempest, yet still, if they look up, they will see the same heaven: even so, the man that walks in Christ, and lives by faith, his faith never loses its sight of its Rock; he may lose sight of land, sight of friends, and relations, and enjoyments of time, and all human props; but faith acted, will never lose sight of God, and Christ, and the promise: though all sensible enjoyments fly off, yet the man that lives by faith, is at no loss: What can he lack, who hath him that is *all in all?*

8. It is a *familiar* walk; *So walk ye* IN *him.* O! who can walk more familiarly, one with another than this, for one to walk IN another? *walk* IN *him! Two cannot walk together, except they be agreed:* here is the sweetest agreement and familiarity. There are several acts of familiarity, by which this intimate walk is expressed in scripture; and each of them might also be matter for our trial, whether we know this familiar walk.—There is *communion* between Christ and the believer; *Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with the Son, through the Spirit. He sups with them, and they with him.*—There is *communication; The secret of the Lord is with them;* and they impart their secrets to him.—There is *cohabitation;* he dwells in them by his Spirit; *I will put my Spirit within you. I in them, and thou in me, that they may be one in us:* and they dwell in him by faith.—There is *co-ambulation;* he walks with them, and they walk with him; *He walks in the midst of the golden candlesticks:* they shall *walk with him all the day long.*—There is *confabulation;* he speaks to them, and they to him: they converse together; *Thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek.*—There is mutual *visitation;* he visits them in a way of grace, and they him in a way of duty.—There is mutual *feasting* and *banquetting; He brought me to the banquetting-house, and his banner over me was love.*—There is mutual *salutation* and embracement; they *greet each other with a holy kiss: Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth; for his love is better than wine.* And they learn to *kiss the Son, lest he be angry.*—But I enlarge not upon these now: What know you of these things, when thus you see what sort of a walk it is, this walking in Christ?——Try yourselves, by searching into the scriptural qualities of it.

2*dly*, Try this walk by the GOSPEL-PROVISION for it. All that know this walk, and truly walk in Christ, they are provided for the journey: God sends none a warfare on their own charges; nor doth call any to walk in him, without providing them for the way. And there are these eight things that travellers need for their journey, and all these things spiritual travellers have in Christ; yea, and communicate from him, according to the exigencies of their journey.

1. The traveller must have a *guide* to direct him: even so, if ye walk in Christ ye have a guide; Christ himself is the guide: *This God is our God for ever and ever, and will be our guide even unto death.*—He is a skilful guide, that knows every step of the way.—A faithful guide, that doth not mislead his people.—A tender guide, that helps the weak traveller.—And a continual guide, that never leaves them nor forsakes them.—Now, what know you of his guiding you by his word and Spirit? Do you ever hear the voice behind you, saying, *This is the way, walk ye in it,* when you go to the right-hand, or to the left? And have you been made to resign yourselves to his conduct?

2. The traveller must have *light*, for it is hard to walk in the dark; and *sight*, that his eye may be upon the road: for though a traveller have light, yet if he shut his eyes, or suffer them to gad, or to wander, without noticing the way, he is fair to stumble, or turn aside; so the spiritual traveller, that walks in Christ, he gets light and sight: and indeed Christ himself is his light; for, *He is the light of the world;* and his Spirit is given to the believer, as a

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Spirit of wiſdom and revelation; and it is he that gives him ſight as well as light, and fixes his eye; hence prays the pſalmiſt, *Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity, and quicken me in thy way*, Pſal. cxix. 37. Right walking is influenced by the light of the knowledge of Chriſt: the more we know of Chriſt, the more will we walk in him; yea, and the more we walk in him, the more will we know him: *He that doth his will, ſhall know his doctrine*: they influence one another. Even as the body warms the cloaths, and then the cloaths warms the body: ſo, the knowledge of Chriſt leads to goſpel-practice; and goſpel-practice leads to more knowledge.

3. The traveller muſt have a *cordial*, that he faint not by the way: even ſo they that walk in Chriſt have a cordial provided; and indeed Chriſt, who is the way, is alſo the cordial; for, he is the *conſolation of Iſrael*: and he affords them ſometimes ſtrong conſolation, ſo as the *joy of the Lord is their ſtrength*. *Wiſdom's ways are pleaſantneſs*, though the world reproach it as a melancholy way.—Now, what know ye of the goſpel cordial, or of the intimations of divine love, filling your hearts, at ſometimes, with *joy unſpeakable*, and *peace that paſſeth all* natural *underſtanding*? This is what he affords, now and then, to thoſe that walk in him: he hath provided public inns for their refreſhment and entertainment; and theſe are the public ordinances of his grace; the banquetting-houſes, where he ſatiates and ſolaces his people with himſelf on the *feaſt of fat things*, even the *true bread that cometh down from heaven*, and diſplays his *banner of love over them*.

4. The traveller muſt have a *purſe* and *money* to bear his expences: even ſo, they that walk in Chriſt, they get *unſearchable riches* in him; *out of his fulneſs they receive, and grace for grace*: they get what they need, though not always what they would; but he is a wiſe diſpenſer, and they have enough in him: yea, are *complete in him*; in whom is fulneſs of merit for their juſtification, and fulneſs of Spirit for their ſanctification; *Money that anſwers all things*; yea, *durable riches and righteouſneſs*; riches that will not rot in the grave, nor take the wings of the morning and fly away, as temporal enjoyments do: here is enough to pay all his charges, ſatisfy all his creditors, and anſwer all the law-pleas of the devil, of conſcience, yea, of juſtice, and the law itſelf. Know you what it is, man, to be ſupplied out of this ſtock?

5. The traveller muſt have *armour* for his journey: even ſo, they that walk in Chriſt, they get weapons to defend them from robbers and wild beaſts, that are ready to bereave them of their life, and of their goods. See the complete armour of the Chriſtian, Eph. vi. 11,—17. You have the ſeveral pieces of armour there mentioned; and Chriſt himſelf is the great magazine of his military proviſion; he walks in Chriſt, and in Chriſt hath all theſe pieces of armour; therefore is called, to be *ſtrong in the Lord, and in the power of his might*. Are you acquaint with this way of travelling, and walking in arms, depending on the power of a Mediator to fight all your battles againſt ſin and Satan?

6. A traveller muſt have a *girdle* for his loins, to keep up his looſe garments, and to keep his loins firm, that he do not weary with the length of his journey: even ſo they that walk in Chriſt, need to *gird up the loins of their mind*, as the apoſtle expreſſes it; and to *have their loins girt about with truth*, Eph. vi. 14. Now, as *Chriſt is the way*, ſo he is *the truth*, and can give *truth in the inward part*, and therefore will provide them of a girdle. His *truth ſhall be thy ſhield and buckler*, Pſal. xci. 4. Spiritual travellers are therefore taught the truth, as it is in Jeſus: both the truth, in reſpect of goſpel-principles; and the truth of God in his promiſe.

7. The traveller muſt have *ſhoes* for his feet: even ſo, they that walk in Chriſt, they muſt have their *feet ſhod with the preparation of the goſpel of peace*; that is, with a heart prepared to adhere to the goſpel, and abide by it: now, this *preparation of the heart is from the Lord*. Do you find your heart prepared, fortified, and ſtrengthened by his grace, notwithſtanding of difficulties that are in the way of adhering to his truth, his goſpel, his cauſe, and his intereſt in the world?

8. The traveller muſt have a *ſtaff* in his hand, to help him forward, and to lean upon: even ſo, they that walk in Chriſt, have a ſtaff put in their hand; *Thy rod and thy ſtaff, they comfort me*, Pſal. xxiii. 4. And what is the ſtaff they lean upon? CHRIST himſelf is the main ſtaff; *She goeth up from the wilderneſs leaning upon her Beloved*. More particularly,

(1.) The ſtaff of his *All-ſufficiency*: ſaith God to Abraham, *I am God all-ſufficient, walk before me*; I have enough in myſelf, and enough for every creature: as the ſun hath light enough for a whole world; and a fountain water enough for a whole country. *Walk before me*; if you want light, you will look to the ſun; if you want water, you will go to the ſpring; and ſo, if you want any good, will you not look up to me, who am goodneſs itſelf, and infinitely able to ſuccour; All-ſufficiency itſelf, and infinitely able to ſupply? There is a ſtrong ſtaff.

(2.) The ſtaff of his *promiſe*; as when God ſays, *I am thy ſhield, and thy exceeding great reward: Fear not, for I am with thee; I will uphold thee with the right-hand of my righteouſneſs*. Not only have I all good, all-ſufficiency, but there is a promiſe, might he ſay, that all the good I can do, I will do it for thee: there is no particular want of the believer, but hath a particular promiſe. If you knew a man to be ſufficient, and to have an eſtate worth ten thouſand pounds, and all free, you would ſoon truſt him for an hundred pound: but if he ſhould tell you particularly, and ſay, Friend, I have a great eſtate, and I pray thee, if thou haſt need of any thing, at any time, repair to me, I give thee my word, and if that be not enough, my bond and ſeal, that I will help thee; it were enough, he needed ſay no more. Yet, thus ſaith the Lord to the man that hath received Chriſt; Not only am I an all-ſufficient God, but I promiſe that I will give thee *grace and glory, and with-hold no good thing from thee*: as true as I am God, *I will not leave thee, nor forſake thee*. Is not this an excellent ſtaff to lean upon?

(3.) The ſtaff of his *power*: Whatever God promiſeth, he is able to make good. Many a man is undone by ſuretyſhip; he ſuffers himſelf to be bound beyond his ability: but it is not ſo with God. If a ſubject promiſe to releaſe and pardon a malefactor, it is nothing; he is not be truſted, becauſe he hath not power of life or death. If a poor man promiſe to diſ-

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charge a great debt, no-body will credit his promiſe; becauſe his ability is not anſwerable to his undertakings: but behold here, Chriſt hath ability to make good all his promiſes: he hath promiſed great things; to pardon great ſins, to conquer great temptations, to ſubdue great corruptions, to convey great conſolations: well, but he is a great God; is any thing too hard for him? Do your particular wants ſtill increaſe and renew themſelves? Well, as veſſels which we fill to-day, need a new filling to-morrow; the ſtomach which we ſeem to ſatisfy juſt now, within a few hours is empty and craving again: ſo here, the ſoul that hath once *taſted and ſeen that God is good*, ſees that this taſte is not ſufficient to ſupport him, and that created fulneſs will ſoon be diminiſhed, if it is not daily ſupplied, and therefore ſtill wants more, ſaying, *evermore give us this bread.* But, here lies the comfort, that though the veſſel be dry, the fountain is not; though the veſſel be empty, the fountain is full: and his power to help is a creating power; ſuch as can command things into being. O what a wonderful ſtaff is this! Do you know what it is to walk with this ſtaff in your hand?

(4.) The ſtaff of his *fidelity*: behold, the promiſes are ſealed with truth; it is *God who cannot lie who hath promiſed: Faithful is he that hath promiſed, who alſo will do it.* He takes his own time, but he will be true to his word; *Behold, the days come, ſaith the Lord, that I will perform the good thing, which I have promiſed to the houſe of Iſrael, and to the houſe of Judah.*

(5.) In a word, *Chriſt himſelf*, and his *everlaſting righteouſneſs*, his *meritorious obedience* to the death, with which God is well-pleaſed, and his *valuable interceſſion*, whom God heareth always, is the ſtaff which the believer leans upon: he that is the way they walk in, is the ſtaff they walk with, and lean upon; for, *in him are all the promiſes Yea and Amen*: and one word of promiſe from a God in Chriſt, is enough to faith. If a mariner can get to the top of the maſt, and deſcry but a point of land, then he is glad, and all is well: thus the believer by faith climbs to the top-maſt, and ſees the *promiſe afar off*, Heb. xi. 13.; and rejoices in Chriſt, in whom it ſtands faſt. Every believer is ordinarily brought to ſuch circumſtances, that, if he do not live by faith, he cannot live at all: he is brought to Jehoſhaphat's plight; *We know not what to do, but our eyes are towards thee.* It is with them, many times, as with a ſhip laden; on a ſudden it is broken to pieces, and now of neceſſity they muſt ſwim to the ſhore, to the rock: ſo doth God daſh all our lower confidences; he cracks our full ſtate; ſeparates us from all our ſenſible enjoyments; and, it may be, gives not a heart to any to ſhow us compaſſion; that, when ſorrows are poured in on all ſides, a man may have nothing in all the world left him, but God's Bible, his word of promiſe, his Chriſt; and here he may reſt, when all means under heaven cannot give relief.

Now, here are the *qualities* of this walk in Chriſt, and here is the *ordinary proviſion* that is given believers for this walk: a guide, a light, a cordial, a purſe, armour, a girdle, ſhoes, and a ſtaff. What know ye of this walk in Chriſt? Theſe are ſome ſcriptural accounts of it, by which we may try ourſelves. I fear this walk is a myſtery to many of us: theſe that never received Chriſt know nothing of it; and many that have received Chriſt, know but too little of this walk in Chriſt, this life of faith.

O man, woman; what do you think of Chriſt? and what do you think of this walk? Is he not a better portion than all the vanities of time can be to you? Yea, *The portion of Jacob is not like theſe; for, he is the former of all things, and Iſrael is the rod of his inheritance; the Lord of hoſts is his name*, Jer. li. 19. Is not this walk in him, a better walk than the world are taking, who are walking in the broad way, and reject Chriſt? Alas, Sirs! however lightly you think of Chriſt, and his way now, yet I will aſſure you, if you die not like a ſot, you will think otherwiſe when the dead ſweat begins to break upon you; you would then give a thouſand worlds to have ſaving acquaintance with this way and this walk: and it may be, all that you will hear then, inſtead of this goſpel, will be, As you have given the devil the flower of your age, ſo give him the bran alſo. O ſeek in to Chriſt, that you may know him, receive him, and walk in him!

There are two excellent gifts which all men ſtand in need of, and as God only can give them, ſo every one ſhould earneſtly covet them.

The *firſt* is CHRIST, who is expreſly called *the gift of God*, John iv. 10. This gift is the more to be prized, that when God gives it, he gives himſelf and his Spirit with it. When a man gets Chriſt, he receives God in and with him; and therefore Chriſt ſays to ſuch, *My Father is your Father, and my God your God*: and when a man receives Chriſt, he gets the Spirit in him and with him; for, *If any man have not the Spirit of Chriſt, he is none of his.*

The *ſecond* is FAITH, which is expreſly called *the gift of God* alſo, Eph. ii. 8. When God gives this latter gift, he juſt gives grace to receive the former gift. Infinite Majeſty cannot give a greater gift than Chriſt; and infinite poverty cannot receive a greater, or more ſuitable gift: Chriſt is the greateſt gift that heaven can give, or earth can receive. There is a giving of Chriſt in the goſpel-offer, which is preſuppoſed to, and conſtitutes the duty of receiving: for, *A man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven*, John iii. 27. Now, the whole life of religion lies in theſe two things, *viz.* faith's *reception* of Chriſt; and faith's *improvement* of him: both are in our text; *As ye have received Chriſt Jeſus the Lord, ſo walk ye in him.*

The *fourth* uſe of the doctrine is for *exhortation*. 1. To *unbelievers* who never received Chriſt, that they *receive Chriſt Jeſus the Lord*. 2. To *believers* who have received Chriſt Jeſus the Lord, that they *walk in him as they have received him.*

Firſt, The firſt branch of the *exhortation* is to all UNBELIEVERS who never have believed in Chriſt, that they believe in him, and receive him: this is the great call of the glorious goſpel, to all ſinners that hear this goſpel. And though believers, who have received Chriſt already, be called to receive him again and again; and ſo are not to exclude themſelves, but are to improve the call that is given to unbelievers, in order to their further reception of Chriſt; yet their duty falling more natively in my way, upon the latter part of the text, and ſo in the ſecond branch of the exhortation, I ſhall more eſpecially now addreſs myſelf, as the Lord may aſſiſt, unto thoſe that never yet have truly received Chriſt. O unbelieving ſoul, who art afar

off from God, be exhorted to receive *Christ Jesus the Lord*. And that I may the more enforce this exhortation, I would, 1. Shew who they are that I call *unbelievers*, that never received Christ as yet. 2. Offer some *motives* and *considerations* to urge you to the receiving of Christ. 3. Give some *directions*, in order to the receiving of Christ. 4. Endeavour to remove some *obstructions*, and answer some *objections* against the receiving of Christ.—What I here propose, will make me launch further yet, into this gospel-subject, than ever I proposed, when I entered upon it, though I have enlarged much upon the text already: but yet, it being such a necessary comprehensive theme, containing, in a manner, the whole Bible in one verse; the whole gospel in one sentence; and so, being of the utmost concern, I think this may be sufficient ground and reason, for my enlarging thereupon, as the Lord may please to assist. And,

1*st*, I am to shew who they are that may be called *unbelievers*, who never yet received Christ: for, when I am calling all unbelievers especially to believe, it is fit you know whom I mean; for it is a great bar and hinderance to faith, in multitudes of people, that they think they are believers already, and that they have received Christ; and hence they never take a word to them, that is directed to them; and are proof against all the calls of the word, because they think they have faith already, they have believed already, and have received Christ already. But that they who never received Christ, may not deceive themselves, I will offer you some evidences of an unbeliever, that hath not received Christ. As the learned speak of twelve signs in the heavens, so I might tell you of twelve signs of unbelief, which, where they take place in their power, discover the man was never gained thereby, to the acceptance of Christ.

1. The first sign, or discovery of reigning unbelief, is *total hardness of heart*; when a man is not moved or affected with his own misery, nor the remedy provided by Christ, nor the invitations of grace in the gospel: It is said, Acts xix. 9. *That divers were hardened, and believed not*. An hard heart is one of the devil's impregnable forts, standing out against the word, and slighting the offers of Christ. Hardness of heart is known by the *foolishness* of it; *When seeing, we see not; and hearing, we hear not:* when we have the grammatical knowledge of things, but no spiritual discerning.—It is also known by the *insensibleness* of it; when men have no feeling of fear and terror by the law; no feeling of peace, joy, and hope by the gospel; no taste of the good word at all; but are as stones, unmoved with all that is spoken. This hardness shews your unbelief to be such, as that you have not received Christ. Believers may feel much heart-hardness; but this hardness I speak of, is past feeling; being *seared as with a hot iron*.

2. The second sign, or discovery of unbelief, is the *total neglect of spiritual* and *heavenly things*; when men make it not their business, to look after these things; *They made light of it, and one went to his farm, another to his merchandise*, Mat. xxii. 5. Do not thousands bewray their unbelief, and that they never received Christ, in that the world hath engrossed all their care? Would Christ, and heavenly things, be thus slighted, and lightly esteemed, if they soundly believed in him, or believed the word of God. Surely, when men make the world their main care, and take no heed to the great offers of the gospel, they do not look upon it as a certain truth, whatever faith they fancy they have.

3. The next sign, or discovery of unbelief, is a *secret suspicion concerning the truth of the gospel*; like him that called the gospel, *Fabula Christi*; they look upon it as an excellent fable, a golden dream, to make fools fond of it; and that all opinions in religion, are but a LOGAMACHY, a mere *strife of words*, a doctrine to set the world together by the ears, and that they need not trouble their heads about it. [They may have some understanding about the truth of the gospel, but no *assurance of understanding*, Col. ii. 2.] It is true, such thoughts may rush into the heart of a godly man, but they are abominate and cast out with indignation: but in wicked men they reign and dwell; they live by these kind of principles: natural atheism in them is not cured; and that faith they pretend to is but a loose and wavering opinion, not a grounded and settled persuasion, of the gospel: the *assurance of understanding*, spoken of Col. ii. 2. depends upon experience, and an inward sense of the truth, and is wrought by the Holy Ghost, when the gospel comes *not in word only*, but in *power, and in the demonstration of the Spirit*.

4. The fourth sign, or discovery of unbelief, is a *secret rejecting of the counsels of salvation*, Acts xiii. 46. All natural men are children of disobedience; out of pride scorning either the messages of God, for they are *foolishness to them*; or the messengers of God, *Is not this the carpenter's son?* Is not this preacher of the word, such and such an insignificant person? Thus unbelievers fancy of the methods of grace used to gain them.

5. The fifth discovery of unbelief, is *unholiness of life and conversation:* the truth of faith brings in *the obedience of faith*, Rom. xvi. 26. Where the prince is, there will his train be; where faith is, there will gospel-obedience be; and where unbelief is, there is disobedience: faith hath its train of gospel services; unbelief hath its train of ungodly practices. When men give themselves up to drunkenness, and whoredom, and Sabbath-breaking, and swearing, and lying, and backbiting, and live as carnally and careless as infidels, who will believe that they are believers, let them say what they will?

6. The next discovery of unbelief, is *mens hearing the word, without ever applying it to their own use:* without application it worketh not; it causeth not a man see himself involved, and inclosed, and included in the general promise, or precept, so as to give a particular answer; as Psal. xxvii. 8. the call is in the plural, *Seek* YE *my face*: the answer is in the singular; *Thy face, Lord, will* I *seek*. The gospel-call is general; *Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ*, and receive him: the answer must be particular; *I believe, Lord, help my unbelief*. When people suffer truths to hover in the brain without application; or learn things as children do their Catechism by rote, never reflecting, what am I? what have I done? where am I going? what will become of me? what effect hath this word upon me? unbelief remains undisturbed.

7. The seventh sign, or discovery of unbelief, is *total apostacy*, or *falling off from God:* for,

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as *by faith we ſtand*, and *continue in well-doing*, Rom. ii. 7. if we are believers; ſo, by unbelief, or by reaſon of unbelief, men fall off from God, they tire and grow weary of his ſervice; and ſo wholly give up with it.

8. The next ſign, or diſcovery of unbelief, is *final deſperation*; Jer. xviii. 12. *There is no hope, but we will walk after our own devices, and we will every one do the imagination of his evil heart.* When men think there is no hope, it is in vain to trouble ourſelves: when they think their damnation is fixed, and therefore reſolve to go to hell as faſt as they can; ſuch deſperate wickedneſs there may be in the heart of man, like thoſe, Job xxi. 15. *What is the Almighty, that we ſhould ſerve him? and what profit ſhould we have, if we pray unto him?*

9. The ninth diſcovery of unbelief, is *people's diſtruſting all preſent means*, ſaying, *If one come from the dead, they would believe:* if we had oracles or miracles, or if God did ſpeak to us from heaven, then we would believe: but *Moſes and the prophets* are a ſufficient ground of faith, and *if we believe not them, neither would we believe, though one roſe from the dead.* Extraordinary means will not work with them, upon whom ordinary means doth not prevail.

10. The next ſign and diſcovery of unbelief, is *demurs* and *delays* as to a *complete cloſing with Chriſt:* here is a refined degree of unbelief; the man ſeems to approve the report of the goſpel; hath nothing to object againſt Chriſt; but there is a ſecret, dilatory, procraſtinating, delaying ſpirit in him: he hath a will for a future, but not a preſent choice of Chriſt: he cannot yet bid adieu to his beloved luſts; *A little ſleep, a little ſlumber* more he muſt have, in the lap of his Delilah. Luke ix. 59. *Follow me*, ſays Chriſt; why ſays the man, *Lord, ſuffer me firſt to go and bury my Father;* excuſe me for a while. Again, ver. 61. *Lord, I will follow;* but let it be deferred for ſome time; *let me firſt go and bid them farewel which are at home at my houſe.* Thus awakened ſinners put off Chriſt, as Felix did Paul, with delays; theſe delays are but a ſly rejection of Chriſt: a *will* for hereafter, is a preſent *nill:* your reſolving will hereafter ſays you have no heart at preſent. But the longer you delay, the more averſe will you be from believing: and before your hereafter come, you may be in hell.

11. The next ſign and diſcovery of unbelief, is *men's receiving a falſe Chriſt*, an idol of their own fancy, inſtead of the true Chriſt: they that compound Chriſt, or add any thing to him, make to themſelves a falſe Chriſt; as they that would have Chriſt and the world both, Chriſt and their luſts both; Chriſt they muſt have to ſatisfy their conſciences; and luſts they muſt have to ſatisfy their heart. Hence they meditate and mediate a league, between Chriſt and their darling idols: ſuch a mixed Chriſt is a falſe Chriſt. Thus many would make their own righteouſneſs, their tears, and melting affections, in part, if not wholly, their Chriſt. As the *goſpel* hypocrite makes his very faith his Chriſt; ſo the *legal* hypocrite makes his duties his Chriſt. The *politic* hypocrite will join his carnal prudence with Chriſt's wiſdom, and ſo make it in part his Chriſt. The *refined* hypocrite will make the common aſſiſtance and influences of the Spirit reſts to him, and put them in the room of Chriſt. Are not all theſe ſo many falſe Chriſts? Yea, a divided Chriſt is a falſe Chriſt, while men would receive him as a Jeſus, to ſave them from hell; but not as a Lord, to rule over their luſts: they would ſhare in his benefits, but not in his perſon. There is ſomething in Chriſt that they like, and ſomething that they diſlike; they like the *blood* that came forth of his heart, to waſh their guilty conſciences; but they diſlike the *water* that came forth alſo, to waſh their filthy hearts.

12. The laſt ſign and diſcovery of unbelief, is *men's receiving a true Chriſt in a falſe manner;* as when Chriſt is received, but not in his grandeur. A prince is then received aright, when he is received according to his dignity: if a ſubject ſhould receive his prince, and entertain him no otherwiſe than he would do a peaſant, or country neighbour, this would be interpreted a contempt: So, if Chriſt be not received according to his grandeur, and dignity, and ſtate, he counts it a contempt rather than a right reception of him. Chriſt will be received as a LORD, or not at all: he will be a KING, or nothing. This was the ſin of the Jews, they could be content to receive Chriſt as a great Prophet, as the Mahometans do; but they did not receive him according to his grandeur, or that greatneſs and glory which he was inveſted with, and therefore they are ſaid *not to receive him;* John i. 11. *He came to his own, but his own received him not.* Whereas John ſays of the believing Jews that received him, that they *beheld his glory, as the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth;* that is, they received him in all his grandeur, ſplendor, majeſty, and glory. Thus men receive not Chriſt, but ſhew their unbelief, even in receiving the true Chriſt in a falſe manner. When Chriſt is not received as he is offered in the goſpel, he is received in a falſe manner: He is offered fully, freely, cordially, and conſtantly; and the right reception is alſo full, free, cordial, and conſtant: men may therefore receive him in a falſe manner, which is as good as rejecting of him; when they do not receive him fully, without dividing him; freely, without buying him; cordially, without reluctancy; and conſtantly, without repentance, or being diſſatisfied with the bargain.

Now, let all theſe twelve ſigns and diſcoveries of unbelief be conſidered, and they will ſhew, how many pretenders to faith are yet unbelievers: even all that are under the power of heart-hardneſs; live in the total neglect of ſpiritual and heavenly things; in a ſecret ſuſpicion of the truth of the goſpel; and a ſecret rejecting of the counſel of God; in habitual unholineſs of life and converſation; and that hear the word without any application ſuitably to themſelves; who give themſelves up to a total apoſtaſy, and a final deſperation; a diſtruſting of all preſent means; to delaying and demurring about cloſing with Chriſt; who either receive a falſe Chriſt, or yet a true Chriſt in a falſe manner. Theſe are unbelievers, that have not yet received Chriſt the Lord. I now proceed,

2dly, To the next thing propoſed, namely, to offer ſome *motives* and *conſiderations* to urge you to the receiving of Chriſt. If any here would know what is that ſtar, by which they may be led to the place where the Lord Jeſus lies? why it is juſt this everlaſting goſpel; it points out Chriſt, ſaying, *Behold the Lamb of God.* There are but two great requeſts that heaven makes

makes to us all by this glorious gospel: The first request is to all *Christless* persons whatsoever, that hear this gospel, *viz.* That they *receive Christ Jesus the Lord.* The second is to all *Christians* that have received him, *viz.* That they *walk in him: As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.* Now, you would know before hand, that no motive will move you, no argument will persuade you to receive Christ, unless it be backed with the almighty power of God: and therefore if you think salvation a business worth your while, O send up an ejaculatory prayer to heaven, that God would make this gospel, the power of God to your salvation, through Jesus Christ. We are now calling you in the name of the great and eternal God, to believe in his Son Jesus Christ, and receive him, so as you may walk in him, till you come to *walk with him in white* among the redeemed above: and there is this general motive, that should be instead of a thousand to you all; and which, if duly regarded, there would be no need of any more; and that is, the *supreme authority of God the Father* is interposed in this matter: *For, this is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ,* 1 John iii. 23. And, shall we think nothing to trample upon the authority, and contemn the command of that God, who can command us to hell in a moment? Here God sums up all the ten commands, as it were, into one; and says, if you obey this, you obey all; if you break this, you break all: the man that doth not believe in the Son of God, he breaks both the tables of the law at one dash; and violates every precept of the law, in the most dreadful manner. You have heard sometimes, how the sin of Adam, in eating the forbidden fruit, was at once a breach of all the ten commands. But do you consider, that your unbelief, in not receiving Christ, is a trampling under foot the authority of God in every one of these commands, and that in the most grievous manner.—The man that receiveth not Christ, he rejecteth God himself as *his God;* for he is not the God of any man, neither will be, but in Christ.—The man that receives not Christ, all his *worship* is at best but idolatry and superstition; for God cannot be worshipped acceptably any other way than in Christ, who is the *image of the invisible God.*—The rejecter of Christ is a profaner of the *name* of God; for, *God's name is in him;* and it is in him especially that God maketh himself known.—The man that doth not receive Christ, he cannot sanctify the *Sabbath-day,* nor hallow it; for all the days of his life, wherein he lives without Christ, are unholy days; his whole time is a sinful time. The man in this case, is *disobedient* to his heavenly parent, dishonours his heavenly Father; and so can never put due respect upon earthly parents.—He kills his own soul and crucifies the Lord of glory afresh, and so can never have a right love to man.—He is guilty of the grossest *spiritual adultery,* in departing from the Lord, and cannot be otherwise clean.—He *steals* and robs God of his glory, so cannot in other respects be altogether innocent.—He bears *false witness* against God, by making God a liar, and rejecting the testimony that God gives concerning his Son; and having so little regard to God's name, he cannot have much for his neighbour's.—And finally, he is guilty of *covetousness,* which is idolatry, and that of the most atrocious nature; for, he through unbelief, and rejecting of Christ as a Saviour, and thinking of salvation by his own means, doth covet that glory and honour which is only due to God and Christ, to be ascribed to himself: self is his God, and self-righteousness is his Christ; and what will he not covet, who covets to be in God's room?

Thus the sin of unbelief, in rejecting of Christ, doth at one stroak dash the whole commands of God to pieces; and therefore, no wonder that this be his great command, that we *believe in the name of his Son:* seeing also that, by receiving him, we fulfil the whole law, namely, by receiving him for our righteousness and sanctification; for in receiving him for our righteousness, we fulfil the law as a covenant, and that personally in him, who hath yielded perfect obedience in our room, and paid the penalty also for its violation; and in receiving him for our sanctification, we fulfil the law as a rule, by a perfection of parts, through his sanctifying Spirit in us, which goes on to a perfection of degrees in heaven. Therefore, I say, when we reject Christ, we reject the great command of God, and contemn his authority in the most signal instance. Know then, that, by the authority of the eternal God, you are obliged to believe; and let this general motive be in the room of all.

But to name some more particular motives, there are these six considerations that should, and would if the Lord would powefully concur with them, engage us to receive Christ. 1. Consider *whom* you are called to receive. 2. How *few* of the world do receive him. 3. *What* you shall receive when you receive Christ. 4. What you *must* receive, if you receive not Christ. 5. What is the *malignity* and *danger* of *unbelief,* in rejecting of Christ. And, 6. What is the *excellency* and *necessity* of *faith,* in receiving the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, some of these we would open at the time.

[1.] Consider WHOM you are called to receive. It is no less than the *Lord of glory;* the *Lord, mighty in battle:* we are exhorted from this very consideration, Psal. xxiv. 7, 8. *Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? the Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.* Who would not cast open these gates, to receive such an honourable guest! O let us open the gate of our understanding, to behold him; and open the gate of our will, to choose him; and open the gate of our affections, to embrace him; and open the gate of our whole heart and soul, to receive him. O what an excellent one is he! What excellent company for travellers! What excellent food for the hungry, and drink for the thirsty! What excellent medicine for the diseased, and excellent salvation for the needy! Man is the excellency of the creatures, grace is the excellency of man, glory is the excellency of grace, but Christ is the excellency of all: it is greater honour to be one of Christ's little ones, than one of the world's great ones. O consider whom you are to receive, it is not a man or an angel; but he that is Lord of men and angels; *the Prince of the kings of the earth; He is the plant of renown; the chief among ten thousand.* His beauty and glory outshines the sun in its meridian splendor: *He is fairer than the sons of men; he is altogether lovely.* He is the *desire of all nations;* and hence believers

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in all nations, both before and since his incarnation, have esteemed him most desirable; and shall we find in our hearts to reject and despise him? He is the *consolation of Israel;* and to all *who believe he is precious:* And indeed every thing in him is precious. *What is in Christ?* Why, if you duly considered what is in Christ, you would never reject or neglect him; for God is in Christ; 2 Cor. v. 19. *For God is in Christ reconciling the world to himself.* He is *God manifested in the flesh;* this is the *great mystery of godliness,* 1 Tim. iii. 16. A Godhead dwelling in flesh, is the world's wonder: it is such a wonder, such a mystery, that the world cannot receive it; yet God is in him, so as in receiving Christ you receive God. But here it may be asked, *What of God is in Christ?* Why consider,

1. The *authority* of God is in Christ; *My name is in him,* Exod. xxiii. 21. God hath authorized and sealed him; for, *Him hath God the Father sealed,* John vi. 27. He hath a commission, under the great seal of heaven, to save you; and therefore he comes in his Father's name, as well as in his own, to *seek and save you.* And this glorious one is come this day, in this gospel, to seek your acceptance of him, as a Saviour every way well qualified to save even the chief of sinners. Oh! shall such an one be rejected!

2. The *wisdom* of God is in him; *Christ is the wisdom of God,* 1 Cor. i. 24.; and *in him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge,* Col. ii. 3. Never did the wisdom of God display itself in such an illustrious and transcendent manner, before the eyes of men and angels, as it hath done in Christ: wisdom in uniting the most distant extremes, God and man, and God's glory and man's happiness: he is the centre of the union.

3. The *power* of God is in him; as he is the wisdom, so he is *the power of God,* 1 Cor. i. 24.: and *all power in heaven and earth is given unto him,* Mat. xxviii. 18. He hath not only the wisdom of God to contrive, but the power of God to accomplish and perform whatever concerneth us, and our eternal happiness. In an essential way, he hath all power as he is God; and in a donative way, he hath all power as he is God-man Mediator: therefore, *he is able to save to the uttermost.* You are called to receive a Christ, by the power of Christ; to receive one that can give you power to receive; as one absolutely feeble, you are invited to come and to take hold of his strength, that you may be enabled to go *from strength to strength.*

4. The *Spirit* of God is in him; *I have put my Spirit upon him,* Isa. xlii. 1.; *God gives not the Spirit by measure to him.* Men and angels that have the Spirit of God in them, they have their measures; some more, some less of the Spirit: but the Spirit is in Christ without measure; *He is anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows:* and he dispenses to every one their share, as seemeth fit to him; for he hath the communication of the Spirit in his hand: *The Father hath loved the Son, and hath given all things into his hand: He received gifts for men,* and *he giveth gifts to men.*

5. The *righteousness* of God is in him, by which only a poor guilty sinner can be justified before God; for he is JEHOVAH'S *righteous servant, who brings in an everlasting righteousness, and brings it near to justify many:* for, *we are made the righteousness of God in him,* 2 Cor. v. 21. He is *the Lord our righteousness,* Jer. xxiii. 6. JEHOVAH-TSIDKENU; the Lord that justifies us, and is our justifying righteousness. And this righteousness is meritorious of all blessings, being every way perfect and complete. And therefore in him is the righteousness and justice of God manifested; *Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God,* Rom. iii. 25. Again,

6. The *love* and *mercy* of God is in him: the very yearning bowels of divine love are in him. What is Christ but the love of God wrapt up in a garment of flesh and blood? 1 John iv. 9, 10. *In this was manifested the love of God towards us: and herein is love,—that God sent his Son.* This is the highest flight that ever divine love made; and higher than this it cannot mount.—The *mercies* and compassions of God are all in Christ, Jude ver. 21. God's mercy is the thing that poor sinners cry for, when breathing out their last, as the only thing that can do them good. O! what would a man give for mercy, in the moment of death, and mercy at the great day! Why, if you receive Christ, you receive the mercy of God; but out of him, there is no mercy to be expected out of God's hand; for he will never shew mercy to the prejudice of his justice; and it is only in Christ, that mercy and justice meet together, and harmoniously embrace each other.

7. The *salvation* of God is in him; *Neither is there salvation in any other,* Acts iv. 12. Christ is the door of salvation; and faith is the key that opens that door; or it is just the man's entering in by it: and therefore, they that receive not Christ, they exclude themselves from all hope of salvation; for the salvation of God is no where to be found but in Christ: for, *In vain is salvation hoped for from the hills or multitude of mountains: truly in the Lord our God is the salvation of Israel,* Jer. iii. 22. And such as receive Christ for salvation, will in the issue take up old Simeon's song, *Now, lettest thou thy servant depart in peace; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation,* Luke ii. 29.

8. The *fulness* of God is in Christ; *It hath pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell,* Col. i. 19. And chap. ii. 9. *In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.* The fulness of all God's attributes and perfections are in Christ. He is the *brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person.* And there is a meritorious fulness of blessings in him, to be communicate unto the members of his body, being *full of grace and truth,* John i. 14. O what a full Saviour! What a full Christ are ye called to receive!—Thus you see what of God is in him, to induce us to receive him; and whom it is that we are called to receive: he is Christ, he is Jesus, he is the Lord: shall we reject such an one?

[2.] The *second* motive is: Consider how FEW in the world do receive him; notwithstanding of these glorious excellencies that are in him, yet the most part of the world do reject him: *He came to his own, and his own received him not,* John i. 11. The language of the most part is, *Who is the Lord, that we should serve him? We will not have this man to reign over us.* Now, *is this nothing to you, all you that pass by?* Do you think it a small matter, to see the world crucifying the Lord of glory, and renewing the bloody tragedy again? And shall you have a hand in this

this interpretative murder alſo? The more they be that reject him, the more cordially ſhould you receive him. What! ſay you; who would reject ſuch an one as Chriſt? Is it poſſible that any will be ſo mad, as to deſpiſe this plant of renown? Yea, there is a whole generation of Chriſt deſpiſers, and ſee that ye be not in the midſt of them. I will give you a repreſentation of them, and ſhew what they are like, that you may know them, and know if you be among them that are rejecters of Chriſt, in theſe eight particulars.

1. There is a *Gallio-like* generation, that *care for none of theſe things.* Are there not many among us, that will not give a fig for the richeſt offers of Chriſt in the goſpel? They will not give a fig for the ordinances of Chriſt; they will not give a farthing for the goſpel; they will not give a farthing for a ſermon concerning Chriſt; they will not give a ſtraw for a week day's preaching, nor think it worth their while, to go the length of the ſtreet for it: ſo little do they care for Chriſt and his goſpel, that they will not give a ſtraw to ſtay away from a Sabbath-day's ſermon; they care for none of thoſe things. A ſenſeleſs ſtory of Thomas the Rhymer would go better down with them.

2. There is a *Demas-like* generation: *Demas hath forſaken me, having loved this preſent world.* They diſcover their rejecting of Chriſt, by their putting the world in his room; *If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.* And they that love not the Father, they love not the Son, whatever they may pretend and profeſs to do; for, *Every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him alſo that is begotten of him.* It is not Chriſt but the world they are taken up with.

3. There is a *Pilate-like* generation, who, though they *find nothing againſt the man,* yet will cry, *Take you him, and crucify him.* They find no fault with him, and yet are content that he be crucified: they have no objection againſt him; and yet are content though the world trample upon and abuſe him; they are eaſy and indifferent: they have nothing to ſay againſt him, and yet they are content to live without him. Surely they are rejecters of Chriſt.

4. There is a *Felix-like* generation, that will ſay as he did to Paul, *Go your way at this time, and I will hear thee at a more convenient ſeaſon.* They are not for hearing Chriſt to-day; they are for putting off to another ſeaſon; and that ſeaſon may never come: *To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts;* for all the world cannot promiſe you a to-morrow, or another offer of Chriſt. How ſad is it, that the world ſhould be ſtill for delays! A delay for the future, is a denial for the preſent. You reject him, if you do not preſently hearken to him.

5. There is an *Agrippa-like* generation; *Almoſt thou perſuadeſt me to be a Chriſtian.* They that are but half perſuaded, are wholly loſt and undone, unleſs they be wholly brought over to Chriſt, and altogether perſuaded. They that are but almoſt perſuaded to receive Chriſt, are but almoſt believers; and they that are but almoſt believers, are but almoſt ſaved; and they that are but almoſt ſaved, they will be altogether damned; and more fearfully damned, than if they had never been ſo near to ſalvation. O ſeek to have it to ſay, *Lord, thou haſt perſuaded me, and I was perſuaded.*

6. There is a *Herod-like* generation, who can *hear the word gladly, and do many things,* but an Herodias is dearer to him than a John the Baptiſt, whoſe head is ſerved up in a charger to pleaſe and gratify her. They are but rejecters of Chriſt, that, rather than be croſſed in a Delilah, and touched in a particular luſt and idol, will give up with all their pretended kindneſs to miniſters and diſpenſers of the word: touch them in the ſore heel, and then they are perſecutors, either by tongue or hand, as well as in heart: if they have not an opportunity of open violence, yet at leaſt John Baptiſt's head is brought in in a charger, by and by into every company: the miniſter will be beheaded of his good name, by reproach and ignominy caſt upon him. If any faithful reproof, that reflects upon your honour, or croſſes your carnal ſatisfaction, raiſe in you a perſecuting ſpirit againſt the reprover, it is an evidence of your being but a rejecter of Chriſt.

7. There is a *Judas-like* generation, who *betray the Son of man with a kiſs;* with the kiſs of a profeſſion, with the kiſs of a feigned ſubjection, with a kiſs of flattery, or a kiſs of baſtard faith, that never had God for the father of it, nor the word of God for the mother of it: *They profeſs to know God, but in works they deny him; having a form of godlineſs, but denying the power thereof.* They want but an opportunity to betray Chriſt; whatever profeſſion of love to him they make, yet, whenever the trial or temptation comes, they betray his cauſe, they betray his truth, they betray his people, they betray religion, and are ready to turn to any way, or do any thing that the world deſires them, rather than loſe the bag: yea, they will *ſell Chriſt for thirty pieces of ſilver;* and, Eſau-like, *ſell their birth-right for a meſs of pottage.* They will give up with Chriſt, and with a good cauſe, and a good conſcience too, for a worldly trifle.

8. There is a *Balaam-like* generation, that will *deſire to die the death of the righteous, and to have their laſt end like his;* yet they love not to live the life of the righteous. They would deſire to die like ſaints, but to live like pagans: they would deſire to have Chriſt when they are dying, but they care not for Chriſt while they are living. But, how fooliſh is that deſire, whereby they would die in the Lord but live without him! yea, the life of many is a practical ſaying with the Jews, Away with Chriſt, away with him; away with him, and give me Barabbas. The hearts of many ſay, away with that Chriſt whom you call ſo glorious and tranſcendent, and give me the world, give me my luſts and idols.

In theſe eight particulars you ſee a ſight of the world, the temper and diſpoſition of the moſt part, and how Chriſt is deſpiſed and rejected of men; and ſhall that be your diſpoſition too? Can you find in your heart to turn your back upon this glorious, matchleſs, Prince of the kings of the earth, with the reſt of the world? Are you content that he get no backing to follow him and praiſe him? O the more that reject him, the more ſhould you receive him. Again,

[3.] The *third* motive is, conſider WHAT you will receive if you receive Chriſt. I remember upon the doctrinal part *, when I ſhewed the reaſons, why they that have received Chriſt, are to walk in him, in ſhewing what encourage-

* *viz.* On the fourth general head, page 217.

ment

ment a man that receiveth Christ, hath to walk in him; I told of eight things that a believer receives when he receiveth Christ, namely, that he receiveth pardon, peace, grace, the promises, the Spirit, the adoption of children, a title to heaven, and even all things, when he receiveth Christ: but this ALL, that he receiveth in Christ, will admit of infinitely more particulars. I shall name a few things more that you will receive, if you receive Christ.

1. If you receive Christ, you receive *light* with him; for, *He is the light of the world*; and, *in his light we shall see light clearly*. You shall be in case to say, *Once I was blind, but now I see*; once darkness, but *now light in the Lord*. If Christ be not received, you have no light in you. O poor ignorant soul, dark and blind creature, ready to fall into utter darkness! may not this be motive enough for you, to look after Christ and seek an interest in him, that if you follow him, you *shall not walk in darkness*, but *shall have the light of life*; you *shall see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ? Said I not unto thee, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?* And that sight will be an introduction to the vision of his glory, for ever in heaven. Surely, if you were not utterly blind, you would not reject this light. The light of the natural sun is desirable, to any that have eyes to see it; but ten thousand times more is the light of this Sun of righteousness; yea, infinitely more than the light of reason, or the light of learning, and human wisdom; for you may have that light, and yet be a dead man; but this is the *light of life*, John viii. 12. Therefore,

2. If you receive Christ, you receive *life*; spiritual life, *eternal life*; John vi. 47. *He that believeth on me, hath eternal life:* He is *the resurrection and the life*; and *he came to give life, and to give it more abundantly*. He himself is the *bread of life* that you should live upon; and for maintaining of your life you should be fed with the *finest of the wheat*, and with *honey out of the rock*. Why, man, you would give much for your natural life if it was in hazard; but what think you of spiritual and eternal life? The life of justification and sanctification? the life of joy and consolation? the life of communion and fellowship with God? the life of begun glory? and to be in case to say; *To me to live is Christ?* Christ is the ALPHA and OMEGA, the giver and restorer of this life; the maintainer and preserver of it; the food and medicine of it; and the very business of the man's life: *To me to live is Christ.*

3. If you receive Christ, you receive *liberty*; John viii. 36. *If the Son make you free, then are you free indeed*. You shall have freedom from the iron yoke of the law, in its terrible threatenings, legal commandments, and dreadful curses, which now you are under: freedom from the wrath of God: freedom from your idols; for he proclaims *liberty to captives*; and he hath the key of the prison-house, to open your prison-doors.—It is a dark prison in which you are, wherein you can understand no more savingly of God, than the stones of the wall: but he says to the prisoners, *Go forth, and behold the light.*—It is a fearful pit wherein you are, in which you will be surprized with the fear of death and hell, if conscience but awaken upon you; but he comes to *deliver them, who through fear of death, were all their life-time subject to bondage*. Such freedom from the sting of death doth he give, that if you receive him, you may welcome death when it comes, saying, Come, stingless death; welcome, O friend!

4. If you receive Christ, you receive *advantage* by every *ordinance*, and particularly you receive the good of the word: *The word preached doth not profit, not being mixed with faith*, Heb. iv. 2. But now, when it is mixed with faith, and receiving of Christ, then the word preached shall profit, and you shall pick out some spiritual advantage out of this word and that word, as we use to pick, out of every corner of the shell that is broken, as of a walnut, the kernel that is in it; so will you be in case to pick out the kernel of this and the other word and ordinance, and to get food and nourishment to your soul. Out of the same rose there is honey to the bee, and poison to the spider; so, the word and ordinance that proves the *savour of life* to one, proves the *savour of death* to another.

5. If you receive Christ, you shall receive *advantage* by every *providence*; Rom. viii. 28. *All things shall work together for good, to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose*. Merciful providences will make you thankful, and cross providences will make you humble; and you shall have occasion to *sing of mercy and judgment*. And though under a temptation, or the prevalence of unbelief, you may come to say in an hour of distress, *All these things are against you*; yet you shall find all moving for you, and that *he hath done all things well*.

6. If you receive Christ, you receive *righteousness*, even a *robe of righteousness*, in which you may appear boldly before the tribunal of infinite justice, and before the throne of infinite holiness, without being ashamed or afraid: because holiness is vindicated, justice is satisfied, and the law is magnified, by the active and passive righteousness of Christ, which shall be imputed to you; so as you shall be in case to say, *Surely in the Lord have I righteousness*.

7. If you receive Christ, you receive *strength* as well as righteousness: strength to enable you in all your duties; strength to support you in all your difficulties: *Surely in the Lord have I righteousness and strength*. Yea, you shall be able to *do all things through Christ strengthening you*. You shall be *strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might*: and *strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus*. Let this be an argument to those who are by nature without strength to *receive Christ Jesus the Lord*, that they may be strengthened to *walk in him*.

8. If you receive Christ, you shall receive *supply of all wants*: when *the Lord is your shepherd, you shall not want*, Psal. xxiii. 1. You shall want no good thing; you shall receive the supply of all your spiritual wants; out of Christ's fulness, you will receive *grace for grace*: your *God will supply all your needs, according to his riches in glory by Christ*: Yea, you will get a supply of all your temporal wants and losses; you receive that which will be abundantly up-making to you, in all your losses. Have you lost husband, wife, children, or any dear and intimate relation? Well, this may be very afflicting, but Christ can well compensate all losses of that kind; for he is, and will be to his people better than ten thousand husbands, better than ten thousand wives, or children, or familiar concerns; for he is *all in all*.

And, in a word, in your receiving Christ, you shall

ſhall receive more than *eye hath ſeen, or ear heard,* or *heart conceived* here, and an *immortal crown of glory hereafter.* Yea, he that receiveth Chriſt receiveth God; Mat. x. 40. *He that receiveth me, receiveth him that ſent me.* And what can be more ſaid? He is an *heir of God.* As he that receiveth a tree, gets not only the fruit, but all that is in the tree, and all that it can produce to himſelf; ſo he that gets Chriſt, gets not only the fruit that grows upon the tree of life, but all that is in the tree to himſelf: and, ſince God is in Chriſt; he that receiveth Chriſt receiveth God. A man may eat of the fruit of a tree, and yet have no intereſt in the tree: even ſo, many eat ſome of the ſweet fruit of this tree, in common providence and grace; but he that receiveth Chriſt hath intereſt in the tree itſelf, as well as in the fruit; yea, here the believing eater grows into the tree, being a branch thereof; *I am the vine, ye are the branches,* John xv. 5. Yea, he hath the tree of life planted in his heart; *Chriſt dwells in their hearts by faith,* Eph. iii. 17. It were groſs to aſk, how Chriſt in heaven, and believers on earth, can be ſo cloſely united; for man and wife are *one fleſh,* though a thouſand miles aſunder; much more Chriſt and the believer *one ſpirit,* though the viſible heavens interveen betwixt them, 1 Cor. vi. 17.

[4.] The *fourth* motive is, Conſider what you RECEIVE if you receive not Chriſt: Why, there are four things you muſt receive, if you receive not Chriſt: you muſt receive luſts, for your laws; the devil, for your maſter; the curſe, for your comfort; and hell for your portion and reward.

1. If you receive not Chriſt, you muſt receive *luſts* for your *laws:* either you muſt receive Chriſt or Barabbas. When you receive not Chriſt you receive ſin, and ſin ſhall have dominion over you, while you reject the Saviour, who ſaves from ſin: and what for a gueſt is ſin, which you receive in Chriſt's room?—It is a God-oppoſing gueſt; for, it is *enmity againſt God.* —It is a God-provoking gueſt; for it expoſes you to his fury.—It is a ſoul-defiling gueſt; it defiles all the houſe where it is; nay, makes you abominable to God.—It is a moſt expenſive gueſt; it will coſt you dear, even the loſs of your immortal ſoul.

2. If you receive not Chriſt, you muſt receive the *devil* for your *maſter;* for there is no midſt, either Chriſt or the devil muſt be your maſter: and when you receive ſuch a gueſt as this, in the room of Chriſt, do you conſider what for a gueſt, a dreadful gueſt the devil is? He is a gueſt that will blind you; for, *the god of this world doth blind the minds of them that believe not.*—He is a gueſt that will *harden* you ſo, as you ſhall be like the adamant, and get no good of word and rod, ordinances or providences.—He is a gueſt that will *deceive* you; either by perſuading you that you have received Chriſt already, that you are a good enough believer; or by perſuading you to believe untruths and turn you into *damnable errors, to believe a lie.* Whence come all the errors of our day, but from the devil, who is a *liar from the beginning?* —He is a gueſt that will not only delude you, but *deſtroy* you, and devour you; for, *He goeth about as a roaring lion, ſeeking whom he may devour.* And as now he is your tempter, ſo afterwards he will be your accuſer.

3. If you receive not Chriſt, you muſt receive the *curſe* for your *comfort:* no comfort in all the word of God belongs to you that are *rejecters* of Chriſt, but only the curſe of the law; *Curſed is every one, that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them.* You receive more and more of this ſentence of condemnation; the more you live in unbelief, the more doth this curſe take place, binding you over to more and more of wrath; *He that believeth not, is condemned already; and the wrath of God abideth on him.* You are under the wrath of God: and, oh! what is that? *The wrath of a king is as the roaring of a lion:* but, oh! what is the wrath of God like! Surely, *the thunder of his wrathful power, none can underſtand.* Nebuchadnezzar was in great wrath and fury, when the viſage of his countenance changed againſt the three children; and he commanded the furnace to be made ſeven times hotter: but, oh! what is the wrath of God when he is as angry as Nebuchadnezzar was! And truly he *is angry with the wicked every day.* Therefore,

4. If you receive not Chriſt, you muſt receive *hell* for your *portion;* Mark xvi. 16. *He that believeth not, ſhall be damned.* Do not think it is a miniſter only that ſays it; it is the word of God: and if you think not the SAY of a God, the word of a God of truth enough, he hath SWORN it, as well as ſaid it; you have the oath of God interpoſed in the matter; Heb. iii. 18. *He ſwears in his wrath, that you ſhall not enter into his reſt:* And to whom does he thus ſwear in his wrath? even to them that *believe not.* And, oh! what think you of this damnation, which God ſwears you ſhall receive, if you receive not Chriſt? It will be damnation proportioned to the means you have enjoyed; damnation proportioned to the worth of the blood of Chriſt, which you have trampled under foot. And, O! what think you of that debt which is as great as the price of the blood of Chriſt? Will you ever be able to pay it? No, by no means: you will ſink under it for ever. It will be wrath proportioned to the greatneſs of that ſalvation which you neglect. See Heb. ii. 3. and chap. x. 29, 30, 31.

And now, what do you think of all this, that I have been ſaying? Is there no weight in this conſideration, namely, whom you are called to receive, and how the moſt part of the world are rejecting Chriſt, and what you ſhall receive if you receive Chriſt, and what you muſt receive if you receive not Chriſt. Do you think all theſe things fancies, or realities? If the devil be tempting you to think they are but fancies; I tell you, in the name of the great God, that they are realities: and you ſhall find them ſadly to be ſo, when death's cold ſweat begins to break upon you; when your eye-ſtrings begin to looſe; and the union between the ſoul and body begins to be diſſolved, and you called to go to the tribunal of God. O man, then, *to-day, while it is called to-day, harden not your heart as in the provocation.* Do you know that you ſhall hear another offer of Chriſt again? Nay, all the world cannot aſſure you, that you ſhall have another Sabbath-day; nor certify you that you ſhall have a to-morrow.

I think there is as much weight in what hath been ſaid, as may, at leaſt engage you, when you go home, to go to your knees, and cry, "Lord, what a ſad caſe am I in while without "Chriſt! O give me Chriſt, or elſe I die! O "give me the ſpirit of faith, that I may re-"ceive Chriſt! for I periſh eternally without "Chriſt!"

"Chriſt!" May the Lord himſelf awaken and quicken you.

[5.] The *fifth* motive we adduce is, Conſider the *malignity of unbelief* in *rejecting Chriſt*, or not receiving of him, as he is offered to us in the goſpel. As it is not ſafe walking cloſs by the ſea-ſide, when the waves are tumbling out upon the ſhore; ſo it is not ſafe to walk in this world according to the courſe thereof, when the deluge of God's wrath is certainly breaking out upon it; it is the ſafeſt courſe to get into the Ark, and walk therein. In this goſpel there is an Ark provided, even Chriſt; and there is a window opened in the ſide of this Ark; yea, the hand of mercy put forth at this window, to pull in ſhelterleſs doves, that can find no reſt elſewhere: many hover without, till the flood waſh them off from the ſides of the Ark, and they periſh eternally: but happy they that are taught to fly in, by the wing of faith; and this is what here we are called to, namely, to *receive Chriſt Jeſus the Lord, and ſo to walk in him.* Now, the *malignity of unbelief* will appear, if you conſider both the *ſinfulneſs* and the *hurtfulneſs* of it.

(1.) The *ſinfulneſs* of unbelief in rejecting Chriſt, and not receiving him. If a man be guilty of murder, adultery, or the like, preſently he is odious, and juſtly looked upon as a monſtrous ſinner; but yet your ſin of unbelief goes a ſtep beyond all theſe, if you duly conſider it; for, when the Holy Ghoſt is ſent to *convince the world of ſin*, John xvi. 9. he pitches upon this ſin, as if there was no other that the world needed to be convinced of; *He will convince the world of ſin, becauſe they* BELIEVE *not on the Son of God:* Why? becauſe there is more ſinfulneſs in it, than any other. Oh! what an abyſs of iniquity is in the bowels of unbelief! What made the old world ſo ſecure, before the deluge came and ſwept them away, but unbelief? And, how comes it that now, both wiſe and fooliſh virgins do ſlumber, before the coming of the Bridegroom, but from unbelief? Unbelief is virtually all ſin. Scandalous ſins have more infamy, but unbelief hath more of obliquity and guilt in it, it being againſt the greateſt laws, and ſtrongeſt obligations. But, more particularly, we may take up the ſinfulneſs of unbelief in the following particulars; ſuch as theſe,

1. The ſinfulneſs of unbelief in rejecting Chriſt will appear, if we conſider it with reſpect to GOD; for, unbelief doth diſhonour God more than any other ſin, by calling in queſtion all his attributes, and caſting an affront upon all his perfections: no greater indignity can be done to the glory of God, than is done by unbelief; it hath a mouth full of blaſphemy againſt God.—Why? by unbelief we do trample upon the *authority* of God that commands us to believe: it is a proud contempt of the divine command, under the maſk of humility; for, unbelief doth ordinarily paſs vailed under the vizard of ſome refined virtue; and that is one of the reaſons why it is ſo little ſeen, and that people are convinced of other ſins and breach of the commands of God, but not of this: beſides that groſs ſins, the conviction of them may ariſe from a natural conſcience, but the light of nature doth not lead men to the conviction of unbelief; it being a goſpel, and more ſpiritual ſin: however, the more ſpiritual it is, the worſe, in trampling upon the authority of that God who is a Spirit.—By unbelief, as we deſpiſe his authority, ſo we deny his *faithfulneſs*, and charge him with a lie; *He that believeth not hath made God a liar; becauſe he believeth not the record that God gave concerning his Son*, 1 John v. 10. *As he that believeth, ſets to his ſeal that God is true;* ſo, *he that believeth not*, ſets his ſeal to that dreadful untruth, that *God is a liar.* We may tremble to mention the evil of unbelief. To give the lie is reckoned the greateſt injury among men; for, truth is the ground of commerce, and human ſociety: ſo that to ſay that a man is a liar, is as much as to ſay, he is unworthy, and unfit to keep company with men: And, alas! what an injury is this to God, who ſtands more upon his word than any other part of his name! Pſal. cxxxviii. 2. *He hath magnified his word above all his name:* in ſo much that we have more experience of God, in making good his word, than in any other thing.—By unbelief we deny the *wiſdom* of God, and charge him with folly. *All the treaſures of wiſdom are laid up in Chriſt*, and in the contrivance of ſalvation through him: here is the *manifold wiſdom of God;* which the angels admire. Behold, unbelief imputes folly to *the only wiſe God;* and that in the moſt ſignal inſtance of it.—Again, by unbelief you deny the *power* of God, and queſtion his ability: *Can God furniſh a table in the wilderneſs?* Pſal. lxxviii. 19, 20. *Can the ſon of Jeſſe give you vineyards?* ſays unbelief. Though he be *able to ſave to the uttermoſt;* unbelief ſuppoſes there is ſomething too hard for God, that he cannot do, and which his power cannot reach.—By unbelief we deny the *love* and *mercy* of God, and charge him with unmercifulneſs, and defect of goodneſs, as if he was an implacable judge ſtill, and not upon a *throne of grace*, nor a *God in Chriſt reconciling the world to himſelf. God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son: that whoſoever believeth in him, ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life*, John iii. 16. But unbelief contemns all the diſcoveries that God makes of his love and good-will to men in Chriſt. God ſays, you need my Son, you are damned if you take him not; and I freely offer him to you that you may be ſaved, and yet we reject this grace.—Yea, by unbelief we ſtrike at the very *being* of God, and make an attempt upon God's life: ſo much *atheiſm* is in unbelief, that, at one ſtroak, we thereby take away the ſcriptures, God, and Chriſt, and all the good things that belong to our peace. So much *blaſphemy* is in it, that every unbeliever, by his ſecret and open murmurings againſt God, doth raiſe many black ſcandals upon God. So much *idolatry* is in it, that every unbeliever idolizes himſelf, his own carnal wiſdom, pride, will, common gifts, ſelf-ſufficiency, legal righteouſneſs, and ſeeming good duties, and by ſelf-dependency maketh himſelf his God. Thus doth he deify himſelf and undeify the true God. As faith honours God, ſo doth unbelief diſhonour him. What God doth to the creature, that faith doth to God: God juſtifieth, ſanctifieth, and glorifieth the creature; and ſo faith doth juſtify, ſanctify, and glorify God.—Faith doth *juſtify God*, Luke vii. 29.; acquit him from all the jealouſies that the carnal world, and the carnal heart doth caſt upon him.—Faith doth *ſanctify God*, Num. xx. 12.; by ſetting him above all, and believing that he can make good his word, when the courſe of all things ſeems to contradict it.—Faith doth *glorify God*, Rom. iv. 20.; declaratively

declaratively giving him the glory of his excellencies: but unbelief, inſtead of juſtifying, doth accuſe him; inſtead of ſanctifying his name, doth but profane it; inſtead of glorifying, doth diſhonour him. And therefore it is the moſt hainous and hateful ſin.

2. The ſinfulneſs of unbelief will appear, if we conſider it with reſpect to CHRIST. Unbelief reproaches him, betrays him, kills him, and curſes him.—By unbelief in rejecting Chriſt you *reproach* him as if he was a deceiver; for, the native language of unbelief is, he is not the Saviour of ſinners; he is but an impoſtor, and ſo we will have nothing to do with him: his words ſeem to you as idle tales, and you believe them not; as if he was like Naphtali, cheating you with goodly words.—By unbelief you *betray* him, ſaying, *Hail, Maſter*, under a pretence of friendſhip. Many eat his bread, wear his livery, call him Maſter, and yet lift up the heel againſt him.—By unbelief you *kill* and *crucify* him afreſh: know it from the Lord, Sirs, they may have a hand in crucifying Chriſt, that never ſaw his face; Heb. vi. 6. *They crucify to themſelves the Son of God afreſh.*—Yea, by unbelief you *curſe* him, and call him *accurſed*, whom God hath bleſſed; and of whom it is ſaid, that *men ſhall be bleſſed in him, and all nations ſhall call him bleſſed.* It may be you will ignorantly reject this charge and ſay, you never curſed Chriſt, or called him accurſed all your days: but in vain do you excuſe yourſelves, if you be an unbeliever under the goſpel; for, every one that hath heard the goſpel, do, either by faith ſay, that *Jeſus is the Lord*, receiving him as ſuch; or elſe, by unbelief, do practically call him *accurſed*, and reject him as an horrible impoſtor: yea, every unbeliever doth *trample on the blood of the Son of God*, and *count the blood of the covenant an unholy thing*, Heb. v. 29. All unbelief hath ſomething of this in it. The apoſtle ſhews how all that hear of Chriſt, do either by faith crown him, or by unbelief curſe him; *Wherefore I give you to underſtand, that no man ſpeaking by the Spirit of God, calleth Jeſus accurſed: and that no man can ſay that Jeſus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghoſt*, 1 Cor. xii. 3. And, oh! ſhall we reckon it a light matter, thus to tread upon the Son of God, and trample upon God's moſt precious Jewel, wherein he is well-pleaſed; and to loath that which God loves above all things! What horrible ingratitude is it, to ſlight that remedy, that the infinitely wiſe God hath been, at ſo great pains, and ſo much expences to prepare for us; and hath coſt him more, than the creating of ten thouſand worlds would have done! And that we ſhould ſlight the works, which he prefers to all his other works! How criminal muſt it be to undervalue that, and to prefer the devil and your luſts before it!

3. The ſinfulneſs of unbelief, in not receiving Chriſt, will appear, if we conſider it with reſpect to the SPIRIT; for unbelief bears its curſed oppoſition againſt a whole glorious Trinity: and ſeeing God, in the goſpel, doth ſtrive with people by his Spirit, and the motions thereof; people cannot, by unbelief, reject Chriſt, but they muſt ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, as well as againſt the Father and the Son. Indeed, every ſin is a ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, though every ſin be not that which is called eminently the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt: for, there are manifold degrees of ſinning that take place, before it comes to that dreadful and unpardonable ſin. There are five or ſix degrees of unbelief, which all bear a reference to the Spirit of God, and every one of them is worſe than another, and the laſt the moſt terrible.—One degree of unbelief is that whereby the Spirit is ſaid to be *grieved*; *Grieve not the holy Spirit of God: Forty years long was I grieved with this generation.*—Another degree of unbelief is that whereby the Spirit is ſaid to be *vexed*; Iſa. lxiii. 10. *They vexed his holy Spirit.* Oh! to vex God is a ſad matter.—A third degree of unbelief is that whereby the Spirit is ſaid to be *quenched*; *Quench not the Spirit*, 1 Theſſ. v. 19. We are apt to put out the fire that God would kindle within us.—A fourth degree of unbelief is that whereby the Spirit of God is ſaid to be *reſiſted*; *Do ye always reſiſt the Holy Ghoſt?* ſaid Stephen to his unbelieving hearers, Acts vii. 5.—The fifth degree is that whereby the Spirit is reckoned to be *deſpiſed*; and when it comes to this, people are nigh unto curſing: *Behold, ye deſpiſers, wonder and periſh.*—But then the ſixth and laſt, and truly ſaddeſt degree of all is, when unbelief comes to that pitch, whereby the Spirit is ſaid to be *deſpited*, Heb. x. 29. The man is filled with horrible malice, and *hath done deſpite unto the Spirit of grace*; and this is an expreſſion uſually taken to ſignify the unpardonable ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt—There is a black and dark ſtair, with ſix ſteps; and as we would not chuſe to go down to the loweſt ſtep, let us beware of the firſt: unbelief hath ſome ingredients of all theſe in it. And, oh! what ſinfulneſs may we ſee from hence to be in it!

4. The ſinfulneſs of unbelief, will appear, if we conſider it with reſpect to the GOSPEL, wherein Chriſt is offered to be received. Unbelief doth juſt fruſtrate the deſign and make void the importance of the goſpel to man; for, *he receiveth the grace of God in vain*, 2 Cor. vi. 1. As good, yea, better had it been for ſuch a man, that Chriſt had never come into the world; or that he had never heard of him.—By unbelief we fruſtrate Chriſt's glorious expedition from heaven to earth; and, in a manner, give him cauſe to repent of his death and bloody agony. You ſay, in effect, Chriſt might have remained in heaven, kept his blood in his veins, and that he died as a fool; and you give him no thanks for his pains. Alas! ſad is the language of unbelief!—By unbelief you declare a goſpel miniſtry uſeleſs; you, in effect, not only call miniſters *fools*, that preach the goſpel; but the goſpel itſelf *fooliſhneſs*; *The preaching of the croſs is, to them that periſh, fooliſhneſs: We preach Chriſt crucified, to the Jews a ſtumbling-block, and to the Greeks fooliſhneſs.*

5. The ſinfulneſs of unbelief, in rejecting of Chriſt, will appear, if we conſider it in the EFFECTS of it, with reſpect to other SINS: As it is the mother of all ſin; ſo it is the mother of all miſery. Many are aſhamed of the daughter, but not of the mother: they are aſhamed of theft, murder, and adultery; but not of unbelief, which is the mother of all theſe. The firſt ſin was the fruit of unbelief, which opened the door to all ſin and miſery: for, had not Adam diſbelieved the word of God, he had not believed Satan, nor eaten the forbidden fruit: and ſtill it is the prodigious womb of all theſe.—It is the mother of *hardneſs* and *ſtupidity* of heart; *He upbraided them for their unbe-*

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lief and hardneſs of heart, becauſe they believed not, Mark xvi. 14.—It is the mother of *apoſtaſy*; it is big with child of defection from God; *Take heed, brethren, leſt there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God*, Heb. iii. 12. Unbelief travails as in birth till that accurſed child of apoſtaſy be brought forth. Why, through unbelief, the man loſes the thought of the excellency of Chriſt, and increaſeth in thought of love to his idols: for, as love to Chriſt doth decreaſe, love to idols will increaſe. And again, as he that believeth not the threatening, will not ſtand to do any evil: ſo he that doth not believe the promiſe, will not be forward to do any good; hence unbelief makes apoſtaſy.—Unbelief is the mother of *lukewarmneſs*: All our neglect and coldneſs in holy duties, comes from the weakneſs of faith or the power of unbelief; there is a decay at the root. Faith makes a man earneſt and zealous; but unbelief makes him coldrife and careleſs. Unbelief doth even turn duties into ſin, and pollutes every duty, every action: *To them that are unbelieving, is nothing pure; but even their mind and conſcience is defiled*, Tit. i. 15. *The plowing of the wicked is ſin*: yea, the *prayer of the wicked is abominable to God*; for, *whatſoever is not of faith is ſin*. And as it turns duties into ſin and pollutes them; ſo it ſtops the *mortification* of all ſin: it is impoſſible for one in the exerciſe of unbelief, to mortify a luſt or idol. You may allude to, Mat. xvii. 20. when the diſciples aſked this queſtion, *Why could not we caſt out this devil?* Chriſt anſwers, *Becauſe of your unbelief*. So, why cannot you caſt out that devil, that luſt, that idol? It is *becauſe of your unbelief*.—Unbelief is the mother of *inſtability*. Faith is a fixing grace; *My heart is fixed, truſting in the Lord*: but it is through unbelief that the man is *toſſed to and fro; If ye will not believe, ſurely ye ſhall not be eſtabliſhed*, Iſa. vii. 9.——Thus it is the ſin of all ſins, the prolific womb of every other ſin.

6. The ſinfulneſs of unbelief, in rejecting Chriſt, will appear, if we conſider it more cloſely with reſpect to ITSELF. It is the greateſt act of folly to reject and not to receive Chriſt; *They have rejected the word of the Lord, and what wiſdom is in them?* Jer. viii. 9. Though ye were the greateſt heads of wit in the whole world, while ye reject Chriſt, ye are but arrant fools: ye can never be *wiſe unto ſalvation* while this is your caſe.—What greater folly than to refuſe a remedy, when it is in our offer? For an wounded man to ſlight a phyſician, or a condemned man to ſlight a pardon, is an argument he is not in his right wits. He is as guilty of ſelf-murder, who rejects a proper medicine, againſt preſent death, as he that cuts his throat: and ſo is the caſe here. Nothing can be more fooliſh and unreaſonable than to reject Chriſt: for, as he hath the only right to your ſouls; ſo he out-bids all other merchants; he out-bids ſin, Satan, and the world. Can theſe give you more than Chriſt? Can the world give you more? Let them all declare their ſtrength and treaſure. Can any of them give redemption to you? Can any of them procure remiſſion of ſin to you? Can any of them ſatisfy God's wrath for you? Can any of them preſent you righteous before the judgment-ſeat, or ſettle eternal life upon you? All this Chriſt can do, and none elſe. How unreaſonable is it then to reject him, and chooſe any thing elſe beſide him? But the grievouſneſs of this ſin, and its aggravations, may appear, in conſidering further the folly of it, as it is a ſlighting the remedy, when you view what for a remedy you ſlight by unbelief. Why,

Your unbelief, in refuſing Chriſt, is a ſlighting of a *needful* remedy. O Sirs! you have extreme need of Chriſt. Doth not a ſinner need a Saviour? Were you in a ſtate of innocency, as at the firſt creation, then there would be no need: but you are fallen and broken, and ſold under ſin. Had you a ſtock in your own hand, to ſet up your broken ſouls again; and to purchaſe your own peace and ſalvation, there would be leſs need: but you are *by nature without ſtrength*. Could any plank bring you aſhore but Chriſt, then there were the leſs hazard: but, oh! Sirs, there is ſalvation in no other. Is it not needful that you come to Chriſt with your burden? for, otherwiſe the whole burden of ſin and guilt lieth upon your back: a burden that will ſink you to the loweſt hell. Your ſoul is naked, and ſwarms with the vermin of filthy luſts: Do you not need a garment to cover you, and a fountain to waſh you? Your ſoul is enſlaved to enemies and idols: Do you not need a Redeemer to looſe your fetters? You are under the wrath of God: and do you not need a Reconciler? *God is angry with the wicked every day*; every day of the week, and every hour of the day: when you go out, or come in; when you riſe up, or ly down, God is ſtill angry with you. While in a ſtate of unbelief, the flaming ſword of juſtice is over your neck; and who can help you, if Chriſt be neglected? If you remain Chriſtleſs now, ſurely you will be ſpeechleſs at the great day, when the wicked ſhall have none to pity them; for the Judge will frown upon them; their own conſcience will upbraid them; the ſaints will condemn them; their friends will forſake them; the angels will deride them; the devil will ſcoff at them; the heaven will thunder againſt them; earth will flame about them; hell will groan for them; and down they will go, roaring and howling for ever! Why, man; there is no remedy but one, and is not that a needful remedy? yet, by unbelief, you reject it.——Your unbelief is a ſlighting of a *ſuitable* remedy, a remedy fitted to your need: look upon your need aright, and then judge who but Chriſt is fitted for a ſinner. Are you a blinded ſinner? Here is a Prophet to enlighten you. Are you a guilty ſinner? Here is a Prieſt to ſatisfy for you. Are you an enſlaved ſinner? Here is a King to proclaim liberty. He is well furniſhed and qualified for your caſe: He hath gold, for your poverty; balm, for your wounds; a fountain, for your filth; a ranſom, for your debt; yea, here is a broad plaiſter, for your broad ſore; a deep fountain, for your deep [illegible]; a great ranſom, for your great bondage; chief of Saviours, for the chief of ſinners. O what think you of unbelief, that rejects this?—Your unbelief is a ſlighting of a *gracious* and *merciful* remedy: Ah! how would fallen angels value ſuch a mercy! You ſlight your own mercy, through unbelief, in rejecting of Chriſt: *God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son*: and *Chriſt ſo loved the world, that he gave himſelf*. Is not Chriſt ſaying in the goſpel, *Behold me, behold me?* Is he not ſtretching forth his merciful arms? and ſhall not divine love melt, or move you? Why, ſays Chriſt, ſhall I vail my glory, die a curſed ſhameful death,

and

and bear the ſcorn of men, the wrath of God, the curſe of the law, the terror of death, and the pains of hell for you, and yet you care not a ſtraw for me?—Your unbelief is a ſlighting of a *near* remedy; Rom. x. 6, 7, 8, 9. The remedy is brought to your very door: you need not ſay, *Who will aſcend into heaven, to bring Chriſt down? or, who ſhall deſcend into the deep, to bring Chriſt again from the dead?—The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart.* You need not ſay, *Who will roll away the ſtone, from the mouth of the well?* for, Chriſt hath done it for you; and now it is an open fountain, and running by your door. Well, Sirs, will it not be ſad to have Chriſt ſo near, his righteouſneſs near, and yet eternally to miſs him! To periſh, like the thief upon the croſs, with a Saviour at your ſide! To be within a ſtep of him, and yet never touch him! Yea, ſuch is the nature of your unbelief to ſuffer you juſt to ſtarve for want beſide infinite fulneſs at your hand in the goſpel-offer.—Your unbelief is a ſlighting of an *eaſy* remedy; for the goſpel lays no obſtruction in your way of cloſing with Chriſt, and receiving of him: there is no impediment but your want of will, which you lay in your own way; *You will not come to me that you might have life.* The gates of the goſpel are caſt open to all paſſengers; and whoſoever will are commanded to enter. Chriſt is the door, and the door is open, and you may come in; yea, if you but look in, you are ſaved: *Look unto me, and be ye ſaved, all the ends of the earth*, Iſa. xlv. 22. Faith is indeed the effect of the almighty power of God; but your powerleſneſs lies in your unwillingneſs: the goſpel-offer lays no obſtruction in your way; and there is no hinderance on God's part. In this reſpect it is an eaſy remedy; but unbelief ſlights it, notwithſtanding that the Lord ſays, *Whoſoever will, let him come:* and, *him that cometh, I will in no wiſe caſt out.*—Your unbelief is a ſlighting of a *ſeaſonable* remedy, a *timely* remedy; and now is the time, now is the ſeaſon: *Now is the appointed time, now is the day of ſalvation.* You know not but your days may be at a cloſe, ſo as Chriſt ſhall never be offered to you again: you know not but this is the laſt ſermon, or the laſt Sabbath-day; and yet ſuch is the nature of your unbelief, that it neglects the opportunity, which it may never enjoy again.—In a word, this remedy is *preſſed* upon you; Chriſt is in earneſt offering himſelf; *Wiſdom cries in the ſtreets:* and what is his cry? See Iſa. lv. 1. *Ho every one that thirſteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk, without money and without price.* You will notice three times COME in that one verſe: he is crying, *Come, come, come.* O! is he not purſuing you with his gracious offers, even when you are running away from him? As the rock followed the Iſraelites in the wilderneſs, with its running ſtreams of water; ſo Chriſt, the ſpiritual Rock, is following you with the ſtreams of his mercy and blood, to waſh and ſave you. O how compaſſionately doth he complain of ſinners! *Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life*, John v. 40. As if he ſhould ſay: Why run ye ſo faſt away from me? Why will ye not come to me, that am come from heaven to ſave you? It is not an enemy but a friend, that you run from. Oh! what madneſs are you guilty of? Yea, you are buſy going to the devil to get death and eternal damnation: but ye will not come to me to get life and eternal ſalvation. Alas! Sirs, what horrid and unſpeakable evil is there in unbelief!——Thus you ſee the *ſinfulneſs* of unbelief. I ſhould next ſpeak of the *hurtfulneſs* thereof.

(2.) The *hurtfulneſs* of unbelief is another part of the *malignity* of it; and this will appear in theſe particulars following.

1. It is moſt *diſpleaſing* to God, and ſo cannot but be moſt hurtful: as it doth moſt diſhonour God, ſo it doth moſt diſpleaſe him. Chriſt did never chide his diſciples ſo much for any thing, as for their unbelief; *O ye fools, and ſlow of heart to believe; why do ye doubt? O ye of little faith!* When they were afraid of periſhing in the ſtorm, he chides them before he chideth the wind: the ſtorm firſt began in their own hearts. Iſrael were *caſt off, for their unbelief*, Rom. xi. 20. If we would know what company are in hell, ſee Rev. xxi. 8. it begins with the *fearful* and *unbelieving*.

2. Unbelief is hurtful, in regard that final unbelief is an undoubted evidence of *reprobation; Ye believe not becauſe ye are none of my ſheep*, John x. 26. Unbelief is God's priſon wherein he keeps the reprobate world; *For God hath concluded them all in unbelief*, Rom. xi. 21. He hath ſhut them up under unbelief; *As many as were ordained to eternal life believed: The elect ſhall obtain*, and others are hardened. Why then, by unbelief you put a ſeal to your own reprobation, and continue a black note upon yourſelves. While you ſlight Chriſt you increaſe your immortal bonds, and are twiſting a cord wherewith to bind your ſouls eternally, in theſe unquenchable flames: therefore, *Be not mockers, leſt your bands be made ſtrong*, Iſa. xxviii. 22. There is no back-door to eſcape God's wrath, if Chriſt be not received.

3. It is hurtful in that it *hinders the tokens of God's love*, and *deprives us of much good.* Nothing doth bar, and ſhut out God's operation, in order to our relief, ſo much as this ſin; *He could not do many mighty works there, becauſe of their unbelief*, Mat. xiii. 58. It is true, he could by his power deſtroy unbelief; but while unbelief remained, his hands were, as it were, bound; *Said I not unto thee, if thou wouldeſt believe, thou ſhouldeſt ſee the glory of God*, John ii. 40. It mars the comfort of ordinances; *The word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it*, Heb. iv. 2. It bars the gates of heaven: it excluded Adam out of paradiſe, the Iſraelites out of Canaan, and will exclude us out of heaven, if it be not removed, Heb. iii. 17, 18.

4. It is therefore alſo hurtful, in that it is the *great murderer of ſouls: If ye believe not, ye ſhall die in your ſins.* The ruin of ſinners is laid at the door of this ſin, as if there were none other; and juſtly ſo: for, if the malefactor was offered life, upon his accepting the king's remiſſion; if he refuſed this, it might well be ſaid, his refuſal hanged him: even ſo here, *he that believeth not is condemned.* Indeed no other ſin would condemn you, if you were not guilty of this ſin: but this is the ſin, that binds the guilt of all other ſins hard and faſt upon you; becauſe by unbelief, you reject the ſatisfaction for all ſin, by refuſing Chriſt; and this will aggravate your perdition to the higheſt degree.——But having enlarged ſo much upon the *ſinfulneſs* of it, the *hurtfulneſs* plainly follows thence.

[6.] The *ſixth* motive is, to conſider the *excellency*

lency and *neceſſity* of *faith*, in receiving Chriſt. Faith is as helpful and advantageous, as unbelief is hurtful and diſadvantageous.

It was a heavy challenge the Lord Jeſus gave to the Jews, John v. 43. *I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not.* He had challenged them for injuring themſelves, ver. 40. ſaying, *And ye will not come to me, that you may have life:* and again, ver. 42. for their diſeſteem of God, ſaying, *But I know you, that you have not the love of God in you;* and now here, in this verſe, for their not *embracing Chriſt, though come in his Father's name.* Where we ſee, that, though Chriſt be *God over all, equal with the Father;* and *Lord over his own houſe*, and ſo acts in his own name; yet he condeſcends, as Mediator, to come into the world clothed with a commiſſion and authority from the Father, to make offer of himſelf, and life through him, Phil. ii. 5,—11. Mat. xiii. 17. Heb. v. 4, 5. Obſerve alſo, Chriſt, though thus coming, is to be received, embraced, and entertained; yet ſuch is the perverſeneſs of the world, as not to make him welcome. When Chriſt manifeſts himſelf to the world, it is uſual with Satan to hound out ſeducers, and falſe teachers, to ſtudy to bear him down, and make the way of truth odious. See Mat. xxiv. 5, 24. Acts v. 36, 37. John viii. 37. But the true diſciple of Chriſt diſcovers himſelf, at all times, by his firm attachment to his Maſter; and therefore is characterized by our Lord himſelf, as one that not only gives entertainment to the Father, but to the Son; *He that receiveth me, receiveth him that ſent me*, Mat. x. 40. Though ſeducers may pretend to come in Chriſt's name, Mat. xxiv. 5.; yet they come but in their own name, having no commiſſion from the Lord; making themſelves, and their reputation and advantage, their chief aim in their undertakings, and ſpeakings, and imaginations of their own heart and brain, without any warrant from God. Such as will not receive and embrace Chriſt, will eaſily receive and embrace ſeducers.

All that I ſhall point at, concerning the *excellency of faith*, upon this head, ſhall be to diſcover theſe ſix advantages thereof, beſide what I have ſaid before: For, I have told you what it is we receive, when we receive Chriſt *, which diſcovers the unſpeakable advantage thereof. But beſides what was then offered, let us view it,

1. With reſpect to *Chriſt*, and then the firſt excellency of faith in receiving Chriſt is, that it *advances Chriſt's name*, and makes him very precious, and very glorious in the man's eyes: *To you that believe he is precious;* yea, *more glorious than mountains of prey.* And herein faith goes beyond ſenſe, or ſpiritual ſenſation; for ſenſe may take up the glory of his actings; but faith ſees the glory of his perſon.—Senſe beholds the love that is in his ſmiles; but faith beholds the love that is in his heart, even when ſmiles are out of view.—Senſe looks to what Chriſt is for the preſent; but faith will look to what he hath been from eternity, before time; and what he will be to eternity, after time: and faith's long journey, from eternity to eternity, makes it fall into an ocean of admiration, and raiſes the thoughts to the higheſt pitch of eſtimation of Chriſt.—Senſe, in a word, will follow Chriſt for his love, and for the loaves; but faith prizes him for himſelf. And ſurely this is the exerciſe of the higher houſe, to be dwelling upon the contemplation of Chriſt's beauty, and to be tranſported with love to him, and joy in him.——By faith we view the matchleſs excellency, and the tranſcendent properties of Chriſt. Faith makes long commentaries and precious encomiums upon Chriſt: "It is the "faithful ſpy, as one calls it, that brings the "good report of glorious Chriſt." Chriſt's and his Father's honour are both advanced at once by faith, when we receive Chriſt.

2. The ſecond excellency in faith, is with reſpect to the *believer*, in that it advances the believer to the *higheſt dignity*, ſuch as, the dignity to be a *member* of Chriſt; for, by faith, Chriſt and the believer are ſo unite, that they are no more two, but *one ſpirit; He that is joined to the Lord is one ſpirit.* And herein faith keeps a ſweet correſpondency with her ſiſter love; for faith is that nail which faſtens the ſoul to Chriſt; and love is that grace that drives the nail to the head. Faith takes hold of him, and love helps to keep the grip. Chriſt dwells in the heart by faith, and he burns in the heart by love, like a fire melting the breaſt. Faith caſts the knot, and love draws it faſt.—The dignity of being *God's children;* we are *the children of God by faith:* and *to as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the ſons of God, even to them that believe in his name*, John i. 12. And is this a ſmall thing to be a ſon to the King of kings; or to enjoy the privileges of his children; *the ſon abideth in the houſe for ever;* to be *heirs of God, and joint heirs with Chriſt?* O if we knew the excellency of this dignity, it would ſtir us up to more concern after this grace of faith!—The dignity of *power* with God, like Jacob; for, he hath ſaid, *Whatſoever ye aſk in prayer, believing, ye ſhall receive it*, Mat. xxi. 22. And, indeed, if ye receive Chriſt, ye ſhall receive whatſoever ye aſk of God. It is ſtrange to ſee his condeſcenſion, in that he puts a blank in the poor believer's hand many times, ſaying, *What wilt thou that I ſhould do unto thee?*

3. The third excellency in faith, is with reſpect to other *graces*, in that it advances all other graces: faith doth quicken every other grace.—It advances *love;* and hence faith and love are put together in ſcripture ſo frequently: for, no ſooner doth faith look to the glorious object, than love delights in it; faith draws aſide the vail; and love ſits down and ſolaces itſelf in the diſcovery.—Faith advances *mortification;* for, by this ſhield of faith, we *quench the fiery darts of the wicked: And this is the victory whereby we overcome the world, even our faith.* Faith makes the ſoul to eſteem his idols to be as taſteleſs as the white of an egg: and that which formerly was ſweet proviſion for their luſts, doth now become ſorrowful meat, and bitter herbs.—Hence faith advanceth *humility.* By *what law is boaſting excluded?* It is not *by the law of works*, but by *the law of faith:* yea, faith ſees ſuch glory in Chriſt, as makes the man vile in his own eyes.—Faith advances *joy;* for, *the God of peace doth fill with joy and peace in believing: in whom believing we rejoice.* The more faith the more joy.—And further, faith advances the grace of *hope.* We cannot hope for the thing promiſed, unleſs by faith we cloſe with the promiſe itſelf; for, faith lays hold on the promiſe, and hope to the thing promiſed.—In a word, all the graces of the Spirit are quickened and advanced by this grace of faith; as, peace, long-ſuffering, gentleneſs, goodneſs, and temperance.

4. The

* What theſe things are, may be ſeen above, p. 217, 239, 240.

4. The fourth excellency in faith, is with reſpect to *duty*, in that it advances duties as well as graces: I inſtance in prayer and obedience.—It advances and excites to the duty of *prayer*: a believing perſon is a praying perſon; *Lord, I believe*, ſaid the man, Mark ix. 24.; there is the confeſſion and profeſſion of his faith: *Lord, help my unbelief*; there immediately follows his prayer. Faith excites to the greateſt diligence in attending upon the Lord in this duty. Little faith makes little prayer; little ſweet diverſion from ſleep, in this ſpiritual exerciſe.—It advances *obedience*: faith makes obedience eaſy and pleaſant; Heb. xi. 8. *By faith Abraham, when called to go out to a place which he ſhould after receive for an inheritance, obeyed.* Why are God's commands a burden? Even want of faith is the reaſon: a pleaſant obedience is impoſſible without faith. Faith diſcovers the invaluable excellencies that are in Chriſt, and this makes the perſon look upon his duty, more as his dignity than his duty. Faith takes hold of that infinite ſtrength that is in Chriſt, and draws virtue from him; and this makes him obey. No holineſs without faith. It facilitates every duty, and makes it ſweet: but unbelief makes every duty a burden.

5. The fifth excellency in faith, is with reſpect to *acceptance* of every duty and action: neither our prayers nor ſervices are acceptable but in faith; *By faith Abel offered up a more acceptable ſacrifice than Cain*, Heb. xi. 4. Intimating, that without faith, no acceptable ſacrifice. And ver. 6. *Without faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe God*; intimating, that by faith we do exceedingly pleaſe him. Many prayers are nothing elſe but a breach of the third command, in *taking the name of God in vain*; for which *the Lord will not hold them guiltleſs*. The duties of the moſt part are nothing but abomination; becauſe, to the *unbelieving and impure, nothing is clean*, Tit. i. 15.

6. The ſixth excellency in faith, is in reſpect of *communion with God*. Faith is that grace whereby a believer doth attain the moſt *intimate* communion with God, and correſpondence with heaven; for, *Chriſt dwells in the heart by faith*, Eph. iii. 17. By the exerciſe of other graces, Chriſt is as a paſſenger that tarries at moſt for a night: but, by the exerciſe of faith, he is as an inhabitant, that comes and takes up houſe with us. The acts of faith are like the ſteps of a ladder, by which we go up to heaven, and converſe with the higher houſe; it uſhers the believer to the throne.—It is the grace whereby the believer attains the moſt *ſenſible enjoyments*; for, it keeps the eye upon the moſt glorious object: and ſeeing it is a ſenſible act, and faith is a *ſeeing of him who is inviſible*, Heb. xi. 27.; perhaps ſome may be ſaying, Whence ſo little ſeeing of the Lord? Alas! it is more than *thirty days* ſince I ſaw the King: yea, ſome may be at that; I have lived theſe *two years* at Jeruſalem, and yet have not ſeen the King's face: yea, the complaint of ſome may go higher; theſe *three years and ſix months*, it hath not rained upon me, but the clouds have been reſtrained and bound up, and the heaven hath become braſs; and why? it is the want of the exerciſe of faith: many are leſs convinced of the neglect of the duty of faith, than of the neglect of the duty of prayer: but if we knew the excellency of this grace, we would have a holy impatience till we believed.—It is by faith the man hath a *clear ſight* of the things promiſed; the great things in the promiſe, as well as the promiſe itſelf: by faith a man is brought within ſight of God, and within ſight of heaven; *Faith is the evidence of things not ſeen*, Heb. xi. 1. So by *faith Moſes ſaw him who is inviſible*, ver. 27. Why, is it poſſible to ſee things that cannot be ſeen? yea, faith's diſcoveries of God are as certain as the diſcoveries of our bodily eyes are: and, by this means, it comes to have ſuch communion with God; for it is moſt myſterious and ſublime in its actings; and therefore called the *myſtery of faith*.—Hence faith can believe the word of promiſe, though ſenſe ſeems to contradict the accompliſhment thereof; for, it walks not upon the low ground of ſenſe and reaſon, but upon the high road of the *ſure word of prophecy*, and the divine faithfulneſs is engaged in the promiſe; as we ſee in Abraham's faith, Rom. iv. 19. Thus faith believed the falling down of the walls of Jericho, by the blowing of rams horns, which was impoſſible to ſenſe and reaſon.—Faith can believe the promiſe, though the *providence* of God ſeems to contradict the accompliſhment; ſaying with Job, *Though he kill me, yet will I truſt in him.* Notwithſtanding of killing diſpenſations, yet he would believe the Lord's word.—Faith can believe a word of promiſe even when the *commands* of God ſeem to contradict the accompliſhment: thus when Abraham was commanded to ſacrifice his ſon, the promiſed ſeed, yet he believed the promiſe would be accompliſhed: "He had natural affection to wreſtle with, and "the command of God ſeeming to contradict "the promiſe of God; yet, over the belly of "all theſe, as one faith, believing Abraham "gives faith to the promiſe, and brings Iſaac "to the altar," Heb. xi. 17, 18, 19.—Faith can believe a promiſe, though *challenges* for ſin and *conviction* of guilt do ſeem to oppoſe and contradict the accompliſhment of the promiſe; 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. *Though my houſe be not ſo with God*, yet he believed the promiſe, ſaying, *he hath made with me an everlaſting covenant, ordered in all things and ſure.* Thus again, Pſal. lxv. 3. *Iniquities prevail againſt me*; yet this doth not interrupt his faith; *as for our tranſgreſſions, thou ſhalt purge them away*: And ſurely it is a noble act of faith to believe, notwithſtanding of unanſwerable challenges of guilt. The beſt way, both to crucify idols, and to anſwer challenges, is by receiving Chriſt, and hoping againſt hope. Now, the faith of a promiſe being the great medium, the grand mean of communion with God, and intercourſe with heaven, we may ſee how it advances communion with God.—Yea, faith can believe a promiſe, though temptations, falls, and follies ſeem to contradict the accompliſhment. Satan aims at nothing more, than to oppoſe and weaken faith; but God turns his temptations, and their falls, to the further eſtabliſhment of faith, which, like a tree, ſtands the ſtronger of its being ſhaken. True faith gets ſtrength by every fall to the ground, it riſes and fights more valiantly; as we ſee in Peter, and other ſcripture examples. Temptation to faith is as fire to gold, 1 Pet. i. 7. It makes the true gold more pure; and inſtead of deſtroying faith, it is the occaſion of refining it, and adding to its ſtrength.——I might enlarge this purpoſe, concerning the excellency of faith, to a great degree; from the conſideration of the worthy Prince that faith receives,

Chriſt

Christ Jesus the Lord; and the *walk* that issues from thence, and ends in glory.

3*dly*, The third thing here proposed, in this exhortation to receive Christ, was to give some *directions*, in order to the receiving of Christ: And the directions I would offer may be confined to these four. 1. Study the *sad state* you are in while without Christ, and faith in him. 2. Study the *right use* of the means of faith. 3. Study to have the *obstructions* and *impediments* of faith removed. 4. Study the art of *pleading with God*, for this grace to receive Christ.

[1.] Study the *sad state* you are in, while without Christ, and without faith to receive him. While you are destitute of faith you are destiture of Christ; yea, you are yet in nature, and have neither part nor portion in him: and therefore, O man, be deeply impressed with the sad case and state you are in, upon this account; for, you will never seek after Christ, nor faith in him, till you see your need of him, by getting your natural state discovered to you. Though this be not the formal cause of faith, yet it is a forcible mean to engage the soul to be restless, till it get faith in Christ; therefore the law is said to be *our schoolmaster, to lead us unto Christ*. Study therefore, I say, the sadness of a Christless state. Why?

1. A Christless state is a *burdened* state: you ly under the burden of all your sins, original and actual: the burden of the guilt of all your sinful thoughts, words, and actions lies upon your back; because you never come to Christ with your burdens: and if you never come, the burden will sink you down to the lowest hell.

2. The Christless state that you are in is a *loathsom* state. All your actions, whether natural, civil, or religious, are vile and abominable in the sight of God: the very *prayer of the wicked is sin*. You are full of nothing but *putrifying sores, from the crown of the head to the sole of your foot*. There is no mire so unclean, no vomit so loathsom, no pestilence so noisom, no carion so offensive, as thou art in thy Christless state, in the sight of a holy God, who cannot *look upon iniquity but with abhorrence*.

3. Thy Christless state is a *poor, blind*, and *naked* state. Your soul is naked, and you swarm with the vermin of filthy lusts: you are destitute of a garment, to cover you; of eye-salve to enlighten you; and of gold to enrich you: there seems to be an allusion to Christ's threefold office, Rev. iii. 18. *I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see*. As a Prophet, he hath eye-salve; as a Priest, he hath a garment; and as a King, he hath gold: but now, you are destitute of all these, while you are without Christ, and without faith in him.

4. Your Christless state is an *enslaved* state. You are a slave to Satan; he works in your heart, as in his shop, Eph. ii. 2. He says to you, *Go, and you go; do this, and ye do it*. Your state is worse than the Egyptian bondage; for, *Israel groaned under theirs*; but, alas! you are not sensible of yours; neither do you believe it: the devil knows, that if you perceived your slavery, you would seek to make your escape from him; therefore he makes all sure. He does with you as the Philistines did with Samson; puts out your eyes that you may not see your chains, nor look to Christ for liberty.

5. Your Christless state is therefore a *wrathful* state, wherein God's wrath is burning against you; the flaming sword of justice is always over your neck; for, *God is angry with the wicked every day*, Psal. vii. 11. Every day of the week, and every hour of the day; when you go out, and when you come in; when you rise up, and ly down; God is still angry with you: he hath bent his bow, and made ready his arrows; and you are the butt of these arrows of his indignation: and if he let them fly, they will pierce you to the very soul; and who will heal that wound? Who can help you if Christ neglect you? No reconciliation but through him.

6. Your Christless state is a *cursed* state. All the curses of the broken law are levelled against you: and a just God is engaged, by his oath, to ruin you: to whom doth he *swear in his wrath, that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believe not?* Heb. iii. 18. Should not the thoughts of this make you tremble? Were it but the oath of a man, or a company of men, as these forty men, that bound themselves with an oath, that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul, it would bereave you of your night's rest and quiet, till you were made friends with your enemies: And will the oath of the great God have no effect upon you, nor move you to fly to Christ for protection?

Study this sad state you are in; for withal, it is a *weak* state; since, by nature, you are *without strength*, and cannot help yourselves. You can by no means redeem your own soul, or pay your own ransom. Therefore,

[2.] Study the *right use* of the means of faith. Now, when we speak of means, you would know, that faith is not a flower that grows in nature's garden; *By grace ye are saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God*. Yea, though a natural man could gather together all the motives and arguments of the Bible, yet he could not make his own heart to believe, or receive Christ: God is the giver, Christ is the author, and the Holy Ghost is the efficient cause of faith; yet notwithstanding there are means which the Lord uses to bless, for working faith. And in general, the great mean and ministerial instrument is the gospel, which discovers a shore for a shipwrecked soul; and it is the *power of God to salvation*.

More particularly, the ordinary means are especially these six, in so many words. 1. Mean is *reading* of the scriptures; *these are they that testify of Christ*, the great object of faith. 2. *Hearing* of the word preached; for, *Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*. 3. *Meditation*: for if a man never think upon his way, nor consider matters, he will neither know God, nor believe in him; *The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib, but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider*. Meditate on Christ's fulness, your own wants, the suitableness of the promises, and the freedom of grace. 4. *Prayer*; waiting at wisdom's gates, and crying for wisdom to *put forth her voice*; to *give understanding*, to *speak of excellent things*; and that the *opening of her lips may be*, that her *mouth may speak of truth and righteousness*. 5. *Conversation* with the godly; for, *He that walketh with the wise, shall be wise*. 6. *Self-examination*; *Examine your-*

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ſelves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own-ſelves; know ye not your own-ſelves, how that Jeſus Chriſt is in you, except ye be reprobates? Many never believe, becauſe they never examine, nor put the queſtion, whether they have believed or not.——These are ſome of the means. Now, I ſay, ſtudy the right uſe of the means of faith.

QUEST. *What is the right uſe of theſe means?* Indeed no unbeliever can rightly uſe theſe means: but you are to ſtudy to uſe them as rightly as poſſible, and to uſe them right, is to uſe them,

1. *Humbly*, knowing that means will not do without the Lord's bleſſing upon the means. Never think that God is obliged to give you faith, upon the account of your uſing the means; but uſe them, becauſe he enjoins them as means: put them in their own place, not in Chriſt's room; and do, as the mariner; he cannot command the wind, yet he lies ready at the coaſt, and waits on the wind; and when the gale comes, he hoiſts up the ſails: ſo, though you cannot command the wind of the Spirit, which *blows where it liſts*; yet, wait humbly upon his blowing, and till he *come and move the waters.*

2. *Hopefully* and *believingly*; *It is good for a man both to hope and quietly to wait for the ſalvation of God*, Lam. iii. 26. If God looks upon no motive in us to induce him to give us Chriſt; who then may not hope and expect againſt hope, and believe againſt unbelief? People, in uſing the means, ſhould do it as believingly as they can, by trying what the Spirit of faith will help them to, preſſing after faith, with an eye to the promiſed ſtrength: and ſo ſtudy to mix faith with the uſe of the word; for, *the word preached did not profit, not being mixed with faith in them who heard it.* And the word read doth not profit, not being mixed with faith in them that read; neither do we receive any thing by prayer, but by believing. Therefore, cry for the ſpirit of faith to accompany the means.

3. Means are to be uſed *frequently*: be often about the Lord's hand, in the uſe of the means; *Bleſſed is he that ſoweth beſide all waters.* We have a common proverb: *A going foot is always getting*: If you be much about God's hand, there will be ſome off-fallings now and then to be got. How frequent and induſtrious was Elijah in the uſe of the means! He went up to mount Carmel, and there fell on his face and prayed for rain; but not a cloud appears: he ſent his ſervant to go up and look toward the ſea, to know if there was any appearance of rain; he returning tells there is nothing: he doth not leave praying; he prays again, and ſends his ſervant again, even to ſeven times, 1 Kings xviii. 42, 43. Thus uſe the means frequently and induſtriouſly. And ſo,

4. *Fervently*: *Be fervent in ſpirit, ſerving the Lord*: be earneſt in this matter, as a matter of eternal life and death; ſeeking the ſpirit of faith as what you cannot want; *Aſk, and it ſhall be given; ſeek, and ye ſhall find; knock, and it ſhall be opened unto you*, Luke xi. 9. Why, all theſe words, aſk, ſeek, knock, doth intimate fervency, as well as frequency, in the uſe of means: and what are we thus fervently to ſeek? even *the Spirit*, ver. 13.

5. *Patiently*; *Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord: behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain*, James v. 7. *Wait patiently for him*, Pſal. xxxvii. 7. *The Lord is a God of judgment, bleſſed are all they that wait for him*, Iſa. xxx. 18. The word may ſeem ſtrange; for there is encouragement in waiting on a God of mercy, but what comfort in waiting upon a God of judgment? but *judgment* in this place is not to be underſtood as oppoſed to mercy, but to folly: he is a God of judgment; that is, of infinite wiſdom, who knows how to time and order his gifts.

6. *Perſeveringly*; Hoſ. xii. 6. *Wait on thy God continually*, till he come in with regenerating grace: do not *limit the holy One of Iſrael*; it is reaſonable to wait God's leiſure, for he gives grace freely and ſovereignly: and if grace come in the end, what though we have waited long for it?—Uſe the means *honeſtly*, and *do not weary in well-doing; for, in due time, ye ſhall reap if ye faint not.* Give not over the uſe of means, but wait on him who *waits to be gracious.* We never heard of any that got this diſpoſition, but they found their waiting on the Lord was not in vain; the Lord pitied them and gave them a heart to believe and receive Chriſt.——This is the direction I offer then; ſtudy the right uſe of the means of faith.

[3.] Study to get removed from you all the *obſtructions* and *impediments* of faith and receiving of Chriſt: and the impediments are theſe ſix.

1. Impediment of faith that hinders the receiving of him, is *natural atheiſm: The fool hath ſaid in his heart, there is no God.* And an atheiſtical ſpirit hath moſt ſordid apprehenſions of God: it doth not take him up in the greatneſs of his nature, nor in the authority of his word: God looks not like a God to that perſon: the word of God is not like the word of God: the ſweet promiſes are but empty notions to the man: the ſharp threatenings of hell and wrath, are but terrible fables to him. O ſeek that the power of God may remove this impediment; otherwiſe you will never believe nor receive Chriſt.

2. Impediment is *groſs ignorance*; ignorance of God and of Chriſt. Many fooliſhly queſtion, whether or not they have an intereſt in Chriſt, before ever they know that there is a Chriſt: they are ignorant of Chriſt, and his excellency; ignorant of the law, and its ſeverity; ignorant of the goſpel, and its condeſcendency; ignorant of themſelves, and their ſinfulneſs, and miſery, and their abſolute need that they ſtand in of this glorious goſpel-remedy. If they knew the diſpoſition of God toward ſinners out of Chriſt, they would not take reſt, while they are expoſed to that conſuming fire, and within the flood-mark of his wrath. If they were not ignorant of their natural ſtate, they would not reſt content in that ſtate. If they knew Chriſt, they would not be content to live without him: *If thou kneweſt the gift of God*, ſays Chriſt to the woman of Samaria, *and who it is that ſaith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldeſt have aſked of him, and he would have given thee living water*, John iv. 10. *My people are deſtroyed for lack of knowledge.* O ignorant ſouls, you are nearer hell than others; your ſtate is darkneſs, and it borders upon utter darkneſs. You ſwear, and lie, and drink drunk, and break the Sabbath, and commit uncleanneſs; you ſlight ordinances, you ſlight duties, you ſlight prayer, in ſecret and family; you go on in ſin without flying to Chriſt; and all is becauſe of your ignorance: *They that know his name put their truſt in him*; but you know him not, and therefore believe not.

Why,

Why, say you, many have knowledge that make no good use of it; yea, they are more graceless and profane, than we that are poor ignorant creatures. I answer, that their knowledge is but head-knowledge, and not heart-knowledge; or else it would influence their heart and life; and they have a sad account to make, for sinning against so much knowledge: but this will not help you; for profanity kills them, and ignorance kills you; they die of one disease, and you die of another. Will you reject knowledge because some abuse it? Why, that is as ridiculous as to say, because many die who have both food and physic, and plenty of means for preserving life; therefore, I will use no means, for preserving of my life at all. They that have food and physic may die; but they that have none of them cannot live: so, whoever perish, ignorant persons, that slight the means, are sure to perish.

3. Impediment of faith that you need to seek removed is *presumption:* Many presume they have Christ already, and thus they need not receive him: they will not confess that they want Christ. Many presume they have a righteousness of their own: Christ spoke a parable to certain that trusted in themselves, that they were righteous. If a proud man hath money in his house, he will scorn to be obliged to his neighbour: so it is with the proud sinner, his language is, *I have never wronged any man;* none can say, black is the eye of my head; I am neither whore nor thief; I have a good heart to God; and have done as well as I could. Alas! poor deluded creature, cannot the God, who *charges his angels with folly*, see a fault in you? yea, millions of deformities doth he see: and is this a sufficient bottom for you to sail to heaven into? There is a leck in the vessel that will sink you for ever, into the bottomless pit: the soul is the passenger, graces are the sails, the spirit is the wind, but Christ only is the bottom, in which you can sail safe to glory. It is said of some in the Acts, *They came and burnt their books, whenever they came and believed in Christ:* so, if ever you believe in Christ, that trash must be burnt; you must be forced out of yourselves, and obliged to relinquish every thing about you.

4. Impediment of faith is *earthly mindedness* and *worldly dispositions:* the vanity of the world so possesses the mind, that there is no room for Christ: the thoughts of the world shut out the thoughts of God. As Saul hid himself among the stuff: so, many are buried and absorbed in the midst of the world. And yet, all the best things of a world are like the shadow of the sun, which the least cloud can remove: like a heap of chaff, which any wind can blow away; and like Jonah's gourd, which any worm can eat out.

5. Impediment of faith is a *heart-league with sin*, which hinders the match with Christ: why, we are married to other lovers, and in love with sin; Christ comes as a *Saviour to save from sin;* well, he is welcome; yea, but it is to save from such a beloved sin as your drunkenness, whoredom, lewd and carnal company: why, here the heart recoils: Oh! I cannot live without my nature; I cannot part with Benjamin. At the root of unbelief, try when you will, you will find the heart is in league with some lust, which it cannot part with. Seek the removal of these impediments.

6. Impediment of faith is the *cunning artifices* of *natural unbelief.* The unbelieving heart hath a thousand deceits whereby it keeps off people from Christ, and from the receiving of him. Sometimes unbelief presents impossibilities before the man: O it is impossible that God will have mercy on you: it is impossible that the like of you can get to heaven. Unbelief will present a thousand difficulties and discouragements; *there is a lion in the way:* you will never be able to believe; never be able to pray; never able to hold on in God's way. Unbelief doth harden the heart, and turn it so stupid, that they are no more moved with the word, than if they were a thousand miles from ordinances. Unbelief fills the heart with slothfulness, so as the man doth not put forth his hand, as it were, to receive the offered Saviour and salvation. Yea, unbelief presents a world of wrong objects of faith, and that hinders true faith, or believing in, and receiving of the Lord Jesus Christ, the only true object.

There are four things that unbelief doth cunningly lead men to build upon, that seem good things, and are so indeed; but yet wrong objects of faith, namely, sense, duties, graces, providence.

(1.) Through the cunning of unbelief, a man will build his faith upon *sense*, and not upon Christ: thus Thomas, *Except I put my fingers into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into the hole of his side, I will not believe.* O Sirs, to believe in a bare word of promise, abstract from sense, is a great mystery: and therefore, when one makes sense and feeling his idol, God usually withdraws himself, and denies sensible tokens of his presence, that they may learn to build upon Christ only, or upon a bare word of promise.

(2.) Through the cunning of unbelief, a man will build his faith upon his *duties*, and *establishing a righteousness of his own, and not submitting to the righteousness of God.* And thus he builds upon self: or, like the whorish woman that divided the child, he makes the object of his faith, half Christ, and half self, when unbelief cannot prevail to exclude Christ wholly.

(3.) Through the cunning of unbelief, a man will build his faith upon his *graces;* and so lies open to that challenge, Ezek. xvi. 15. *Thou did put thy trust in thy beauty.* And thus, through the cunning of the old serpent, and of unbelief, the man will build his faith upon his faith, and not his faith upon Christ: it is not Christ that is the righteousness of such persons, but their faith is their righteousness. Hence many can give no other ground of their faith, but just this, *they believe:* and what is the foundation of their faith? Why, they believe, because they believe: they hope to be saved, because they believe: and whence do they believe, but because they believe? Alas! it is a fancy instead of faith; and a fancy built upon a fancy.

(4.) Through the cunning of unbelief, a man will build his faith upon *providence:* hence, ask at some people, what is the ground of their hope for heaven? O, say they, God hath been good and kind to me all my days; he hath many times protected me from danger, and [illegible] me in difficulties, and fed me in my straits: yea, perhaps, he is only feeding you for a day of slaughter: no man can know love or hatred by these outward providences. These

These wrong objects of faith, and grounds of believing, are great obstacles and impediments, in the way of true believing and receiving of Christ.

Now, O Sirs, seek that all these impediments of faith may be taken out of the way; whether it be atheism, ignorance, presumption, earthly-mindedness, a heart-league with sin, or the cunnings of natural unbelief, presenting wrong objects of faith. Another direction is,

[4.] Study the art of *pleading with God* for *grace to receive Christ*. It is true, God is not bound to hear an unbeliever's prayer; but he that *hears the ravens when they cry*, may hear you when you plead with him for the blessing. And, if you would learn the art of pleading, there are six pleas, or arguments, wherewith you may urge him to pity you.

1. Plead his *promise*, Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27. *A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.* It is a free gracious promise: cry to him to make good that word to you, seeing he hath said, *For this will I be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them*, ver. 37. Tell him, that now you are come to enquire, and request him to do it.

2. Plead your own *impotency* and *inability* to help yourselves: this was the impotent man's plea at the pool of Bethesda, John v. 6, 7. *When Jesus saw him ly, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool; but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me.* So say you, Lord, I have lain many years with this dead plagued heart, beside the open fountain of thy blood; I am unable to move to it of myself, I have none to put me in: ordinances cannot do it; ministers cannot do it; thou must put to thy helping hand, or else the work will remain unperformed.

3. Plead his *power*, in a sense of your own impotency. Do you feel the power and multitude of your corruptions within you? Say with Jehoshaphat, *Lord, I have no might against this great company; neither know I what to do: but mine eyes are upon thee.* With thee all things are possible. Though I may despair of help in myself and others; yet, thou hast forbid me to despair of help in thee. *Thou said, Let there be light, and there was light:* O say, let there be faith and it will immediately take place; for, faith is thy work and thy gift: it is *the* WORK *of God that we believe: By grace we are saved, through faith, and that not of ourselves, it is the* GIFT *of God.*

4. Plead your *necessity*, your extreme need of Christ, and of faith in him. O man, there is not a starving man that needs meat so much, as you need Christ: there is not an wounded man that needs a physician; a shipwrecked man, that needs a plank; a dying man with the dead rattle in his throat, that needs breath so much, as thou needs Christ. O then, cry, *Give me Christ, or else I die.* I may live without friends, without wealth, and honour, and pleasure; but I cannot live without Christ, and without faith.—Plead his *power*; how easy is it for him to help, saying, as Psal. lxxx. 1. *O thou that dwells between the cherubims, shine forth:* it will cost thee no more pain to work faith in me, than it doth the sun to shine forth. Yea, he can more easily put forth his power and grace, than the sun can dart out its beams. It is no trouble nor loss to the sun to shine forth: so neither will it be to him, to shew his power and mercy: a look, or a touch, will do it; since he can so easily do it. You may cry with hope; he will never miss an alms bestowed on a beggar, out of the ocean of his bounty. Nay, as the sun, the more it shines, displays its glory the more: so will he gain glory by putting forth his power to help you.

5. Plead his *mercy*, and the freeness and communicativeness of it.—Plead the *freeness* of his mercy, that needs no motive, and expects no worth: it runs freely, so that the mountains cannot stop the current thereof, no more than the rocks can stop the ebbing and flowing of the sea.—Plead the *communicativeness* of his mercy to others: he had compassion on men's bodies, that came to him for healing; and will he not have compassion upon souls, that come to him for life? Is not mercy the work that he delights in? that perfection of his nature that he takes pleasure to display?

6. Plead Christ's *commission*, Isa. lxi. 1. that he came *to proclaim liberty to the captive, and the opening of prison-doors to them that are bound.* Cry, Lord, here is a *poor* prisoner, a locked and bound up heart; here is employment for thee: O loose and knock off my fetters, and bring my soul out of prison.—O here is a *naked* sinner for thee to cover, a wounded soul for thee to cure, a lost sheep for thee to seek and save: and, was not this thy errand? Thou *came to seek and save that which was lost.* And, wilt thou not be found of a lost sinner, that desires to seek thee, through thy grace? Plead his commission under the broad seal of heaven; for, *Him hath God the Father sealed.* And plead the value of his blood, and merit of his righteousness; and upon that ground whereby all grace is purchased: plead for faith and grace to *receive Christ Jesus the Lord.*

Thus I have laid before you some directions, in order to the receiving of Christ. O cry for grace to follow them, and put them in practice, so as you may indeed close the bargain with him.——I should now answer some *objections*, but am prevented with your time *. O shall all these directions be lost and Christ be still slighted and rejected! O Sirs, you cannot please God better, than by coming to Christ, and embracing the offer of him: and you cannot please the devil better than by refusing the offer of Christ; and putting him off with delays, till you perish in your unbelief.

And now, after all that hath been said, what are you resolved upon? Will you receive Christ, or not? Our glorious Lord and Master hath sent us to pose you, man, woman; and demand whether you will receive him or not? O! what answer shall we return? Must we go and say, that all this people, upon no terms, will receive him; none of them are for precious Christ? Oh! God forbid! shall he not *see the travel of his soul*, who travelled through all the armies of God's wrath for you, and gave his soul an offering for your sin? O give your soul to him, saying, Lord, in spite of the devil and of unbelief, through grace I will open my heart and

* This seems to be the conclusion of one of the discourses.

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arms to receive Christ!——The Lord himself help you to *receive him*, and *walk in him*.

4*thly*, The *fourth* thing, upon this exhortation, to receive Christ was, to answer some *objections*. There are two things, that the sum of Christianity, and the whole of a gospel-life doth consist in; and they both have a respect to Christ, and are these, in short, 1. To *take* him; 2. To *use* him. Now, behold Christ's name sounds in the ears of multitudes, that never yet could be persuaded, to take him and use him: to take him as he is offered, and to use and improve him as he is taken; yet this is the great call of God in the words of our text; *As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:* where the way to heaven is described, by taking Christ, so as to receive him as *Christ Jesus the Lord;* and then by using and improving him, so as to walk in him suitably to that reception. The receiving of Christ being the leading thing here, without which there can be no walking in him; therefore, I have insisted a considerable time upon this exhortation, to receive Christ. But after all that hath been said for conviction, excitation, and direction, perhaps the hearts of hearers are filled with a thousand objections, against this great and necessary duty of *receiving Christ Jesus the Lord.* We cannot answer the half of them; yea, no man or angel can answer one of them without Christ. All objections whatsoever, would vanish before the grace of the gospel, rightly understood, and powerfully displayed. Christ stands in the gospel ready, to hear and answer all your objections; and he can do it with a word.

If the soul say, I have no right to receive Christ, for I am a great sinner; his answer is ready: *I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.*—O, says the soul, my sins are red as crimson: Well, says Christ, *I can make thee white as wool.*—Oh! but I have no reason to hope; for I am a lost creature: nay, says Christ, *I came to seek and save that which was lost;* and many a lost sheep I have sought and found.—O but, says one, I am past cure, for I am dead and rotten in the grave of sin: nay, but, says Christ, *I am the resurrection and the life.*—O but, says the soul, I am a slave to sin and Satan, and a prisoner to justice: well, says Christ in his word, *I am come to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.*—O but I have many burdens of sin, and guilt, and confusion, and innumerable burdens, that I cannot mention: well, says Christ, *Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*—O but my hand is withered, I cannot receive Christ: well, in this case, Christ bids you *stretch forth the withered hand*, believing in him for grace to believe; and coming to him for grace to come.—O but, says the soul, I am lame, and cannot walk in Christ, or in his way: well, says Christ, *I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes.*—Ah! but he may withdraw his Spirit, and depart from me: no, says Christ, *I will make an everlasting covenant with thee; I will not turn away from them to do them good.*—O! but I may depart from him, and make apostasy: no, says Christ, Jer. xxxii. 40. *I will put my fear in your heart, that ye shall not depart from me.* And, Jer. iii. 19. *Thou shalt call me, My Father, and shall not turn away from me.*—O! but I may be overcome with strong temptations: well, says Christ, *Fear not, for I am with thee; my grace is sufficient for thee.*—Alas! but I have been a great backslider already: well, says Christ, there is a word for you to rely on, in answer to that, *I will heal your backslidings, and love you freely.*——And thus Christ, in the word of grace, and gospel of salvation, stands ready to answer every objection.

But more particularly, we might open the *grounds* of manifold objections, that sinners make against believing in, or receiving of Christ.

1. Objections are drawn from the *greatness* and *multitude of sins.* It is true, there are some who have no such objection as this at all: they are as secure, senseless, and stupid, as a stone of the wall: there is no hope of saying any thing, to move and affect such, unless the Lord himself awaken them. But if any here were objecting to this purpose, though it was but one in all this company: "Oh! my guilt is so "grievous, my sins are so great, and my trans- "gressions are so multiplied, that you would "tremble to think of the sins I have been guilty "of, and what light I have sinned against; and "this makes my heart sink: none knows, but "God and my own conscience, what a sinner "I have been; and will Christ ever accept of "me?" *Answ.* The greatness of your sins should be a great argument to engage you to come to Christ, and receive him. Your sins are not greater than God's mercies: your guilt is not greater than Christ's merits. It is hardly to be supposed, that you are worse than some who yet have obtained mercy; such as Paul, a persecutor and blasphemer; Manasseh, a murderer and wizard, in compact with the devil; Mary Magdalene, in whom were seven devils; and many of the Jews that crucified the Lord of glory, yet washed in that blood of the Lamb, which they shed. The merit of Christ's blood is infinite; though your sins were greater than all sins, yet there is virtue in his blood to expiate them; for, it *cleanses from all sin.* Though the sands be many and large, yet the sea can overflow them all: so, though your sins be numerous and great, the blood of Christ can cover them all.—In a word, the question is not about the *greatness* of your sins, but your *present duty:* be your sin what it will, the Lord calls you to come to Christ and receive him: and your unbelief, in your rejecting Christ, is greater than all your other sins; for it is a refusal of the remedy, whereby you may be relieved of all your sin and guilt. Your other sins are but against the law; but this sin, in rejecting Christ, is against the law and the gospel both. Other sins are against God; but this sin, in rejecting Christ, is against God and Christ both. It is a great sin to think any sin little; but it is a greater sin, to think the righteousness of Christ is not above all sin. Our disobedience is the disobedience of man; but Christ's obedience is the obedience of God: therefore, our believing in Christ doth please God better, than if we had continued in innocency, and never sinned. The least sin is unpardonable without this obedience and righteousness of Christ; and the greatest is pardonable by it. Therefore, O seek in to Christ, to be cloathed upon with this righteousness.

2. Objections are drawn from the *justice of God:* "Oh, God is just, and will not hold the "sinner guiltless: therefore, though I should "fly to the horns of the altar, there I fear ju- "stice would be avenged upon me." *Answ.* This is also an argument why you should re-

ceive

ceive Chriſt. God's juſtice indeed muſt be ſatisfied, and there is no way in the world, to give ſatisfaction to God, but by believing in Chriſt: for, *God is in Chriſt reconciling the world to himſelf:* he hath endured the wrath of God, and ſo there is no way to anſwer juſtice, but by flying to that ſatisfaction he hath made; and if you do, juſtice will not demand a double ſatisfaction; one from thee, and another from thy Surety: no, he will *deliver from going down to the pit, becauſe he hath found a ranſom.* It is contrary to the nature of juſtice, to demand a double ſatisfaction, when the ſatisfaction given by Chriſt is infinite.

3. Objection is drawn from the *ſinner's unworthineſs.* "Oh! I am utterly unworthy, and have "nothing to move God to pity me; will he "accept of the like of me?" *Anſw.* What think ye is the ſtrength of that reaſoning? It comes juſt to this: I have no merit; therefore, God will have no mercy: there is no ſalvation for me by the law; therefore, there is no ſalvation for me by the goſpel. If you look at God with a legal eye, the leaſt ſin makes you uncapable of mercy: but if you look at him in Chriſt, or with an evangelical eye, the greateſt ſinner is capable of mercy: yea, the ſenſe of unworthineſs makes a man the more capable. It is an unworthy objection, and argues lamentable ignorance of the goſpel. Come to him as deſerving nothing but wrath, and flying to God's free grace, and Chriſt's full merit, and the covenant's rich promiſe. It is with faith, as it is with a bird caſt into the water, it cannot fly, the element is ſo groſs; it cannot clap its wings there: but caſt it into the air, then it will clap its wings and mount: ſo, faith is the wing of the ſoul; when it looks to the man's ſelf, and his own worthineſs, this is ſuch a groſs element faith cannot mount; but let it out to the air of God's free grace and promiſe in Chriſt, then it will act and fly: yea, grace cannot act but upon an unworthy object, and without any cauſe from the object. Juſtice hath an eye upon the diſpoſition of the perſon, in its rewards; but grace and mercy hath an eye upon itſelf. Thus, if a king execute a malefactor, this is an act of juſtice, and the cauſe of it is in the offender; but if a king pardon a malefactor, this is an act of grace, and the cauſe of it is in the king's breaſt, not in the worthineſs of the delinquent: ſo here, if you was worthy, you were not capable of this free gift. If ever there was a gift freely given, it is Chriſt: and will you reject him becauſe you are unworthy? Why, if you was worthy, it would not be a free gift. Nay, your refuſing of Chriſt, and ſtanding aback from him, for your unworthineſs, is great pride: you would have a bladder of your own, that you might ſwim to heaven, without being obliged to Chriſt. If you meet a poor beggar, and ſee nothing but miſery and poverty in his face, and draw your purſe and offer him a ſhilling; would it not be ſtrange to hear him ſay, No, I will not have it; I am not worthy; yonder is a gentleman in gay clothing, give it him, for he is worthy? Juſt as ridiculous is the caſe here, while you ſtand aback from Chriſt, becauſe of your unworthineſs. In a word, Chriſt is worthy enough of your taking. What if the greateſt prince in the world ſhould make ſuit to the pooreſt beggar, that hath neither beauty or dowry, though ſhe be unworthy to hear of the propoſal, yet the perſon is worthy who hath made it, and the acceptance of the motion is reaſonable: ſo it is here, if Chriſt, the *Prince of life,* and *King of glory,* be worth the receiving, then reject not his offer that he makes of himſelf: and indeed never will you be worthy till you receive him.

4. Objection is drawn from a doubt and ſuſpicion ariſing in the mind if Chriſt be *willing:* "Oh! I fear he is not willing to accept of me." *Anſw.* He *declares,* in his word, that he is not *willing that any ſhould periſh;* and he *ſwears* that he hath *no delight in the death of ſinners.* And, O ſinner! will you look up to God's face and ſay, though he hath both ſaid and ſworn to that purpoſe, yet he is not willing? His purpoſe of grace in ſaving ſome, doth not ſay that he is willing to deſtroy any; it only ſays, that, as he is not willing that any ſhould periſh, ſo, he is reſolved that all ſhall not get leave to deſtroy themſelves; as all would do, if he did not catch hold of ſome, and pluck them as brands out of the burning: and his doing ſo ſays, that none are deſtroyed by him, unleſs they deſtroy themſelves. None are willing to be ſaved by him, until his willingneſs prevents theirs. His not ſaving all, is no more an argument of his willingneſs that any ſhould periſh, than a king's not pardoning all rebels, is an argument of that prince's willingneſs, that any ſhould live in rebellion againſt him, and fall under his furious reſentment: and though it was poſſible for that earthly prince, to make them all willing ſubjects to him, yet it were not inconſiſtent with a merciful diſpoſition, for him to ſuffer ſome to take their will; that he may ſhew how obſtinate their nature is, and how equal and juſt he is in the adminiſtration of his government: for, acts of juſtice toward ſome is not inconſiſtent with a will to ſhow mercy upon all. Carnal reaſon and unbelief ſtill ſuſpects the willingneſs of Chriſt; eſpecially becauſe of a decree paſt in heaven, which the word mentions concerning the *ſalvation of ſome,* from which they know not but they may be excluded: but as this is a powerful temptation of Satan, leading men boldly and arrogantly, to meddle with the records of heaven, that are locked up from men and angels, till the *decree break forth;* ſo it is an evidence of our curſed enmity againſt God, that we will not believe his good-will in Chriſt, revealed in the goſpel toward ſinners, by ſo many commands and promiſes, calls and invitations. If you would notice inſtances of Chriſt's willingneſs; behold how he *wept over Jeruſalem,* ſelf-deſtroying Jeruſalem, rejecting his offer, Luke xix. 41, 42. *And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, ſaying, If thou hadſt known, even thou, at leaſt in this thy day, the things which belong to thy peace, but now they are hid from thine eyes.* What a moving ſight was this, to ſee the Son of God in a flood of tears for loſt ſinners! Had he been enquired at, as he did Mary, in another caſe, *Bleſſed Lord, what ſeekeſt thou? why weepeſt thou?* His anſwer readily would have been, "I ſeek not myſelf; I weep not for my-"ſelf; for, *I ſhall be glorious in the eyes of the Lord,* "*though ſinners be not gathered;* but I weep to ſee "ſinners ſo mad, as to reject their Saviour and "ſalvation, rather than part with their luſts "that have damnation attending them; I weep "to ſee them content, rather to caſt themſelves "headlong into the devil's arms, than throw "them-

" themſelves into my arms of mercy, or receive " and embrace me." Oh! how did Chriſt's heart melt with pity for you, and will not your hearts melt with deſire toward him! ſurely, all the rivers of tears, that flowed from his eyes; and the rivers of blood, that flowed from his pierced head, and feet, and hands, and ſide, will be ſtanding monuments of his good-will to ſave ſinners. How would you have him to diſcover his willingneſs? Why, man, woman; he juſt turns a humble ſupplicant to you; and, as it were, upon his bare knees beſeeches you to be reconciled to him; 2 Cor. v. 20. *We are ambaſſadors for Chriſt, as though God did beſeech you by us; we pray you in Chriſt's ſtead, be ye reconciled to God.* O ſtupendous and amazing condeſcenſion! Behold divine mercy ſtooping down to a ſinner, in the humbleſt poſture, importuning him to receive a Saviour, and to receive a free remiſſion through him! Surely the humble intreaties of the great God ſhould both convince us of his willingneſs to receive us, and ſhame us out of our unwillingneſs to receive Chriſt, and ſalvation through him.

5. Objection is drawn from a doubt or ſuſpicion of our being *prepared* for receiving of Chriſt. " Oh! ſays the ſinner, that is any way " ſenſible, I am not humbled enough; Chriſt " comes to *bind up the broken-hearted*; but my " heart is not broken: to *give the oil of joy for* " *mourning*; but I have not a mourning or melt- " ing ſpirit: therefore I may not believe, or " receive Chriſt." *Anſw.* You will never reckon yourſelf humbled enough, if you would have humiliation proportioned to your ſin, which is an infinite evil. Legal humiliation, though never ſo deep, though your heart ſhould be broken in as many pieces, as the glaſs doth ſhudder againſt the wall; and though you were roaring day and night, under the diſquiet of a guilty conſcience, and fearful apprehenſions of God's wrath; yet all this will not ſay, that you are now fit for Chriſt: theſe humiliations may be merely judicial, and puniſhments of ſin, as were thoſe of Cain and Judas: therefore, you cannot judge yourſelf by your legal humiliation, but only by the iſſue and event of them. Think not, then, to bring humiliation in your hand as a price; this but will more unfit you: the beſt humiliation is, to ſee your want of humiliation; the beſt preparation, to ſee your want of preparation, and your want of all good things about you: and to receive Chriſt is the only way to true goſpel-humiliation. The law is like a thunder-clap, that terrifies; but the goſpel is like a warm ſun that diſſolves the ice. Nothing melts the ſoul more than Chriſt apprehended by faith; *They ſhall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they ſhall mourn*, Zech. xii. 10. Faith ſees the greateſt love, the ſweeteſt kindneſs; and this melts the heart. No doubt, the prodigal was more melted and broken, by his father's embracing of him ſo kindly, than by all his former miſeries. What! art thou embracing me, a ſtubborn child, and unworthy ſpendthrift! So Chriſt comes in the goſpel, ſaying, Come thou, poor ſinner, that haſt done evil as thou couldeſt, though thou haſt wronged me, and my Spirit, and my Father, and thyſelf, come and I will get you a pardon for all that; fear not, I will be thine to ſave thee; my blood thine, to waſh thee; my righteouſneſs thine, to juſtify thee; my Spirit thine, to ſanctify thee. O this melts the heart! What! is this for me, guilty me, rebellious me! Yea, it is for thee graciouſly and freely! O! how doth the ſoul now diſſolve into tears!

6. Objection is drawn from *fear* that the *day of grace is gone.* " Alas! I have refuſed many " calls, invitations, and offers, in ſo much that " Chriſt will not regard me! I have often ſlight- " ed the goſpel-offer, trampled on this precious " blood; and with what confidence can I now " claim it?" *Anſw.* It is to be hoped, that while you have this call, yet to receive Chriſt, that *now is the accepted time, now is the day of ſalvation*; if your former refuſals of Chriſt have not yet been malicious and deceitful, but rather timerarious and inadvertant, which, though a grievous ſin, yet not unpardonable: and now, ſince Chriſt doth not yet exclude you from the goſpel-offer, why will you exclude yourſelf? The more you have refuſed his offer formerly, the more you have need of a pardon. You ſhould go to God, as David, ſaying, *Pardon mine iniquity, for it is great.* This would indeed be a ſtrange argument with man, Pardon my crime, for it is great; but it is a ſtrong argument with God: Lord, it is great, and ſo I have more need of a pardon; it is great, and ſo thou wilt have great honour in pardoning: even as a phyſician hath in curing a deſperate diſeaſe. The ſinning againſt Chriſt's blood, or ſlighting it, is indeed a hainous ſin; but the more hainous it is, the more need you have to haſten to this blood, as the only fountain that can waſh away the guilt of trampling upon it. Nay, though you had ſhed this blood, as the Jews did, yet you are welcome to come to it for mercy: ſee the commiſſion that Chriſt gives to his apoſtles, Luke xxiv. 46, 47. *Preach repentance and remiſſion, in his name, to all nations, and begin at Jeruſalem.* O! why at Jeruſalem, where he was mocked, pierced, crucified? Nay, begin there; for they have moſt need of my blood to waſh them. If any thing could alienate Chriſt's heart from ſinners, ſurely the conſideration of their crucifying of him, and uſing him ſo deceitfully, might have done it; yea, ſays he, go make offer of my blood and mercy to theſe my murderers; and accordingly it was done by Peter, Acts ii. and many of them got this blood applied to them. Again,

7. Objection is drawn from the *long continuance in ſin.* " I am an old ſinner; my ſins are " of very long continuance; I have remained " long in the grave of ſin: and I am juſt an old " rotten ſinner." *Anſw.* I fear there are ſome old ſinners here very near to hell and damnation; the devil hath got the flower of their age, and he is like to get the brawn. Oh! if goſpel-grace would draw you, I would let down the cord of love, by telling you, that, though your ſins be old, yet they are not ſo old as Chriſt's mercies, which are everlaſting mercies. It is not the firſt old diſtemper that Chriſt hath cured; he raiſed Lazarus with a word, though he had been four days in the grave: he ſtopt a bloody iſſue, with the hem of his garment, that had run twelve years: he looſed a poor woman, whom Satan had bound eighteen years: he cured an impotent man that had an infirmity thirty eight-years: and, can he not eaſily cure all your old ſoul diſtempers? He received thoſe that came at the eleventh hour: he received ſome that came at the laſt hour; particularly the thief on the croſs, whom the devil

devil thought he was ſure of, having drawn him the length of the mouth of hell, juſt ready to caſt him in; yet, even then, upon his looking to Chriſt, did the arms of mercy take hold of him. This is encouragement to you to look to him.

8. Objection is drawn from a doubt or jealouſy about our *right* to receive Chriſt. "Oh! "ſays one, though Chriſt can ſave me, yet I "have no right to receive him: though his "blood is ſufficient to waſh me, yet I have no "right to it." *Anſw.* You have a full right and warrant, from the very call of the goſpel, to fly to it: ſee what Chriſt enjoins miniſters to do, Mark xvi. 15. *Go into all the world, and preach the goſpel to every creature:* Make offer of me and my blood to all, without diſtinction; whatever be their age, ſex, or circumſtances; man, woman, and child. Let no children hearing me think, they are too young to be included in this call to come to Chriſt: nay, the goſpel is preached to you as well as to old folk: you may die in your youth; and if you die without Chriſt, you will periſh as well as old Chriſtleſs perſons. *Preach the goſpel to every creature;* even to the worſt of ſinners: EVERY *creature*, be they never ſo wicked; even though they have ſinned themſelves into the likeneſs of beaſts or devils; yet, if they be creatures, offer my blood, my mercy, my merit, my righteouſneſs to them: invite and preſs them to come to me and receive me; and, *him that cometh, I will in no wiſe caſt out.* O ſinner, let the goſpel-offer be accepted; and you ſhall find, whatever you have been, that there is mercy enough in God's bowels to pity you; merit enough in Chriſt's blood to pardon you; and power enough in his interceſſion to procure and apply it to you. Look to him for a ſhare of this grace offered to you; and *receive not the grace of God in vain.*

9. Objection is drawn from the *power of ſin.* "Alas! I find ſin to be ſtrong in me; how "ſhould I believe or receive Chriſt? none have "ſuch an abominable heart; ſurely the Lord "will loath me." *Anſw.* That as a ſenſe of the power of ſin, is better than to be ſenſeleſs and ſtupid under it; ſo, conſider the nature of unbelief more than the ſtrength of ſin; for, it is *an evil heart of unbelief*, that gives ſtrength to ſin. There are two things you muſt be obliged to Chriſt for: his merit, to get the guilt of ſin pardoned; and his Spirit, to get the power of ſin ſubdued. There is no healing, but under the wings of Chriſt; and therefore you muſt go to him for it. What think you of faith, man? Is it an enemy to holineſs? No, by no means; it is the only way to it. And do you find ſin oppoſing you? Why then, know, that a time of contrariety, is a time for faith to work. When a man ſees death, then it is time for faith to believe life; when he ſees the grave, it is time for faith to believe the reſurrection; when he ſees guilt, it is time for faith to believe pardoning mercy; and when he ſees ſin, it is time for faith to receive a Saviour: when he ſees ſtrong corruption, then it is time for faith to lay hold on Chriſt's ſtrength, and caſt yourſelf upon his faithful promiſe, for healing and pardoning of it. You may try other ways, but they will not do; you may waſh in other waters, but they will not cleanſe you; you may perplex your own thoughts, with a thouſand ſhifts beſide this, but they will not avail you: in Chriſt, and the promiſes of the covenant, are the cures of your ſinful nature; and faith doth apply the healing medicine. But now, to name no more,

10. Objection is drawn from the *weakneſs of the creature*, and of *means*. "Why, ſay you, I "have no ſtrength to believe; no ſtrength to "pray; no heart to duty: or, if I eſſay it at "any time, I have no ſucceſs in it, no benefit "by it." Here are two ſcruples, and I ſhall divide them.

Well then, the *firſt* part of the objection is: "Oh! I have no ſtrength to believe, no power "to receive Chriſt; yea, no heart to pray for "faith." *Anſw.* It is fit you know your own *utter impotency to believe;* they who think they can believe well enough of themſelves, they miſtake the faith of God's operation for fancy, and ſtrong imagination of their own brain. But, whereas you ſay you have no *ſtrength;* ſee that the diſeaſe lies not rather in this, that you have no *will:* if you were made willing, you undoubtedly would find yourſelves made able in due time: therefore, cry for one pull more of omnipotent grace, to make you *willing in the day of his power.* And whereas you ſay you cannot cry, you have no *heart to pray:* it is perhaps your mercy, to be kept empty handed, that you may not make a Chriſt of your duty, or a Saviour of your frame; for perhaps you would reſt there. However, know, that unbelief is the great cauſe of indiſpoſition for duty; for it fills the man with hard thoughts of God: "Oh! ſays unbelief, God is ſo holy he will "never regard you; God is ſo juſt he will ne-"ver endure you." Unbelief makes God all full of frowns and anger; and ſo the man's ſpirit ſinks within him: but faith would bring up the ſoul; Pſal. xxvii. 13. *I had fainted, unleſs I had believed to ſee the goodneſs of the Lord in the land of the living.* Faith ſhews God to be on a throne of grace; and this raiſes the heart: and faith ſets the ſoul upon prevailing motives in prayer; ſuch as, the name of God, the blood of Chriſt, the promiſe of the covenant, the interceſſion of Chriſt, the faithfulneſs of God. In the mean time, think not either to believe or pray aright, without oppoſition from Satan, an evil heart of unbelief, the prevalency of ſin, and an enſnaring world. You muſt wreſtle, through grace, all the way to glory: *The kingdom of heaven ſuffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. Be ſtrong in the grace that is in Chriſt Jeſus. Preſs toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus.*

The *ſecond* part of the objection is, "That, "though you eſſay, you find no ſucceſs in "duty, no benefit by it; I am ſtill where I was." *Anſw.* True ſeeking comes always to ſomething: it is pride and impatience that ſays, *It is vain to ſerve the Lord:* See Mal. iii. 14, 18. and Iſa. lx. 22, 23, 24. *God is faithful who hath promiſed.* It is true, many *aſk and receive not, becauſe they aſk amiſs, and do not aſk in faith, nothing wavering.* How ſhould we ſpeed, or what ſucceſs can we expect, if we tell the true God to his face, that he is a liar and diſſembler; that he will not make good a word that he ſays? Therefore, ſeek the removal of this unbelief.

Beſides, remember that there is a twofold anſwer that God makes; real and ſenſible. A king may ſign a pardon and yet the criminal not know it, for a time: an anſwer may be given ſometimes when we know not of it. *e. g.* You ſeek, perhaps, a heart to pray, and a heart

to

to hate sin: well, upon this, perhaps, you find your heart harder, to your feeling, than it was; and your corruption bursting forth upon you; which makes you ly groveling, with the most fervent importunity, at heaven's gate, and begets the most extreme loathing of your depraved nature: why, here you get the very thing you was seeking, yet you are not sensible that these things are answers; because the answer comes in a way, contrary to your expectation: for the heart may have such thirstings after grace, such an abomination of sin, that these present answers from heaven may seem to be nothing; there is something more the man would have: present grants are not a satisfying of his desire. Yet something is got by every faithful seeking: the man gets either more addition to some grace, or more aversion to some sin; or more grace to seek, or more strength to wait. But though you get not so much as you desire, surely you get more than you deserve; though not so much as to satisfy, yet as much as to help for the present. But suppose you be not answered at all, it is your sin to murmur, and your duty to wait: and remember, that God never gives his people so large an alms here, but that they need to become beggars the next hour, at the throne of grace again: and know, that God loves to be urged, but he does not love to be hastened. If God doth promise, it is your duty to believe: if he delays, it is your duty to wait; for, he *waits that he may be gracious*; and, *blessed are all they that wait for him.* In a word, the Lord may keep his door bolted, that you may be provoked to knock the harder. The woman of Canaan took up the design of Christ's refusing to answer her; therefore she turns the more importunate; and so gets all her will. Therefore, whatever discouragement you meet with, resolve never to quit the throne of grace, but always to lay yourselves in Christ's way, and never to go to another for help; yea, that you will die waiting on him. Remember the psalmist's experience, Psal. xl. 1. *I waited patiently on the Lord, and at length he inclined his ear, and heard my cry.* You may meet with discouragement and temptation, and be put to very hard thoughts; but you must be resolute in looking to Christ for help; reasoning with yourselves like the four lepers at the siege of Samaria, 2 Kings vii. 4. If I live at a distance from Christ I will infallibly perish, there is no hope for me: if Christ pity me not, when I am waiting on him, I but perish: but yet there is hope, he will have pity at length; therefore, if I perish, I will perish at Christ's feet; still looking up to him, where never one yet perished; and I hope he will not let me be the first.

Thus I have essayed to answer *some objections*: but after all there may be thousands of objections that remain; and it is the Lord only that can effectually and powerfully answer them, or any of those already mentioned. But whatever be your objections, against receiving Christ, pray to Christ himself to answer them: he is content that you receive him for this end, to answer all your objections, as well as to pardon all your sins, and subdue all your corruptions.

Notwithstanding of all that hath been said, perhaps some are ready to think, my objection hath not been mentioned; my case hath not been touched; for, it is a singular case: I am no more moved with all that hath been said, than a stone in the wall. Well, it might give some ground for faith, if you consider that Christ can, *out of these stones, raise up children to Abraham*; and that he hath promised to take away the heart of stone. O Sirs, will ye put him to his word? Nay, say you, my heart is raging in enmity against him, like a devil. Well, say not, for all that, there is no hope; for, Christ can cast out devils; and it is his work and business to put evil spirits out, and to put his own Spirit within you: only give him employment; for that is one of the ways of receiving him, even to employ him to receive you, and to destroy the works of the devil within you. If Christ get no employment here, among all this company, wo is us, that you should all give such a vile slight to a precious Christ, as that you prefer your base lusts to him, and will not so much as desire him, to put the sacrificing knife to the throat of your lusts; and though he stand knocking at your door, yet you will not so much as desire him to come in; nor invite him to shut up the door. If any body knock at your door, you will readily desire them to open, and come forward: and shall not glorious Christ get so much reception as that from you? O invite him, at least, to *put in his hand by the hole of the door*, and then *your bowels will move for him*, Song v. 4.——May the Lord persuade you to receive Christ, and answer all your objections against him!

Secondly, We now proceed to the *second* branch of the *exhortation* which was to BELIEVERS, who have *received Christ*, that they *walk in him.* Grace is not an idle habit, but an operative principle: religion doth not make men loiterers, but labourers. After a man hath believed in Christ, and received him, he is not then to ly down upon a bed of slothfulness, as if he had no more ado: nay, he hath much work, relative to God's glory, and his own good, to be employed about: he hath many duties to be performed; many evils to be reformed; many ordinances to be improved; many heart-plagues to be healed; many temptations to be resisted; many enemies to be vanquished; many graces to be exercised; many corruptions to be mortified: much employment to give to Christ all his days: therefore, *As he hath received Christ Jesus the Lord, so he is to walk in him.* It is a walking, and a walking in Christ, that he is called unto. I have already, in the doctrinal part, handled this branch of the text, at some length, and spoken of the duty of walking; the qualification of it, as it is a walking in Christ; and also the rule of this walk, or the proportion it should bear to our reception of Christ, by considering the AS and the SO in the text: *AS ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, SO walk ye in him.* And therefore, all that now remains is, (by way of exhortation and direction) to press, excite, and direct unto this walk. And in order to the more distinct pursuing of this exhortation, I would, 1. Offer some *considerations*, for clearing our thoughts and conceptions, concerning this walk. 2. Some *qualifications*, or *properties* of this walk, and of the way wherein we are to walk. 3. Some *motives* and *persuasives* that believers have to walk in Christ. 4. Some *directions* in order to our walking in Christ. If in prosecuting any of these particulars, any head shall occur, that may coincide with what was said on the doctrinal part; yet the different enlargement will, I hope, make the whole tend to be of new usefulness.

1*ſt*, I am to offer ſome *conſiderations*, for clearing our thoughts and uptakings, concerning this walk; and for paving the way to what may afterward be offered upon this exhortation. And the

1. Conſideration I offer is, that this *Chriſtian walk* is not to be expected in any, that are not *Chriſtians indeed*: yea, it is impoſſible for a man to have a truly Chriſtian walk, if he be not truly a Chriſtian. What it is to be a Chriſtian? Why, it is for Chriſt to be in a man by his Spirit, and the man to be in Chriſt by faith.—It is for *Chriſt to be in a man by his Spirit*: and indeed Chriſt muſt be in us by his Spirit, as a Spirit of regeneration, before we can poſſibly come to him by faith: and as regeneration is primarily ſuppoſed to this walk, none can walk in Chriſt if Chriſt be not in them, and if they be ſtill in a ſtate of nature and unregeneracy: the regenerating Spirit is the ſpring of this walk. Men in their natural ſtate, are dead, and cannot walk. I have read of one that attempted, by art, to make a ſtatue to walk and ſpeak; but after all, when he found his art fail him, and the thing impracticable, he was obliged to cry out, *Aliquod deeſt intus*; "There "is ſomething wanting within." Why, there wanted a ſoul, a living principle within. So it is here; men in nature are but like dead ſtatues, they want ſomething within to make them walk in Chriſt. It is true, as watches may go right for an hour or two, but will not hold on, if the ſpring be amiſs: ſo, natural men may take a pace or two, in the ways of God, but they cannot walk unleſs the ſpring be right, the heart be renewed, and the Spirit of Chriſt be put within them.—Again, to be a Chriſtian, it is for a *man to be in Chriſt by faith*: there is no walking in him, till there be a receiving of him, and cloſing with him: if a man be not in Chriſt, he cannot walk in Chriſt. Without faith there is not ſo much as a good thought, or conſideration about a Chriſtian walk: Now, ſerious conſideration is requiſite thereunto; *I thought on my ways, and turned my feet to thy teſtimonies. Without faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe God*: but to walk in Chriſt is a walk that pleaſeth God; and therefore without faith it is impoſſible to walk in Chriſt. Faith takes in the ſtrength of God to enable us thus to walk: and without this ſtrength we cannot walk; for, *The way of man is not in himſelf: it is not in man that walketh to order his ſteps*. Therefore, without faith, drawing ſtrength from him, we cannot walk in him: Why? becauſe we cannot walk with God, without God; nor walk in Chriſt, without Chriſt. In a word, it comes all to this: A Chriſtian walk cannot be without a Chriſtian ſtate. O then, ſeek to be Chriſtians indeed: *i. e.* To have Chriſt in you by his Spirit, and you in Chriſt by faith: and not only to be in him by faith in the habit; but to abide in him by faith in the lively exerciſe thereof; for, without this, *you cannot bring forth fruit in him*, John xv. 5.

2. Conſideration I offer is, that there are not a *few profeſſors*, whoſe *walk* doth give their *profeſſion the lie*: as thoſe ſpoken of, Pſal. lxxviii. 34,—37. *They returned, and enquired early after God: and they remembred that God was their rock, and the high God their Redeemer: nevertheleſs they did flatter him with their mouth, and lied to him with their tongues; for their heart was not right with God, neither were they ſtedfaſt in his covenant*. Many *profeſs to know God, but in works they do deny him*. Many profeſs the name of Chriſt, who never ſet upon the buſineſs of renovation, to be renewed in the Spirit of their mind; and ſo they are in the caſe of thoſe, Pſal. l. 16,—22. to whom God ſaith: *What haſt thou to do to declare my ſtatutes, and take my covenant in thy mouth; ſeeing thou hateſt inſtruction, and caſteſt my words behind thee?* etc. Yea, many walk, of whom the apoſtle *tells us weeping, that they are enemies to the croſs of Chriſt: whoſe end is deſtruction, whoſe God is their belly; and whoſe glory is in their ſhame, and who mind earthly things*, Phil. iii. 18, 19.

3. Conſideration is, that they who profeſs to be Chriſtians, and yet have no Chriſtian walk, or know nothing of *walking in Chriſt*, they *deceive themſelves* with their profeſſion; *they get no good of it*, and *God gets no glory by it*.——They *deceive themſelves*. Profeſſors, who are not practical, they are but ſoul-cheaters, ſelf-cheaters: they are the worſt of all cheats that cheat themſelves; *If any man among you ſeem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, that man's religion is vain*, James i. 26. And ſo, *if any man among you ſeem to be religious, and bridleth not his* HEART, but giveth way to all carnal thoughts, worldly thoughts, while *God is not in all his thoughts*; that *man's religion is vain*.—*If any man among you ſeem to be religious, and bridleth not his* APPETITE, but giveth way to gluttony and drunkenneſs, *that man's religion is vain*.—*If any man ſeem to be religious, and bridleth not his* PASSIONS, but giveth way to anger, and wrath, and malice, and revenge, for every injury, *that man's religion is vain*.—*If any man ſeem to be religious, and bridleth not his* LIPS, but giveth way to lying, and ſwearing, and curſing, and obſcene filthy talking, *that man's religion is vain*.—*If any man ſeem to be religious, and bridleth not the* FACULTIES of his ſoul, and members of his body, his hands and his feet from working miſchief, and walking in the broad ways of whoredom, and Sabbath-breaking, and neglect of God's worſhip, in ſecret, private, and public, *that man's religion is vain*; he *deceiveth his own heart*.—— It is true, the godly have ſometimes caſt off the bridle, or kept very ſlack reins, and ſo ſtumbled greatly, and fallen foully: but this is not the tenor of their walk, nor the way that, as Chriſtians, they can take pleaſure in. And, therefore, the propoſition remains thus ever firm: they that profeſs to be Chriſtians, without having a Chriſtian walk, they *deceive themſelves*.——Yea, they *get no good of their profeſſion*, and are in the caſe of thoſe, Ezek. xxxiii. 31. *They come and appear before God as his people; they ſit before him, and hear his words, but they will not do them: for, with their mouth they ſhew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetouſneſs*, They get no good of their profeſſion, who know nothing of the life and power of godlineſs: their religion is vain: they pleaſe themſelves with the empty ſhell, but never eat the kernel.——And as they get no good by it, ſo *God gets no glory by it*, nor the goſpel any credit. A profeſſion, without a Chriſtian walk, is no ornament to religion: we ought to *adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour, in all things. Let your light ſo ſhine before men, that others, ſeeing your good works, may glorify your Father which is in heaven*. The man that hath nothing of this, deſerveth not the name of a profeſſor. Oh! how many plagues are in our boſom, that make, inſtead of an ornament to religion, a ſtain to the Chriſtian

Chriſtian name! like thoſe, 1 Tim. v. 24. *Some men's ſins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and ſome follow after.* Which words ſeem to be ſpoken concerning church cenſures: ſome men's ſins are open, and obvious, and evident, before ever they be brought under any cenſure: others they follow after; they are not reformed by any cenſure.

4. Conſideration is, that thoſe who, through grace, have a Chriſtian walk, they have the *happieſt life* of it, as well as the holieſt: hence ſays Chriſt to his diſciples, John xiii. 17. *If you know theſe things, happy are ye if ye do them.* And Pſal. cxix. 1. *Bleſſed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord.* A Chriſtian walk, indeed, is not the meritorious or procuring cauſe of this happineſs; but it is the character, property, and quality of happy men: bleſſings, both ſpiritual and temporal, are entailed upon ſuch; yea, it is only ſuch who have a well-grounded, well-ſettled hope of heaven: and hence this walk, and this hope, are joined together, Tit. ii. 11, 12. *The grace of God that bringeth ſalvation, hath appeared to all men, teaching us, that, denying ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, we ſhould live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly, in this preſent world: looking for that bleſſed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.* Here they are knit and buckled together; and if this buckle be looſed, the man will have little hope: hence if a profeſſor drink drunk, and ſwear, and lie, and whore, and cheat, he cannot have the hope of heaven in ſuch a courſe; for, ſuch folk do not anſwer Chriſt's deſign in the goſpel; *to be a peculiar people, zealous of good works.* For, though good works, and a Chriſtian walk, be not the ground of the man's hope, (for that alone is Chriſt and his righteouſneſs,) yet it is the garment wherewith true hope is adorned, and by which it is known; and therefore, *he that hath this hope, purifieth himſelf, even as he is pure,* 1 John iii. 3.

5. Conſideration I offer is, that this Chriſtian walk is *many ways preſſed and urged in ſcripture:* it is both commanded and commended; and there are both threatenings and promiſes relating to it.—The Lord doth *command* it, ſaying, *Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,* Eph. iv. 1. Believers in Chriſt are expreſly commanded in this, *as they have received Chriſt, ſo to walk in him.* And we may ſee the Lord commanding this very walk in his own name and authority, Jer. vi. 16. *Thus ſaith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and ſee, and aſk for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye ſhall find reſt for your ſouls.*—The Lord not only commands it, but *commends* it. Thus was Noah commended, Gen. vii. 1. *Come thou, and thy houſe into the ark, for thee have I found righteous before me in this generation.* Thus was Enoch commended; for, *by faith he walked with God, and was not, for God took him: and before his tranſlation he had this teſtimony, that he pleaſed God.* And indeed all that thus walk, ſhall be thus tranſlated; though not corporally at the firſt, as he was. The body, like Elijah's mantle, ſtays a little while behind, to be locked up in a cabinet of duſt, while the ſoul is tranſlated at death, to be with God: What is that? never to ſin more; never to ſorrow more; always praiſing God; always rejoicing in him; and preſſed down with nothing but a weight of glory. Thus it ſhall be with all that walk in Chriſt: for they are *made meet for this inheritance of the ſaints in light.* Others are not fit for heaven, and ſo could not dwell in it. But I was ſaying that God commends this walk; and to give all the inſtances of commendation that he gives this way, would lead me to enlarge too far.—There are *threatenings* relating to this walk. God threatens to bring ſad ſtroaks upon ſuch as are ſtrangers to this Chriſtian walk; Lev. xxvi. 27. *If ye will not for all this hearken unto me, but walk contrary unto me: then I will walk contrary to you alſo in fury: and puniſh you ſeven times more for your ſins.* Yea, if God's own children ſtep aſide, and take not heed to their walk, they ſhall ſmart for it: though he *take not his loving-kindneſs from them,* yet, if they *break his laws, and walk not in his commandments, he will viſit their tranſgreſſions with the rod, and their iniquities with ſtripes,* Pſal. lxxxix. 30,—33.—Again, there are *promiſes* relating to this walk. There are promiſes of it, and to it. Promiſes of it, like that, Ezek. xxxvi. 27. *I will put my Spirit within you, and cauſe you to walk in my ſtatutes:* And indeed none would walk ſo much as a right ſtep, without the Spirit to guide them. Then there are promiſes to it; hence *godlineſs* is ſaid to be *great gain, having the promiſes of this life, and that which is to come.* This Chriſtian walk hath promiſes, not in the way of the firſt covenant, when the promiſe was made to works itſelf; but here it is made to the worker, or walker in Chriſt; or to the walk, as it is an evidence of union to him, *in whom all the promiſes are Yea and Amen.*

6. Conſideration I offer is, that this Chriſtian walk hath a *reference to all the duties of religion,* to all the *graces of the Spirit,* and to all the *directions of the word,* which is the rule of this walk.—It hath a reference, I ſay, to all the *duties of religion;* and ſo they cannot walk in Chriſt, who neglect the duty of prayer, the duty of watchfulneſs, the duty of vowing, and paying our vows to the Lord, as David, Pſal. cxvi. 9, 14. compared.—It hath a reference to all the *graces of the Spirit.* Chriſt is the way that the believer, walks in: but, as in a high way, there are ſeveral foot roads, ſome on this ſide, and ſome on that ſide of the way, which a perſon may conveniently walk in, and yet never go off from the high way: ſo here, the ſeveral graces of the Spirit are like ſo many branches of the way and road, for believers to walk in, ſo many little walks by the way-ſide.—There is the walk of *faith,* which we are daily to ſtep into, acting faith on Chriſt's righteouſneſs, for acceptance; acting upon his ſtrength, for aſſiſtance; acting upon his fulneſs, for ſupply; acting upon him for grace, to kill ſin and to quicken the ſoul; and acting upon him for glory, and for another life to come.—There is the walk of *repentance:* while the ſoul looks to him whom it pierced, and mourns. O Sirs, when the ſoul looks to Chriſt crucified, it ſees more of the curſed nature of ſin, and more of the curſed deſert of ſin, than it is capable to expreſs. He that was infinitely pleaſed with his Son, could not but be infinitely diſpleaſed with ſin, that made him to bruiſe him, till he melted under the burden of theſe fiery mountains of wrath, that were heaped upon him: *It pleaſed the Lord to bruiſe him.*—There is the walk of *love,* Eph. v. 2. *Walk in love, as Chriſt alſo loved us, and hath given himſelf for us; an offering, and a ſacrifice of a ſweet-ſmelling ſavour.* O! here is a pleaſant walk: *God is love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him,* 1 John iv. 16. Many walk in doubts and fears;

but if we were more in the ſweet element of love, we would doubt leſs; for, ver. 18. *There is no fear in love; but perfect love caſteth out fear: becauſe fear hath torment: he that feareth is not made perfect in love.* And if we were more in this happy region, of love to God, we would be more in love to one another.—There is the walk of *joy*, that the believer ſhould be ſtepping into; *Rejoicing in Chriſt Jeſus; Rejoicing evermore.* This joy is not only a privilege but a duty: not only a part of our happineſs, but a part of our holineſs; a part of this walk; a commanded duty. This *joy of the Lord* is the *ſtrength of the ſoul:* and this walk, in holy joy, is not inconſiſtent, with a walking in holy fear; they are both put together, Acts ix. 31. *Walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghoſt, they were multiplied.* Is the believer married to Chriſt, and ſhould he not delight in his Huſband? He delights in them, and ſhould they not delight in him? Believers ſhould mourn all their lives for ſin, and yet rejoice all their life in Chriſt: *Theſe things have I ſpoken to you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full,* John xv. 11. It is Chriſt's joy to ſee his people rejoicing in him; in his love, in his death, in his reſurrection and interceſſion, in his fulneſs and righteouſneſs, in his merit and Spirit: for this holy and ſpiritual walk is from the Spirit, as the principle; in the Spirit, as the mover; and after the Spirit, as the guide.——But again, this walk, it hath a reference to all the *directions of the word,* as the rule of it. The man that walks in Chriſt, hath a *reſpect to all God's commandments;* and a reſpect to the whole word, as the rule: for, *Whoever walketh according to this rule, peace be on him,* ſaith the apoſtle, *and on all the Iſrael of God.* Oh! how few diſcover a Chriſtian walk, from this very particular, that they are ſo unacquaint with the rule of the Chriſtian walk; ſuch ſtrangers to the Bible! Many caſt the rule of the Bible behind their back. Would ſhe not be counted a whoriſh woman, who had received a letter from her long abſent huſband; and when ſhe had read it, ſhe rent it in pieces, and tread it under her foot? And, indeed, all of you are doing this, while you are ſlighters of the Bible, from Sabbath to Sabbath; and make no conſcience of walking by the rule of the word.

7. Conſideration I offer is, that this walk hath a *preference,* beyond all other walks; even the beſt walk of any in the world, that are but pretenders to religion and Chriſtianity. As the worſhippers of the beaſt have the mark of the beaſt: God's children have God's ſeal; 2 Tim. ii. 19. *The foundation of God ſtandeth ſure, having this ſeal, the Lord knoweth them that are his. Let every one, that nameth the name of Chriſt, depart from iniquity.* God's ſeal hath a double motto: the one denotes their ſecurity; *The Lord knoweth them that are his:* the other denotes their ſanctity; *they depart from iniquity.* There are many wild flowers in the field, that bear a reſemblance unto, and look like the flowers in the garden; but are really not the ſame: ſo, many things, at a diſtance, look like ſanctification, and a Chriſtian walk; but at a nearer view are quite different from it.

There is a threefold walk, that looks like a Chriſtian walk, but yet it is not only different from it, but oppoſite to it: and this Chriſtian walk is ſo far beyond it, as heaven is above earth.

(1.) The walk of *civility,* which is nothing elſe but a fair ſhew in the fleſh; rather a heatheniſh ſtrictneſs, than a Chriſtian holineſs. For, mere civility is uſually accompanied with *ignorance of God,* and the *myſteries of his kingdom.* Men may be no drunkards, no ſwearers, no adulterers, no rude debauched perſons; and yet groſly ignorant of ſpiritual matters: ſo Nicodemus, a ruler in Iſrael, a ſtrict Phariſee, a civil man; and yet a mere *ignoramus* in the new birth, John iii. 10. Whereas a Chriſtian walk begins with *knowledge,* and with the *Spirit of wiſdom and revelation in the knowledge of Chriſt.*—*Jeſus Chriſt* is uſually *little prized* by civil men: they are ſatisfyed with their own righteouſneſs; they do not hunger and thirſt after Chriſt's righteouſneſs. The law is more natural to men than the goſpel; yea, the goſpel is not at all what nature can duly imagine about: therefore, legal ſtrains, and moral maxims, ſuit more with them, than goſpel-doctrine: but, to the Chriſtian, *Chriſt is all in all.*—Some *reigning luſt* uſually keeps company with civility; ſuch as covetouſneſs, for ordinary. The young man in the goſpel, that was a civil honeſt man, a fair dealer in the world; and could ſay, *I have kept all theſe things, from my youth;* ſo he might, as to the letter of them: yet, behold, his poſſeſſions were a ſnare to him: at the narrow bridge of ſelf-denial, Chriſt and his ſoul parted.—In a word, the civilian uſually takes *more care* about his *actions,* than about his *luſts:* he can digeſt all the luſts of wrath, malice, pride, worldly thoughts, and unclean affections; becauſe the converſation ſeems to be ſmooth and fair, theſe crawling vermin ſwarm in the heart without controul: why, civility is all for outward carriage; it minds not the heart. But the Chriſtian walker complains, even of the *law in his members,* the *ſinful workings of the heart:* his eyes, like the windows of the temple, are broad inward; he looks much within, and mourns over the ſins of the heart, as well as thoſe of the life. But there is,

(2.) The walk of the *Formaliſt,* that hath but a dead form: this Chriſtian walk is vaſtly beyond that. Why? the formaliſt acts from *foreign* conſiderations, motives from without; ſuch as popular applauſe, carnal reſpect, worldly honours, preferments, and the like. Juſt like puppits, that want the natural motion of life within, and are artificially moved by an outward force. The Spirit of God may aſſiſt the hypocrite in ſome duties; but he is not in him as an informing, quickening, renewing principle: but the Spirit is in the believer, like a *living fountain,* natively bullering up: *Out of his belly floweth rivers of living water,* John vii. 37.—Formaliſts are *careleſs of God's ſight and preſence;* they can neither appeal to God for their ſincerity; nor live in his preſence, as in the eye of his omniſcience: but their great care is, to blind the world. The Chriſtian can appeal to God, with Peter; *Thou that knoweſt all things, knoweſt that I love thee.* At other times he loaths himſelf, at the ſight of God's glorious majeſty and purity, in the ſenſe of his defects; *Now mine eyes ſeeth thee; therefore, I abhor myſelf, and repent in duſt and in aſhes.*—The formaliſt is *proud of his falſe grace;* but the Chriſtian walk is always attended with ſpiritual poverty. The more knowledge the ſaint hath, the more he is ſenſible of his ignorance: the more faith, the more he bewails his unbelief: the more love, the more

more he blames his heart for want of love. It is a good ſign, when the ſoul is kept hungry and humble, in the ſenſe of its wants, amidſt the height of its enjoyments.

(3.) The walk of the *temporary Chriſtian* ſeemeth excellent; but this true Chriſtian walk hath the preference.—Some hypocrites are under the influence of *reſtraining* grace, chained up by their own fears; but not moved by goſpel-grace, nor conſtrained by love and mercy: this reſtraining grace, where there is no more, never deſtroys ſin; but only diſcharges the acts of it: but true grace ſweetly inclines the heart, to *hate every falſe way*, and *to run the way of God's commandments*.—Other hypocrites are under the influence of *common temporary* grace: this hath a degree of excellency beyond all the former, and yet comes to nothing. It differs from *civility*, becauſe it is more Chriſtian and evangelical. It differs from *formality*, becauſe that is only a ſhew, and this is a real work on the ſoul. It differs from *reſtraining* grace, for that avoids ſin, and performs duty from ſlaviſh fear; but this ſeems to have ſome affection for Chriſt and his word: this a man may have, and yet fall away, like the *ſtony-ground hearers*. This is the neareſt to true grace, and it is called, Heb. vi. 5, an *enlightening*; a *taſte of the heavenly gift*, a *partaking of the Holy Ghoſt*, namely, in his gifts, that are common: but yet the light here ſpoken of, is not humbling; the taſte is not raviſhing; the gifts are not renewing: all that they have puffs them up. The foundations ſink that are not laid deep enough. The true Chriſtian walk doth magnify Chriſt, and debaſe ſelf: this Dagon falls down before the ark. In a word, a formaliſt and hypocrite, or legaliſt, may have the Spirit, and yet not be *born of the Spirit*: he may have the Spirit ſhining on him, like the glancing of the ſun-beams upon a glaſs window: but the ſaint hath the Spirit in him, like a *well of water ſpringing up to everlaſting life*. He enjoys his indwelling preſence and his gracious working; not only in his inferior operation, but in effectual regeneration, and ſpiritual transformation; and ſo the Spirit of adoption, crying, ABBA, *Father*, Gal. iv. 5, 6. But in order to clear this difference further, the

8. Conſideration I offer is, that this Chriſtian walk is different from all other *pretenders* to it, eſpecially in its relation to Chriſt. And it hath chiefly a threefold relation to Chriſt. As *of him*, and *through him*, and *to him are all things*; ſo, this walk being a walk in Chriſt, is of him, as the author; through him, as the altar; and to him as the end: it is of him as the Alpha; through him, as the way of acceptance; and to him, as the Omega: it is of him as the efficient cauſe; through him, as the accepting cauſe; and to him, as the final cauſe.

(1.) This Chriſtian walk is *of him* as the ALPHA, the principle, the efficient cauſe: *I live*, ſays Paul; *yet not I, but Chriſt liveth in me*. Every ſtep of this walk is an act of the ſoul, made alive unto God through Chriſt, and his quickening it by the ſupereminent influences of the Spirit of Chriſt, *without whom we can do nothing*. We have neither life nor legs to walk, without Chriſt: it is *he that worketh in us, both to will and to do*. It is he that *giveth power to the faint, and encreaſeth ſtrength to them that have no might*. Then they *run without wearying, and walk without fainting*. The man is able for all things through Chriſt ſtrengthening him: now he ſurmounts all difficulties, which before were inſuperable. Though the ſoul be the formal agent, yet the power and efficiency, by which it acts, is from him: as the ſoul animates the body; ſo Chriſt animates the believer's ſoul in this Chriſtian walk. Here is a myſtery which is but madneſs and melancholy to an ignorant world; and particularly to blind moraliſts.

(2.) This Chriſtian walk is *through him*, as the ALTAR, the mean of acceptance, and the accepting cauſe; for, *we are accepted in the Beloved*. It is in him alone that *God is well-pleaſed*: this is the altar on which the gift is to be laid. As the believer draws all his ſtrength from him; ſo he expects all his acceptation through him: no action, no duty is accepted but as perfumed by the merit of his oblation. Though they ſhould be melted down into tears of goſpel-tenderneſs; yet they dare not preſent them to God, for acceptation; but only by Chriſt: they carry back theſe tears to be bathed in his blood; knowing that their ſalt water is of little value with God; expecting only to be accepted upon the value of the blood of the Lamb, and the virtue and efficacy of his interceſſion.

(3.) This Chriſtian walk is, *to him*, as the OMEGA, the final cauſe, and the end of it: it is all directed to the praiſe of his grace, and to the glory of God in Chriſt. The very thoughts of robbing God of his glory, and clothing himſelf with the ſpoils of his honour, are ſometimes terrible to him: why, he is upon a God-exalting, Chriſt-honouring, and grace-magnifying deſign: This is the very nature of the Chriſtian walk, and that which completes the image of God, when his glory, and the exaltation of his grace, and the manifeſtation of his glorious perfections, is uppermoſt in the man's thoughts, deſires, deſigns, and endeavours. When it is the man's greateſt wiſh on earth, to ſhew forth the glory of his name; and his greateſt errand to heaven, to ſee this glorious object, and be in caſe to extol him up for ever. This is the walk we are called to, and herein it is diſtinguiſhed from all that moraliſts, formaliſts, legaliſts, and hypocrites can attain.——May theſe conſiderations be indeed the matter of your conſideration; and may the Lord acquaint you with this walk; that receiving Chriſt, you may ſo walk in him.

2dly, I am to offer ſome *qualities* and *properties* of the way. Having conſidered the walk formerly, at ſome length, I ſhall now confine myſelf to ſpeak a little of the way: and indeed every property, that I am to offer of this way, that you are to walk in, may be a ſtrong inducement to thoſe that are out of the way, to come to it; and thoſe that have come to it, to walk in it. All men are walking in ſome way or other: What is the way the moſt part are walking in? Why, they are walking *after the fleſh*, Rom. viii. 1.; walking in *the way of their own heart*, Eccl. ii. 9.; walking *after their own devices*, Jer. xviii. 2.; walking *after vanity*, Jer. ii. 5.; walking after their *own ungodly luſts*: this is far from walking in Chriſt; and yet, this is the walk of the moſt part in the world. The laſcivious man walks in his luſts; the covetous man walks in his wealth, as in his ſtrong tower; the voluptuous man walks in his pleaſures; the hypocrite walks in his formal duties, *etc.* Oh! how few walk in Chriſt! They who do ſo, are a few perſons by themſelves; and of another ſpirit, like Caleb, Num. xiv. 24. However,

ever, this is the walk of true believers; and if they do not walk so, they do not act like themselves: *As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.* Christ says, *I am the way*, John xiv. 6.; and here his apostle says the same: *As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:* in him, who is the way, wherein ye are to walk. And now, to shew what sort of a way this is, we need not be at any loss, if we were under the conduct of the word and Spirit of Christ, who is the way. There are these ten qualities and properties of this way, wherein you are to walk: all the conveniencies that the heart of man can conceive or devise; all the accommodations, that may either gain people to this way, or refresh people that are in this way: and therefore apply it still, as we go along, by way of motive to quicken you to set footing in this way, if you be out of it, and to make progress therein if you be in it.

1. Property is, that it is a *free* way for all comers to enter into, and for all intrants to walk in.——It is free for all *comers* to enter into. It is a way barred up to no person whatsoever; a way whose gates are cast off from the hinges: *Whoever will may come* freely to it; *without money and without price.* There are some ways, some bridges over certain rivers, which we cannot be allowed to pass without paying some little money, for defraying the charges of the building, or support thereof: but here is a way, a bridge, built over the ocean of God's wrath; a way for sinners to get to God. And, indeed, it is a costly way, built at the greatest expence that God and Christ could be at, yet free to us; nothing to pay for the passage.—It was, indeed, a costly way to the *Father*, and cost him his own Son; not so as to lose him for ever, but so as to kill him for a time. Though a man do not lose his child; yet it goes to his heart to see his child tormented; much more when he himself is forced to be the tormentor. Christ was the Father's *beloved Son, the delight of his bosom*, Prov. viii. 30.; yet, *it pleased the Lord to bruise him:* he not only beheld the tragedy that was acted upon him by man, but allowed the suffering; yea, and was the chief actor of it himself: it pleased him to bring about the salvation of sinners this way.—It was costly to *Christ*; he parted with the glory of his divinity, for a while, though not with the essence of it: and though he was *King of kings*, underwent the notion of a beggar, and *took upon him the form of a servant*; yea, and *died the cursed death of the cross.* But yet it is a free way to us, without any cost or charge: Christ is freely given of the Father, to be the sinner's way to him; and it is by way of absolute free gift; *I will give thee for a covenant of the people. Not for our sake doth he it, but for his own name's sake:* in so much that the greatest of sinners may freely enter into this way; *By grace we are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.* If any thing was to be done on our part, to partake of Christ, we might have whereof to boast; Rom. iv. 2. *If Abraham was justified by works, he had whereof to glory:* therefore God gives Christ freely, without any consideration in us, to move him thereto; yea, contrary to all the evil in us, that might move him to deny Christ unto us; and all to the praise of the glory of his grace; that we may come boldly to this throne of grace. If this way of access to God was not free, we could not come boldly. If God shewed regard to any previous good in us, it would mar our boldness; but, *we have boldness to enter into the holiest;* not by his blood and our actions, but only *by his blood.* If a man has a mind to step into the king's high-way, out of his house, which is the subjects privilege, no man can say to him, you trespass in so doing; it is made to be common for all: so Christ is a free common good; a common way to all sorts of persons whatsoever, to whom there is a heart given to step into the way. Christ allows all sorts of sinners to come to him and enter into this way: but he allows none to live in sin, that have come to him: nay, he purges out their sin. Let none take it amiss that we say, the vilest of sinners are freely welcome to this way, that they may walk in it; and then surely they will walk at another rate, than they have done: in this sense it is that Christ says, *Publicans and harlots may enter into the kingdom of heaven, before the self-righteous Pharisees*, Mat. xxi. 31. Men's thoughts run another strange way: if I have a little holiness and righteousness, then the man thinks, now I may, in regard of that holiness and righteousness, without presumption, close with Christ: why, this is to overthrow the gospel of the grace of God in Christ; who says, that *he came to save that which was lost;* and came *not to call the righteous but sinners.* It is a free way for all comers to enter into.——And it is free for all that have *entered* into it to walk in, and to walk freely. Walking is a voluntary motion, and the regenerate soul walks freely, without force or compulsion, or a base mercenary spirit; *The love of Christ constrains him:* love is a golden weight that hangs upon the soul, and makes every wheel in it to move. Christ is such a free way, as makes all his people volunteers in his service; *Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.* It is their choice, their delight, their option: *I have chosen the way of truth*, Psal. cxix. 30.

2. Property is, it is a *safe* way to walk in; and so as there is here the freest walking, so there is here the safest walking; hence it is said of the man that walketh in this way, Isa. xxxiii. 16. *He shall dwell on high, the place of his defence shall be the munition of rocks.* In this way the man is so safe that he needs fear no evil. O how sweetly do they walk, who can sing the twenty third Psalm in the very view of death! *Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, yet will I fear no evil; for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.* There is the greatest security in this way; *He that walketh uprightly, walketh surely. He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty*, Psal. xci. 1. Let a man take any other way in the world to heaven, but Christ, and there are a thousand dangers in it, and hazards of miscarrying: but let a man take this way, and walk in it, and *the gates of hell shall not prevail against him.* It is said of this way, Isa. xxxv. 9. *No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall be found there: but the redeemed of the Lord shall walk there.* Those that keep close to this way, they keep out of the reach of Satan, the roaring lion; that wicked one toucheth them not. It is true, they are the objects of his greatest spite: but they are out of his reach; he can do them no real hurt, while they keep close in this way. They that walk in their lusts, and in sin, they are in Satan's

Satan's way, and he hath them at his will: this is the way to hell. They that are walking in their own righteousness, as their way to heaven, Satan hath continual advantage against them; because there is so much sin in all their righteousness, and so much of the devil in all their goodness, they are not out of the reach of the lion: but there is no lion in the way Christ. It is a safe way to walk in, you cannot be safe in any other way. This is the way that hath salvation at the end of it; for it leads to eternal glory, and eternal happiness; Heb. xii. 1, 2. *Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us, and run with patience the race set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith: who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right-hand of the throne of God.* Other ways lead to hell, this takes to heaven; for the promise is made to this way, and to the walkers in it; for, *all the promises are in Christ Yea and Amen.* And those that *live godly in Christ Jesus, have the promises of this life, and of that which is to come.*

3. Property is, it is a *lightsom* way to walk in; for there is much light in this way; hence says the prophet Micah, chap. vii. 8, 9. *When I sit in darkness, the Lord will be a light unto me; he will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness.* Psal. cxix. 130. *The entrance of thy word giveth light; it giveth understanding to the simple.* It discovers sin to be sin, and duty to be duty. *It is a pleasant thing*, says Solomon, *for the eye to behold the sun:* and, Oh! it is a heavy thing for a traveller to be benighted and overtaken with darkness! And hence the summer seasons, are the best seasons for travellers in the way, because it is lightsom. Now, Sirs, all other ways but this are darkness: Christ is the light of the world; John viii. 12. *I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.* The light of knowledge, in opposition to the darkness of ignorance and error, is in this way; for he that is the way, teacheth all the travellers, according to his promise; *They shall all be taught of God:* never a schoolmaster in the world, can teach the perfect trade of walking uprightly, but Christ, the God-man: they are all but unskilful, that are not taught of him, and by his Spirit as a *Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him.* We that are ministers, we leave you all but unpolished dunces in Christianity, till the Lord himself come in to that ministry; and, by his Spirit, teach your spirits: and then, when he comes, he can make you wiser than your teachers. Again,

4. The *fourth* property is, it is a *firm* and *solid* way to walk in; there is no fear of sinking, while we keep this causeway, this road. Gluts of rain make some mirey boggy ways sinking, to both men and horses. But here is a way that is a firm rock; all the rain that falls upon it runs away; it is a *sure foundation:* it is firm in the foulest as well as in the fairest weather. Christ is a way that will deceive none, that walk in him: some ways will look well enough to the eye, and yet deceive people: some places will look as green and fair, as any other parts of solid ground; and yet they are such quagmires and bogs, that men and horses will sink to the neck therein: even so, there is a way of self-righteousness, and legal obedience, that seems to be a fair green way, that promises firmness; but he that walks there will himself sink; and if Christ come not to pluck him out, he will sink over head and ears. Paul durst not be found in that way of his own righteousness, but looked upon it as *dung*, Phil. iii. 8, 9. Now, dung you know, makes both a stinking way, and a sinking way: even so, when men go *about to establish their own righteousness*, for justification, and so the way to the Father, it smells in the divine nostrils, as dung: and not only so, but, as it is unacceptable to God, so it is unprofitable to us, in point of acceptance; for, it is a sinking way; we cannot keep firm footing upon it, but sink in it: but Christ is such a firm way to walk in, that you cannot sink therein; for, he *upholds with the right-hand of his righteousness.* The way of sin is a sinking way; the man will sink to hell that walks in it: the way of self-righteousness also is a slippery way; all the righteousness of man is not able to uphold him; for the sin that is in his righteousness, is enough to trip up his heels, and lay him in the mire, and overthrow him. But the man walks firmly that walks and builds upon a rock. Though they that walk in Christ, are not free of the filthiness of sin altogether; but as water falling upon a rocky way, glides as fast as it falls, the way being as hard as before the rain; so, though *the Lord hath laid on Christ the iniquity of us all*, and the believer's sin falls still upon Christ; yet he passed away all this iniquity from himself, by making full satisfaction: if Christ should have our sin remaining on him, he himself would be a sinking way to us: if Christ was sinful in the eyes of God, we could never be clean in his eye: but when sin was laid upon Christ, how did he sweat it out, when *he trode the wine-press alone!* Again,

5. The *fifth* property is, that it is a *high* and *honourable* way; Isa. xxxv. 8. *An high way shall be there, and it shall be called the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it, but it shall be for those: the way-faring man, though a fool shall not err therein.* It is an *high* and *honourable* way: if you walk in this way, you may debate with any man, in point of honour; for therein you have *fellowship with the Father, and with the Son.* They that walk in this way, they *dwell on high*; for it is the way of God: it is the king's high-way, the way of the King of kings; *Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight*, Mat. iii. 3.—It is the way of *holiness*, that makes it an honourable way also, of which God says, *Without holiness no man shall see God.* Indeed none can walk in holiness that do not walk in Christ; and none shall ascend to heaven, that are not sanctified in Christ. There is no man or woman, no king or queen, no lord or lady, no rich or poor person in the world; no magistrate or subject, no minister or people shall get to heaven without holiness, or being *sanctified in Christ Jesus*, 1 Cor. i. 2.—It is high and honourable as it is the path of *righteousness; He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake*, Psal. xxiii. 3. And so it is the way everlasting; Psal. cxxxix. 24. *See if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting:* i. e. The way that is everlastingly true, everlastingly good, everlastingly holy, everlastingly pleasing to God, and profitable to man, and ends in everlasting life. It is an high way; a way by itself, and distinguished from the ways of the world; for, it is a way of separation from,

and non-conformity to this world.—*The unclean ſhall not paſs over it*; that is, the unregenerate, either to defile the way, or diſturb thoſe that walk there: and they that walk in it, ſhall be *undefiled in the way*; and ſhall more and more *eſcape the pollutions that are in the world*: Why? *there is a river* that runs along this way, *the ſtreams whereof* not only *make glad*, but make clean, *the city of God*; the river of the blood of Chriſt, the river of the influences of the Spirit: by theſe they are cleanſed from all ſin.—Thus it is in every reſpect an high, holy, and honourable way. Again,

6. The *ſixth* property of this way is, it is an *eaſy* way; *My yoke is eaſy*, ſaith Chriſt: and ſaith the prophet here of this way, *The way-faring man, though a fool ſhall not err therein*; though of a weak capacity in other things, he ſhall have ſuch plain directions from the word and Spirit, that he ſhall not err therein: not that they ſhall be infallible, and commit no miſtake; but they ſhall not be guilty of any fatal miſcarriage; nor ſo miſs their way, but that they ſhall recover it again, through grace, and get well to their journey's end. This way is eaſy to hit; *Knowledge is eaſy to him that underſtandeth*, ſaith Solomon: to nature it is a moſt difficult way indeed; but, through grace, it is a moſt eaſy way, and ſuch a way as wherein a man cannot be loſt. In the way of the covenant of works, a man may preſently loſe himſelf: there is not one work he doth, but he commits ſin in it, and ſo he preſently ſteps aſide; and having thus loſt himſelf, he muſt begin again, go about, and come where he was at the firſt: when all is done, it is as good as if it had been undone; for the law is not ſatisfied with any thing leſs than perfection; and this perfection of righteouſneſs, we can only have in Chriſt.—But further, there are theſe four things, that make this way an eaſy way to walk in.

(1.) It is an eaſy way in point of *clearneſs*; Chriſt maketh every thing clear, to the man that comes into this way; for, the anointing which they receive, teaches them all things: he maketh himſelf evident to them, and *giveth underſtanding to the ſimple*; in ſo much, that *the way-faring man, though a fool, ſhall not err*; the Spirit of truth leading them into all truth, that is neceſſary for them: the goſpel makes the ſimple wiſe.

(2.) It is an eaſy way in point of *nearneſs*: they that walk in Chriſt have a ſhort-cut to the Father; *No man cometh to the Father but by me*. Other ways are like the crooked bow, but Chriſt is the even ſtring: all other ways are compaſſes about; yea, they are labyrinths in which men loſe themſelves. How near a way Chriſt is you have account, Rom. x. 6, 7, 8. *Say not, Who ſhall aſcend into heaven? Or who ſhall deſcend into the deep? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart*. The way to heaven is nigh; there is but one ſtep to it, as it were, and that is to ſtep in to Chriſt, and remain there; *He that believeth ſhall be ſaved*. The old way of the law of works is a long way; for, *Curſed is every one, that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them*. If a man will run an hundred miles for money, which he may have juſt at his door, and but one ſtep to it, ſure his journey is vain: ſo it is here, Chriſt hath grace and ſalvation, and all in him, and he lays them down at our door; and what need all this travel with reſpect to legal working? Here is a near way.

But here a queſtion may be propounded, *Will not this diſcourage men to work, or to do good works?* To which we might reply, Indeed it may diſcourage ſelfiſh men, that work for themſelves, and for their own juſtification and acceptance; which is a work that God rejects: a ſervice of ſelfiſhneſs, may be diſcouraged by this goſpel-doctrine; but the ſervice of thankfulneſs, which is the only true ſervice, and is more cordial and ſedulous than all the mercenary work in the world; this ſervice will be furthered and encouraged thereby. True ſervice to God in Chriſt, is not a ſerving him ſlaviſhly, to purchaſe ſalvation from him; but a ſerving of him thankfully, to glorify him who hath brought ſalvation to us.—Thus it is an eaſy way in point of nearneſs: a great deal of labour and toil is ſaved.

(3.) It is an *eaſy* way in point of *readineſs* and *diſpatch* of buſineſs therein: whoſoever chooſeth Chriſt for a way to walk in, comes to a very quick diſpatch of all the buſineſs of holineſs, ſanctification, and mortification, which they are to do, while they are in the way; for Chriſt, whom the believer chooſeth for his way, anoints the wheels of their ſoul, and puts them into a nimble motion; 1 Pet. ii. 3. *To whom coming as to a living ſtone, ye as lively ſtones are built up*. Chriſt being the living ſtone, makes every one that cometh to him living; yea, and lively too: and we ſay a man is a lively man, that is quick in buſineſs. Why? Chriſt is their ſtrength; he is the ſtrong arm that draws the bow, and the ſtronger the arm is that draws the bow, the ſwifter is the flight of the arrow, and the further it flys. Chriſt is the living principle within that makes them lively; *I live, yet not I, but Chriſt liveth in me*. The larger that the root of the tree is, the more ſap doth it gather, and the more fruit doth it bring forth: Chriſt is the large root, where he is once received, and ſo there are anſwerable ſpirits and ſap coming from him; there will be a *bringing forth of much fruit*: hence believers are ſaid, to be *ſtrong in the Lord, and in the power of his might*: there is the believer's ſtock. A poor maid ſervant, or widow, can do little for themſelves in the world; why? becauſe their ſtock doth not reach far: but if married to a rich man, then they could do much, becauſe they are intereſted in a large ſtock: ſo, when a perſon is married to Chriſt, that before was poor, he is now intereſted in a rich ſtock; for, *in him are hid all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge*: and when there is ſuch a great ſtock to trade upon, there may be a great deal of work done with much diſpatch; *I can do all things through Chriſt ſtrengthening me; yea, when I am weak, then am I ſtrong*.

(4.) It is an *eaſy* way in point of *largeneſs*; for it is a ſpacious way, wherein there is abundance of room and liberty: *If the Son make you free, then are ye free indeed*. It is true, it is ſaid, *Strait is the way*: and it is ſtrait, not only becauſe of the ſtrictneſs and exactneſs that is required, while the way will allow no toleration for ſin; but alſo that it is a way, that allows no room to any thing elſe but Chriſt: there is no room for a man's own righteouſneſs for juſtification jointly, together with Chriſt: but now Chriſt, conſidered in himſelf, is a large and ſpacious way, both in reſpect of the number that are allowed to come into this way, and the liberty and freedom he allows to them that walk in him: they walk at liberty. There is a manifold

bondage

bondage in every other way; bondage to ſin, Satan, death, hell, wrath, and to the law as a covenant of works. In a word, other ways are crooked, but this is a ſtraight even way.

7. Property is, that it is the *good old way*; Jer. vi. 16. *Stand ye in the ways and ſee, and aſk for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye ſhall find reſt for your ſouls.* This way you are to walk in; it is not a new up-ſtart way, but the old beaten way, in which all the patriarchs and prophets have walked: we are to conſult the pureſt antiquity; to aſk for the path that Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob have travelled in, and all the ſaints theſe five thouſand years, and more. *Aſk for the old path; where is the good way:* we muſt not be guided purely by antiquity, as if that plea was ſufficient to juſtify our path; no, by no means: there is an *old way, which wicked men have trodden*, Job xxii. 15. But when we aſk for the *old way*, it is to be for the *good old way*. The goſpel is no new ſcheme: Chriſt is an old way in four reſpects.

(1.) It is an old way in reſpect of the *contrivance* of it: it is no new invention, but as old as eternity: Chriſt is *the Lamb ſlain from the foundation of the world*; that is, from eternity: he was *ſet up from everlaſting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.* God's way of ſaving ſinners by Chriſt, is *according to his eternal purpoſe, which he purpoſed in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord, before the foundation of the world was laid*, Eph. iii. 11. 2 Tim. i. 9.

(2.) It is an old way in reſpect of the *revelation* of it; for it was revealed immediately upon the back of the fall: *The ſeed of the woman ſhall bruiſe the head of the ſerpent.*—Adam knew this way; and *Abraham ſaw Chriſt's day*, and Chriſt was before him; *Before Abraham was, I am.*

(3.) It is an old way in reſpect of the *uſe* and *improvement* of it; it is not of late uſe; it is long ſince the ſaints began to walk in it: there was never another way to heaven, ſince the covenant of works was broken and violate; and all that have walked to heaven ſince the beginning of the world by faith, they walked in this way, Heb. xi. And ſo,

(4.) It is an old way in reſpect that it was the *old-teſtament* as well as the new-teſtament way. The old-teſtament church had the ſame faith and hope in Chriſt, that the new-teſtament church have: only with this difference, their faith was to look foreward, and our faith is to look backward: they upon a Meſſiah to come, and we upon a Meſſiah that is come. It is the good old way.

8. Property is, that is the *new* and *living* way; *Having boldneſs to enter into the holieſt of all by the blood of Jeſus, by a new and living way*, Heb. ix. 19. But here two queſtions may be propoſed.

QUEST. 1. *Why called a* NEW *way?*

ANSW. (1.) It is called a *new* way, becauſe it is come *after* the old way of the covenant of works. God never deſigned to bring one man to heaven, by that old covenant of works: he erected that ſcaffold for a little while, that the glory of the new covenant might be diſplayed. The condition of that covenant was perfect, perſonal obedience, upon pain of eternal death; and now, by ſin, this bridge is quite broken down; yet, ſuch is the folly of a blind world, that they labour to build up that bridge again; but it is rotten, and will never bear us over.

(2.) A *new* way in reſpect of the *new, clear, goſpel-revelation* thereof now under the New Teſtament: for, under the Old, *the way into the holieſt was not yet made manifeſt*, Heb. ix. 8. The brighteſt revelations of Chriſt, under the Old Teſtament, were in theſe or the like words; that he was to be the *ſeed of the woman*, the *ſon of David*, a *prophet like unto Moſes*, a *child born*, whoſe name ſhould be *Wonderful, Counſellor:* but what are all theſe to that one bright word of the Baptiſt's, *Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the ſin of the world?* And therefore, John the Baptiſt is called *greater than all the Old-teſtament prophets*; and yet the *leaſt in the kingdom of heaven, is greater than he*, that can ſay, with the apoſtle, *We have ſeen with our eyes, heard with our ears, and handled with our hands the word of life*; and can preach a crucified, dead, buried, riſen, exalted, and glorified Chriſt, that hath brought in everlaſting righteouſneſs: hereupon it was ſaid, *Bleſſed are your eyes for they ſee*, even what the old-teſtament ſaints longed to ſee, and never ſaw, except one, who was the happieſt of the old-teſtament ſaints, *viz.* old Simeon; he was both an old-teſtament and a new-teſtament ſaint; he got it revealed to him, that *he ſhould not ſee death, till he had ſeen the Lord's Chriſt.* Again, they had but types of Chriſt, and *the ſhadows of things to come; but the body is of Chriſt.* What a great difference is there between a prieſt's cutting a lamb's throat, and Chriſt *giving himſelf a ſacrifice!* Therefore it is called a new way.

(3.) It is *new*, becauſe it is *always* new. The blood of Chriſt is but newly ſhed, as it were; and there is no abatement of the virtue of his death: his blood is as warm, and crys as loud this day, as the day it was ſhed: yea, it is always new, ſo as it never gives place to another way; there will never be another way to heaven: and we need to take heed how we improve this; for, if *we ſin wilfully, after we have received the knowledge of the truth*, in rejecting this way, *there remains no more ſacrifice for ſin*, Heb. x. 26.: That is, God will never provide another way, to the end of the world, but this one way.

(4.) It is a *new* way, becauſe it is *well-prepared*, as new ways uſe to be, and we may walk confidently and comfortably in it; for it is ſuch a well-prepared way, that one can hardly ſet his foot in this way, to walk in it, but he is almoſt at the end of the way; becauſe, *he that hath the Son hath life.* We receive eternal life, by receiving of Chriſt; not the full enjoyment of it, but a right to it, and an earneſt of it. When a man ſees Chriſt he ſees heaven; *Thoſe eyes ſhall ſee the King in his beauty, and the land that is afar off*, Iſa. xxxiii. 17. When a man ſees him, he ſees the land afar off; in regard, none can take a believing look of Chriſt, but he muſt ſee heaven, and ſalvation in his face. But,

QUEST. 2. *Why called the* LIVING *way?*

ANSW. (1.) It is called a *living* way, becauſe there was *life in his death*: the life of reconciliation; *We have peace by the blood of his croſs*: for here he ſatisfied juſtice, fulfilled the law-demands, and expiated ſin, which was the ground of the quarrel.

(2.) A *living* way, becauſe he is the *life of the world*; and all that are in this way live; and no man can die in this way: no traveller upon it can die; *He that believeth in me, ſhall never die.* When bodily death comes, they but *ſleep in Jeſus*, who is the *reſurrection and the life.*

(3.) A *living* way, becauſe he *lives for ever* to be the way. Eternal life is one of Chriſt's names; *This is the true God, and eternal life*,

1 John

1 John v. 20. *He ever liveth to make interceſſion for us*, Heb. vii. 25.

(4.) A *living* way, becauſe travellers *muſt live* upon this way: the traveller lives as ſoon as he is in it, and he lives as long as he is in it, and he lives upon it: all his fare is Chriſt himſelf; *whoſe fleſh is meat indeed, and whoſe blood is drink indeed.* If the traveller be faint and hungry, he hath nothing ado but to fall upon Chriſt, by faith, and live upon him; *The life that I live is by faith upon the Son of God.* Never deſire better entertainment for a child of God, than more of Chriſt, more of his grace, more of his fulneſs, more of his Spirit, more of the ſap and virtue of a crucified Jeſus.

I thought, at this time, to have offered more properties of this way, particularly that it is a *conſecrated* way; and upon the whole a *pleaſant* way. But now, is Chriſt ſuch a way as I have been deſcribing you are to walk in, and particularly a living way, then, O what a ſweet life is the believer's life, that is a walking in ſuch a way! To be for ever with Chriſt is heaven; our *way*, is walking IN him; our *heaven*, is walking WITH him in white. Oh! what a ſad caſe are they in that walk in the way of death, and deſpiſe this way of life! And, how ſad and diſmal is it, that men *love death rather than life!* It is a mercy that few people do prize, that they have ſinners to preach Chriſt to them: if we had not experience of that rebellion of the natural heart, in ourſelves, we would be mightily impatient in dealing with ungodly perſons. What infatuates men, that they refuſe Chriſt, and will not walk in this way, but in the way of death! What madneſs poſſeſſes the hearts of men, that they will rather go to hell with the devil, than to heaven with Chriſt! Surely they deſerve hell for ever that make ſuch an abominable choice; and yet every natural man doth ſo, every graceleſs man does ſo.—May the Lord perſuade people to *receive Chriſt*, and to *walk in him.* Again,

9. Property is, that it is a *conſecrated* way; Heb. x. 19, 20. *Having therefore, brethren, boldneſs to enter into the holieſt by the blood of Jeſus, by a new and living way which he hath conſecrated for us*; that is, dedicated to be the way. Now, Chriſt is conſecrated,

[1.] By the FATHER to be the way in which we are to walk. (1.) He is conſecrate by the *oath* of God; *The Lord hath ſworn, and will not repent, Thou art a Prieſt for ever, after the order of Melchiſedec*, Pſal. cx. 4. Heb. vii. 28. *For the law maketh men high-prieſts which have infirmity, but the word of the oath which was ſince the law, maketh the Son, who is conſecrated for evermore.* By the oath of JEHOVAH he is appointed to be the only way to bring ſinners to glory. (2.) He is conſecrated by the *preparing him a body*; Heb. x. 5. *Sacrifice and offering thou wouldeſt not, but a body haſt thou prepared me.* (3.) By the Father's *commiſſion* and *charge* that he gave him about the work of redemption, to ſuffer in that body or human nature: *This commandment have I received of my Father*, John x. 17. (4.) By the *holy anointing*; Pſal. xlv. 7. *Thou loveſt righteouſneſs, and hateſt wickedneſs; therefore God, thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladneſs above thy fellows.* (5.) By getting all *power* and *judgment* committed to him; *For as the Father raiſeth up the dead, and quickeneth them: even ſo the Son quickeneth whom he will*, John v. 21, 22. *As thou haſt given him power over all fleſh, that he ſhould give eternal life to as many as thou haſt given him*, John xvii. 2.

[2.] Chriſt did conſecrate HIMSELF to be the way for ſinners to walk in to heaven. (1.) By willingly *complying with the Father's will*; Pſal. xl. 8. *I delight to do thy will, O my God.* A great part of his conſecration lay in his compliance with the divine will; *By the which will we are ſanctified.* (2.) He conſecrate himſelf by his *willing death*; John xvii. 19. *For their ſakes I ſanctify myſelf, that they alſo may be ſanctified through the truth.* So that *ſanctifying himſelf* is juſt his *conſecrating himſelf*; devoting himſelf to be a ſacrifice for his ſheep. We could never come to that ſanctification by goſpel-devotedneſs to God, unleſs Chriſt had devoted himſelf to death. (3.) He conſecrate himſelf by *diſplaying his authority to ſave*, and declaring his *ability.* For, as *there is no Saviour beſide him*, Hoſ. xiii. 4.; ſo, *he came into the world to ſave ſinners*, 1 Tim. i. 18.; and *ſhall ſave his people from their ſins*, Mat. i. 21. becauſe *he is able to ſave to the uttermoſt*, Heb. vii. 25. (4.) He conſecrate himſelf by the *exerciſe of his office*, in bringing *many ſons to glory*: For *of all that the Father gave him he loſt none*, John xvii. 12.—Thus he is a conſecrated way, and as ſuch we are to walk in him. And, upon the whole,

10. The tenth property is, that this way we are to walk in, is a *pleaſant* way, a *comfortable* way: ſurely *wiſdom's ways are pleaſantneſs*; for wiſdom itſelf is the way. What more pleaſant than to walk in him, who is light itſelf, pleaſure itſelf?

OBJECT. *But believers are many times oppreſſed, with ſadneſs and heavineſs of ſpirit, though they be in this way.*

ANSW. It is only when they turn aſide out of this way, that they are oppreſſed: they walk not in Chriſt as they ought, who rejoice not always in him; for, it is the believer's duty, ſtill to rejoice in Chriſt Jeſus.

OBJECT. *But, ſhould not a believer mourn for ſin?*

ANSW. Yea, indeed; ſurely they ought: but true mourning, goſpel-melting, is not without great pleaſure: there is more pleaſure in goſpel-mourning, than in all the merriment of the wicked. There is much ſecret pleaſure in an evangelically melted heart; for, God deals with believers as he deſires us to deal with our enemies; Prov. xxi. 22. *If thine enemy hunger, give him bread; if thirſty, give him drink: ſo ſhall you heap coals of fire on his head.* q. d. Kindneſs is the beſt way in the world to melt the moſt obdured wretch: thus God deals with his people in Chriſt. They are by nature enemies as well as others: well, he gives them bread, when they are hungry; and drink, when they are thirſty: and thus he heaps coals of fire on their head; *i. e.* he melts them. What is true of drunkards and gluttons, in a ſinful ſenſe, that they are never better than when they are in a wine-cellar, and at a banquet, always tippling and drinking; is true of the believer, in a ſpiritual ſenſe: for, the church ſpeaks in this language; *He brought me into his banquetting-houſe*; [or, as it may be read, his CELLAR OF WINE;] *Stay me with flaggons, comfort me with apples; for I am ſick of love*, Song ii. 4, 5. O the ſoul is no longer ſatisfied than it is with Chriſt! the believer is never better, than when he is in the banquetting-houſe, in Chriſt's wine-cellar; and he cannot get enough, as it were, of this ſpiced wine; *Stay me with flaggons*: it is not with cups, or half cups, but with whole flaggons. There is a holy kind of inebriating, whereby Chriſt doth, in a ſpiritual ſenſe, make the believer,

that

that keeps him company, ſpiritually drunk; he overcomes them with his wine: it is lawful to be drunk in this ſenſe; yea, it is commanded that we take our fill: *Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.* And again, *Be not drunk with wine, wherein is exceſs*, ſaith the apoſtle; *but be filled with the Spirit.* Chriſt hath rivers of pleaſures, to ſatisfy his people with, that walk in him.

Here I thought to have told you of ſix things, that contribute to make this way a pleaſant way; namely, that they that walk in Chriſt, they have in this way, 1. A pleaſant guide. 2. A pleaſant guard. 3. A pleaſant ſhade. 4. Pleaſant company. 5. Pleaſant entertainment. 6. Pleaſant reſt and quiet in the way. This way as it is, on theſe accounts, pleaſant to them; ſo it is a pleaſant way to God: this way pleaſes God; for, he ſays of Chriſt, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleaſed.* And walking therein is, what pleaſeth God alſo; hence Enoch, *who walked with God, had this teſtimony, that he pleaſed God.* Again, it is, and may be pleaſant to the ſaints, on theſe accounts which I have only named.

1. A pleaſant *guide* they have that walk in this way; *This God is our God for ever and ever; and will be our guide, even unto death*, Pſal. xlviii. 14. The Spirit of God is the guide, who not only ſets them into the way, like a friend that leads one a mile out of the town, and then leaves him to go alone, no; but he *leads them into all truth*, and *guides by his counſel*, till he bring them to glory, ſaying, *I will never leave thee, not forſake thee.*

2. A pleaſant *guard* they have that walk in this way. They have a guard of *angels* to ſecure them; *The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him: They are miniſtring ſpirits ſent forth to miniſter to the heirs of ſalvation.*—Yea, they have a guard of *divine attributes* about them: *As the mountains are round about Jeruſalem; ſo the Lord is round about them that fear him.* The Lord himſelf holdeth and upholdeth them, with the right-hand of his righteouſneſs. What a pleaſant walk is it to walk in Chriſt's hand, and to be *coming up from the wilderneſs leaning on the Beloved!*

3. A pleaſant *ſhade* they have who walk in this way; for it is a ſhadow way; a ſhadow place in hot weather is comfortable. How pleaſant and comfortable was Jonah's gourd? But, what a comfortable ſhadow hath the believer to walk in, or ſit under, when the ſcorching heat of God's wrath breaks out into the world? *A man ſhall be as a covert from the tempeſt, and as the ſhadow of a great rock in a weary land*, Iſa. xxxii. 2. *I ſat down under his ſhadow with great delight, and his fruit was ſweet unto my taſte*, Song ii. 3.

4. Pleaſant *company* they have who walk in this way; for they that walk in Chriſt, they walk with God; and ſurely that is the beſt of company. It is encouraging to a poor traveller, that hath a long journey to go, to hear tell of good company to go with him, to his journey's end: here is the choice of company: *Nevertheleſs I am continually with thee*, Pſal. lxxiii. 23.—They have alſo all the ſaints to go along with them; and theſe are *the excellent ones of the earth*; for there is none excellent without grace, be they never ſo great: let them be never ſo great in this world, we muſt not walk with them, when they ſtray from the word of God.

5. Pleaſant *entertainment* alſo they have who walk in this way, and the beſt of refreſhment on their journey; they are fed upon the *green paſtures*, Pſal. xxiii. 3.; and they are fed with the *fineſt of the wheat, and with honey out of the rock*, Pſal. lxxxi. 16. They have noble diſhes to feed upon, which others never taſted of: and a well-furniſhed table to ſit down at, far beyond the table of the great kings and monarchs of the world.—There is the diſh of the divine *promiſes*, that is ſometimes ſet before them: *Man feeds not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.* How ſweet a diſh this is the pſalmiſt declares when he ſays, *How ſweet are thy words to my mouth!*—There is the diſh of divine *peace*; a *peace that paſſeth all underſtanding*; the peace of God quieting the mind through Chriſt: *Great peace have they that love thy law, and nothing ſhall offend them.*—There is the diſh of divine *pardon*; *I, even I am he that blotteth out thy tranſgreſſions, for mine own name's ſake, and will remember thy ſins no more. Son, daughter, be of good chear, thy ſins are forgiven thee.*—There is the diſh of divine *manifeſtations*, John xiv. 21. *He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me, and he that loveth me ſhall be loved of my Father; and I will love him, and manifeſt myſelf unto him.*—There is the diſh of divine *comforts*; *In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my ſoul.*—There is the diſh of a *good conſcience*, which is a *continual feaſt*: *This is our rejoicing, the teſtimony of our conſcience, that in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity, not with fleſhly wiſdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our converſation in the world.* They that walk in Chriſt, they feed upon the rarities of heaven; he makes to them a *feaſt of fat things, and of wines on the lees, well refined.* They have the *white ſtone*, and the *new name, that no man knoweth but he that receiveth it.* The delights in Chriſt are ſuch as none can reach unto, but thoſe that receive Chriſt, and walk in him: therefore Chriſt thanks the Father, ſaying, Mat. xi. 25. *I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, becauſe thou haſt hid theſe things from the wiſe and prudent, and haſt revealed them unto babes.* He doth not thank him, that he hath revealed them to the mighty, great, and wiſe in the world, but to babes. A babe is the weakeſt of all ſorts of men; and it ſays, that the weakeſt of all believers, that are in Chriſt, the feebleſt babe, ſhall partake of ſuch delicates in Chriſt, as all the world ſhall never be able to dive into, or comprehend: and Chriſt himſelf takes ſuch delight to entertain them, that he bleſſes his Father that he, for his ſake, doth ſo much for them, over and above what he confers upon others.

6. Pleaſant *reſt* and *quiet* alſo in this way: they have not only ſuch dainty fare, and delicious entertainment to feed upon, but they have excellent chambers and ornamented apartments to lodge in. A king and prince that wants grace, hath not ſuch coſtly hung rooms to quarter in, as they have; nor ſuch well-furniſhed chambers: *The King hath brought me into his chambers; we will be glad and rejoice in thee*, Song i. 4. O the chambers of divine preſence, the ſecret of God's preſence, is agreeable quarters to lodge in! and Chriſt's warm boſom, is a ſweet bed to ly down in! *Our bed is green*, Song i. 16. Chriſt and believers have but one bed between them; and he covers them with his garment, which is ſo perfumed that it *ſmells of aloes, myrrh, and caſſia, out of the ivory palaces.* And here they are ſure to get reſt in their quarters; Pſal. iv. 8. *I will both lay me down in peace and ſleep;*

ſleep; for thou Lord only maketh me to dwell in ſafety. Nay, Iſa. xxxii. 18. *My people ſhall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in ſure dwellings, and in quiet reſting places.* Prov. i. 33. *Whoſo hearkeneth to me, ſhall dwell ſafely, and ſhall be quiet from fear of evil.* And Song i. 7. *He maketh his flocks to reſt at noon.* Thus while they walk in the *good old way*, they *find reſt to their ſouls*, Jer. vi. 16. He warms them with the fire of his grace, and covers them with the robe of his righteouſneſs, and cauſeth them to reſt: he makes their *hearts to burn within them*, and *giveth his beloved ſleep*; filling them with holy ſecurity, in himſelf. And, O what more deſirable to a poor weary traveller, than to be brought to an excellent inn or lodging; than beſide a well-covered table; to get a good fire to ſit down at, and a good bed to ly down in! And now, what do ye think of this pleaſant way? and how ſweetly it is repreſented to us in the word of God? What have you to ſay againſt this way, and the walking in it? Is the way of ſin and the way of ſelf-righteouſneſs, the way of death, comparable to this way? Are your old ſinful courſes better than this way? If you imagine ſo, your own heart, your own tongues will fall upon you, and condemn you at the great day. Is this the beſt way? O then, why will you not take it? And have you taken it, believer, why then will you not walk in it?—May the Lord himſelf commend his Chriſt, and commend his way to you, that you may walk in it, till you come to glory at the end of it.

3*dly*, I proceed now to lay down ſome *motives* and *perſuaſives* to engage to this walk in Chriſt.

[There is a twofold garment wherewith Chriſt adorns his people. 1. The garment of imputed righteouſneſs, for their juſtification. 2. The garment of imparted holineſs, for their ſanctification. Without the former, we can have no title to heaven; without the latter, we can have no meetneſs for heaven. Both theſe garments they alone are clothed with, and poſſeſſed of, who, having *received Chriſt Jeſus the Lord, do walk in him.*—The work of ſanctification and holineſs is the work of God; *I am the Lord that ſanctifieth you*, Lev. xxi. 8. Grace is his own creature; man's will contributes nothing to the work, but by reſiſtance and rebellion againſt it: therefore, God makes the ſoul willing in the day of his power. Outward means work not, unleſs the mighty power of the Spirit work with them; otherwiſe, why ſhould the ſame word, preached by the ſame miniſter, mollify ſome, and harden others? Nothing but the blood of Chriſt can purge the conſcience from dead works. Chriſt muſt come from heaven and open a fountain, in his own ſide, for our purification and cleanſing. Sanctification is not only expreſſed by a *creation*, Eph. ii. 10. *We are his workmanſhip, created in Chriſt Jeſus unto good works*; but by a *victory*, a powerful overcoming of oppoſition, Luke xi. 21, 22. 1 John iv. 4. In creation, as there was nothing to help, ſo there was nothing to hinder: but when God comes to convert a ſoul, and make him holy, and bring him to a Chriſtian walk, beſides a death in ſin, there is a reſiſtance againſt grace; and, therefore, the grace that is in Chriſt conquers the ſoul, enabling it to receive him; and the ſame grace ſtrengthens to a ſuitable walk in him: out of him it cannot be; for, *without him*, and out of him, *we can do nothing*: and hence we are called to be *ſtrong in him*; and ſo here, to *walk in him: As ye have received Chriſt Jeſus the Lord, ſo walk ye in him.* *]

Now, the *ſcriptural motives*, to engage us to this Chriſtian walk are innumerable. I reduce them to theſe two heads. 1. The conſideration of the *concomitants* of this walk in Chriſt, wherein we may ſee the *excellency* of it. 2. The conſideration of the *effects* of this walk, wherein we may ſee the *neceſſity* of it.

[1.] The conſideration of the *concomitants* of this walk in Chriſt, and ſo therein view the *excellency* of it. There are ſome excellent concomitants and attendants of this walk in Chriſt; eſpecially, what comprehends manifold bleſſed attendants, the Spirit of Chriſt; for there is no walking in Chriſt, but by walking in the Spirit of Chriſt, and ſo it is called, Gal. v. 16. *Walk in the Spirit, and ye ſhall not fulfil the luſts of the fleſh.* And ver. 25. *If we live in the Spirit, let us alſo walk in the Spirit.* And Rom. viii. 9. *If any man have not the Spirit of Chriſt, he is none of his.* This walk in Chriſt then, is attended with the Spirit, in his various graces and operations; and this ſhould recommend this walk to us. More particularly,

1. This holy walk in Chriſt is attended with the Spirit of *humiliation*, Eph. i. 17. If the Spirit of ſanctification and holineſs dwelleth in us; the ſame Spirit, as a Spirit of humiliation, dwelleth in us. They that walk in Chriſt, they receive the *unction from the holy One, to know all things*, 1 John ii. 20. Every man is brutiſh in his knowledge before converſion; *the god of this world hath blinded him*; but when he is brought to Chriſt, to believe in him, and walk in him, then he is made light in him, *light in the Lord*, Eph. v. 8.; being *turned from darkneſs to light.* Sanctification and illumination are as inſeparable, as light and heat in the ſun-beams.

2. This holy walk in Chriſt is attended with the Spirit of *ſupplication*; for when he is the *Spirit of grace*, he will be the *Spirit of ſupplication*, Zech. xii. 10. Where he is the Spirit of holineſs, he will be the Spirit of prayer. Every new-born babe comes, for the moſt part, into the world crying; ſurely every ſpiritual new-born babe crys, ABBA, *Father*, Gal. iv. 6. The word, ABBA, ſignifies FATHER, in the Syriac tongue, which the apoſtle here retains; and which alſo young children retain, almoſt in all languages and countries. If you never find the melting, moving, quickening, warming breathings of the Spirit, you do not look like one that walks in Chriſt: but to *pray in the Spirit* is a ſign of tranſlation from death to life; from nature to grace. And herein alſo appeareth the excellency of this walk, it is attended with the Spirit of ſupplication.

3. This holy walk in Chriſt is attended with the Spirit of *faith*; 2 Cor. iv. 13. *We having the ſame Spirit of faith*; by which the man doth more and more believe that *Jeſus is the Chriſt*, and believe on this Jeſus. By which, on the one hand, he believeth that *Jeſus is the Chriſt*: this was the grand teſt of a believer in the primitive times; becauſe then it was little leſs than death, among the Jews, thus to own and confeſs Chriſt: "Shut your eyes and your ears, "[ſays Luther on Pſal. cxxx.] and ſay, You "know no God, out of Chriſt; none but he "that was in the lap of Mary, and ſucked her "breaſts."—By this faith, on the other hand alſo, we believe on the *name of the Son of God*, and rely

* This incloſed paragraph ſeems to be introductory to one of the diſcourſes.

rely upon him for *wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification*, and *redemption*; cleaving to him, drawing daily virtue from him, and laying all our wants and burdens upon him.

4. This holy walk is attended with the Spirit of *repentance* and *humiliation*: this follows the look of faith; *They ſhall look upon him, whom they have pierced, and mourn*, Zech. xii. 10. The man that is walking in this way, and under the conduct of the Spirit, he is always weeping, as he is walking; *Going and weeping, they ſhall aſk the way to Zion, with their faces thitherward*, Jer. l. 45. The man *goes forth weeping, bearing precious ſeed*, Pſal. cxxvi. 6. being humbled to the duſt, before God, for his ſin and iniquity. He *loaths himſelf, and repents in duſt and aſhes*.

5. This holy walk in Chriſt is attended with the Spirit of *joy* and *conſolation*. As Chriſt is anointed with the *oil of gladneſs above his fellows*; ſo his children have fellowſhip with him, in this oil of joy. The godly ſorrow and weeping, mentioned juſt now, is not inconſiſtent with this joy and gladneſs: the Spirit of humiliation is not inconſiſtent with the Spirit of conſolation; for, while he mourns before the Lord, he melts; and there is more joy in the believer's melting before the Sun of righteouſneſs, than in all the mirth of the wicked. We may appeal to all believers, who have had their hearts melted before the fire of divine love, whether they have not found a ſecret contentment and ſatisfaction, ſuch as hath made them rather fear the change of that mourning, than to be troubled at it: yea, the man many times weeps for joy, while he ſees the fulneſs and freeneſs of the grace of God, toward the like of him.

6. This holy walk in Chriſt is attended with the Spirit of *power*; 2 Tim. i. 7. *For God hath not given us the Spirit of fear, but of power*. There is the Spirit of power and victory that attends it: 1 John v. 4. *He that is born of God overcometh the world*; namely, the wicked of the world, the luſts of this world, the god of this world, the devil: the ſaints have a war with theſe enemies; but are enabled and prepared according to their meaſure, to ſubdue their corruptions within, and vanquiſh temptations without. The believer gets, in ſome meaſure, above the fears, and frowns, and flatteries of the world; ſo as he cannot be turned from the faith of Chriſt thereby. When ſome perſuaded Eraſmus to write to Luther, or againſt him, at the Reformation, to bring him back to Popery: Eraſmus anſwered, "That Luther was too great for "him to write to, or againſt." So a man that walks in Chriſt, is too great a ſpirit to be turned by the powers of the world; when he is himſelf, he cannot be drawn by force or fraud into a baſe compliance with them againſt the honour of his God, and the conſcience of his duty.

7. This holy Chriſtian walk is attended with the Spirit of *love*; 2 Tim. i. 7. *God hath not given us the Spirit of fear, but of love*: love to God and to the brethren. This love is made a ſpecial effect and evidence of ſpiritual circumciſion, or ſanctification, Deut. xxx. 6. there the Lord promiſes to *circumciſe the heart to love him*. The man loves himſelf, and his relations, and outward enjoyments, with a common love; but he loves God and Chriſt, with a ſpecial love. He loves God with a love of deſire; panting after God with a love of union; *with purpoſe of heart, cleaving to the Lord*: with a love of benevolence, deſiring all praiſe and glory to be aſcribed to him: and with a love of delight and complacency, reſting in the Lord as his only God and portion.—This Spirit works by love to the brethren alſo: there are brethren by name, by nation, by office; but eſpecially by grace, that the man loves: *He that loveth him that begat, loveth him alſo that is begotten*. A ſpirit of hatred and enmity between man and man, is inconſiſtent with this walk; and eſpecially where there is no love to the *excellent ones of the earth*. It is true, a child of God may love ſome of the children of God irregularly, when it is not merely becauſe they have more of the image of God, than others; but becauſe they are more their favourites, followers, and admirers: if they be not ſuch, then they will, perhaps, give them little of their company: but, ſays David, *I am a companion to all them that fear thee*. The apoſtle gives us a teſt of true love to the brethren, 1 John iii. 16. *Chriſt laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren*. A true believer is not only to lay down his life for Chriſt, and for his cauſe and the goſpel, when called thereto; but, in ſome reſpect, for the brotherhood: and though this ſeems to be an high pitch, yet, I think, there is ſomething of it in every true lover of Chriſt: they ſo love the brotherhood as, with John, they *deſire to decreaſe*, if ſo be that Chriſt myſtical may *increaſe*; that the kingdom of Chriſt be enlarged, and the generation of the righteous multiplied, amplified, and preſerved; though he himſelf, his name, his honour, his life, ſhould ly in the duſt.

8. This holy Chriſtian walk, or walk in Chriſt, is attended with the Spirit of a *ſound mind*; 2 Tim. i. 7. *God hath not given us the Spirit of fear, but of a ſound mind*. Sanctification is a ſoul reſtoration; *He reſtoreth my ſoul*, Pſal. xxiii. 3. not only to joy and comfort, but to ſinging, health, and vigour. What ſickneſs is to the body, ſin is to the ſoul: a ſick man cannot walk, nor work; ſo here, an ungodly perſon cannot *walk in Chriſt, run the way of his commandments*, nor *work out his ſalvation with fear and trembling*. A ſick man cannot take delight in meat and drink, or the enjoyments of life: ſo, the unholy man cannot take pleaſure in ſpiritual things: but when a man is ſanctified in Chriſt, then he experiences unſpeakable ſatisfaction in ſpiritual exerciſes; he is ſound in the faith, and his heart right with God. It is true, as a man that is healthy may catch cold, and labour under ſome infirmity; ſo a holy, ſpiritually healthy perſon may, through human frailty, and ſtrong temptation, decay in grace for a time; he may get cold, his love and zeal may grow cold, his faith weaken; he may have an inordinate affection to the creature, and immoderate cares; fall into ſin, great ſin; yet the immortal ſeed of God in him will, by the ſupplies of the Spirit of life, revive and corroborate the man again. Grace, like leaven, will ferment the whole lump, and work out the diſeaſe of ſin: the withered principle of grace within, like a tree planted by the river of life, will ſpring, flouriſh, and bud again.

9. This holy walk in Chriſt is attended with the Spirit of *adoption* and *liberty*, which are put together, Rom. viii. 15, 21. When a ſinner becomes a ſaint, that very moment a child of wrath becomes a child of God. They that are the children of God by regeneration, are the children of God by adoption; and they that are born of God, are free-born, they are born to a glorious liberty; *If the Son make you free, ye are free*

free indeed. The spirit of adoption is a free spirit; and *where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty:* the man walks at liberty, and is at freedom for prayer and service; *Truly I am thy servant, thou hast loosed my bonds:* here is *the honour of all the saints.* According to the measure of sanctity that is conferred on them, such is the measure of liberty and freedom they have in the performance of religious duties.

10. This holy walk in Christ is attended with the Spirit of *perseverance;* for the Spirit of God rests on them, and never altogether leaves nor forsakes them. True holiness is an abiding principle; for, *the foundation of God standeth sure;* and, *the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.* He that is the *author,* will be *the finisher of faith:* he that hath begun the good work, will perfect it. See Jer. xxxii. 40. Here God both undertakes for himself, that *he will not turn away from them to do them good;* and then for his people, that *he will put his fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from him.* Hence, *though they fall, they shall rise;* though they step aside into the ways of death, God will bring them back, and give them repentance unto life. Where-ever the image of God is, it is progressive: the picture of a man in a frame doth not grow, it is always at a stand; but the picture, or image, of a man in his child, is far different; it is lively, vigorous, and progressive: so the painted holiness of hypocrites, is vastly different from the image of God in a saint; *The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. I give to them eternal life,* saith Christ, *and they shall never perish.* See Song iv. 16. *Awake, O north-wind, and come thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out.* Not only the wind of influences; the north-wind of nipping and convincing influences of the Spirit; and the south-wind of warming and comforting influences of the Spirit: but all the winds of providence; the north-wind of adversity, the south-wind of prosperity; the north-wind of frowning providence, the south-wind of smiling providence; the warm summer of joy, or the cold winter of sorrow; all the gales and blasts of divine providence, shall sweetly conspire to open the spices of God's garden, to ripen and diffuse the savour of the graces of the Spirit, in the hearts of his people.——Thus you see some of the *concomitants* of this walk; it is attended with the Spirit of illumination, supplication, faith, humiliation, consolation, power, love, a sound mind, adoption, perseverance, *&c.*

[2.] We now come to the consideration of the *effects* of this walk, wherein we may see the *necessity* of it. When I spoke to this part preceding, I brought in what is above as another property of the way, namely, that it is a *spiritual* way; because therein we find the Spirit in all these respects, as above; and so what now follows may be brought in, as the persuasive part of this exhortation: the two former parts being instructive, and the last being directive. What doth immediately follow then, is the persuasives and arguments, for further engaging us to walk in this way. There are these three motives and persuasives to a Christian walk, which comprehend multitudes of other arguments, namely, 1. The glory of God. 2. The advantage of man. 3. The credit of the gospel.

1st, The *glory of God* is the grand motive that should persuade us to this Christian walk: though a Christian walk cannot justify us before God, that was never appointed as the design of it; for our justification is founded only upon the perfect righteousness of God's beloved Son; and to put our imperfect holiness, wrought in us or by us, in the room thereof, is to rob Christ of his title, as the *Lord our righteousness:* but though, I say, a Christian walk cannot justify us before God, yet it glorifies God before the world. And here the glory of all the three persons of the glorious Trinity; the glory of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, require this Christian walk.

(1.) The glory of God the *Father* calls for it, particularly from the hand of believers. Why? because they are *chosen* for this purpose; he *chooseth you that you should be holy,* Eph. i. 4.; and, *he chooseth to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit,* 2 Thes. ii. 13. Believers are ordained for this end: *We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works,* Eph. ii. 10.—They are *called* for this end by the Father; 1 Pet. i. 15. *As he that hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation.*—They are *corrected* by him for this end, that they may be brought to a Christian walk, a holy walk; *This is all the fruit to take away their sin, and to make them partakers of his holiness,* Isa. xxvii. 9. Heb. xii. 10. This is a sweet fruit, that grows upon the sour tree of affliction; we are threshed, that our husks may fly off: tried in the furnace, that the dross of our lusts may be consumed. Many times the saints get such deep spots in their consciences, and stains in their garments, that so nothing but the water of the blood of Christ will wash away; as nothing but the salt and vinegar of affliction will rub out. God would rather see his people in a suffering state, than in a sinful state: he had rather hear them cry, than see them filthy; and better, a thousand times better to be preserved in brine, than to rote in honey.—Thus I say, God chooses them, calls them, corrects them for this end, that he may sanctify them, and bring them to this Christian walk, that by it they may glorify their Father that is in heaven: *Herein is my Father glorified,* says Christ, *that ye bear much fruit.*—We glorify his *holiness,* when we are *holy, as he is holy.*—We glorify his *mercy,* when we are *merciful, as our heavenly Father is merciful.*—We glorify his *righteousness,* when we are righteous as he is righteous.—We glorify his *perfection,* by studying to be *perfect, as our heavenly Father is perfect,* Mat. v. 48.—By this walk we glorify his sovereign *will* and *authority:* for, *this is the will of God, even our sanctification,* 1 Thes. iv. 3, and put honour upon his law, by yielding obedience to, and walking in his commandments.—By this walk we glorify his *love* and *good-will* to us in Christ, while we *walk in love;* and are *followers of God, as dear children,* Eph. v. 12, and serve him from a sense of his love.—By this walk we glorify his *faithfulness* and *power;* in that this walking in Christ imports, as a special ingredient of it, the faith of his promise, and dependence on him for all necessary supplies of grace; and hence this walk is called a *living by faith,* Rom. i. 17. By faith, believing that God is faithful, and will accomplish; powerful, and can accomplish all his promises: *Faithful is he that hath promised, who also will do it.*

Now, an unchristian walk dishonours God in all these respects; and should not the people of

of God have a regard to the glory of God? ſhould not all the children of God particularly have a regard to their Father's honour? All grace begins with God the Father; he is the firſt, in order of being; and the firſt, in order of working: and it is the Father that flows out to us, in Chriſt, by the Spirit. Whatſoever good Chriſt hath done for us, or in us; it is done with reſpect to the Father's love and grant; and Chriſt, as Mediator, is the Father's ſervant, his elect, and choſen, Iſa. xlii. 2. And it is the Father that hath *given him power over all fleſh, that he might give eternal life, to as many as the Father hath given him*, John xvii. 2. In the Father's acts of kindneſs, we have the freeſt and pureſt apprehenſions of love: it was the Father that began the buſineſs, and ſent his Son into the world, to accompliſh the work of redemption: the Son, as Mediator, can have an higher motive, than his own love, to wit, his Father's will; but the Father can have no higher motive than his own love. The love of the Father is antecedent to the merit of Chriſt, and to the operation of the Spirit. O then, what ground to glorify the Father as the original author of all holineſs and happineſs, and that by our walking in Chriſt! Again,

(2.) The glory of God the *Son* calls for this Chriſtian walk: as thereby we are to honour the Father, that his choſen be not diſparaged; ſo to honour the Son, that his members be not deformed: head and members ſhould be proportionate to one another. It were monſtrous that Chriſt ſhould have ſuch a ſtrange body, as Nebuchadnezzar's image, which he ſaw in his dream; the *head of gold*, the *breaſt and arms of ſilver*, the *thighs of braſs*, and the *feet of iron and clay*, Dan. ii. 32.: even ſo, it is not for Chriſt's honour, to be head of a monſtrous body. So much as we retain of ſin, ſo much do we diſhonour Chriſt. Chriſt came for this very end, to make his people holy. He came to repair the ruins of the fall: now, by the fall, we loſt not only God's favour, but God's image alſo: therefore, that the plaiſter might be as broad as the ſore; he died, not only to reconcile us, but to ſanctify us; *That he might ſanctify us by his own blood, he ſuffered without the gate*, Heb. xiii. 12. His blood is not only a price to redeem us, but a laver to cleanſe us. Now, by this Chriſtian walk, Chriſt gets the glory of his mediatorial offices. — We glorify his prophetical office, by hearing his voice, receiving his inſtruction, and learning the law from his mouth. — We glorify his prieſtly office, by coming to God through him, ſeeking acceptance only in him. — We glorify his kingly office, by giving up our luſts into his hand, to be ſlain by him; and by an intire and voluntary ſubjection of our ſouls to his government; ſo as not to be *without law to God, but under the law to Chriſt*. — By this Chriſtian walk, he gets the glory of his *death* and paſſive obedience; while we live to him that died for us: the glory of his doing, or active obedience; while we make honourable mention thereof, in all our courſe of holineſs, ſaying, *I will go in the ſtrength of the Lord, making mention of his righteouſneſs, even of his only*, Pſal. lxxi. 16. — By this he gets the glory of his work *in us*, as well as *for us*: while we *work out our ſalvation*, in the faith of his working in us, *both to will and to do of his good pleaſure*. — By this walk Chriſt gets the glory of his *purchaſe*; having *purchaſed a peculiar people, zealous of good works*: and having purchaſed grace and glory to that people, ſurely he is glorified then, when theſe graces ſhine in the practice of holineſs. — By this walk he gets the glory of his *covenant* and *example*; ſeeing it is by the grace treaſured up in theſe promiſes, that this walk is begun, carried on, and perfected: therefore, *Having theſe promiſes, dearly beloved, let us cleanſe ourſelves from all filthineſs of the fleſh and ſpirit, perfecting holineſs in the fear of God*, 2 Cor. vii. 1.; and ſeeing from theſe promiſes believers bring all their comfort under difficulties; *Though my houſe be not ſo with God, yet he hath made with me an everlaſting covenant, ordered in all things and ſure: for this is all my ſalvation, and all my deſire, although he make it not to grow*, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. By this walk Chriſt gets the glory of his *way* of *walking in the world*; in that it is a walk after Chriſt, as the moſt *perfect example* of holineſs; in doing and ſuffering, according to the will of God: hence they that walk in Chriſt, are ſaid to walk as *he himſelf walked*, and to be *followers of the Lamb whitherſoever he goes*. In a word, by this walk Chriſt gets the glory of his *grace* and *free favour*; for, as this walk is a fruit and effect of his grace; ſo it hath a natural, as well as inſtituted tendency, to advance the praiſe of his glorious grace; and all the believer's walk ſhould be directed to this end. Here is a ſtrong motive, it is a walk neceſſary to the glory of Chriſt.

(3.) The glory of God the *Holy Ghoſt* calls for this walk; for the Father and the Son have committed the ſaints, to the Spirit's charge to this very end and purpoſe, that they might be ſanctified and made holy. Sanctification of heart and life, is made the Spirit's perſonal operation; *Becauſe God hath from the beginning choſen you to ſalvation, through ſanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth*, 2 Theſſ. ii. 13. This holy walk doth belong, according to the œconomy of grace, to the Father, to purpoſe it; to the Son, to purchaſe it; to the Spirit, to work it: and it is not to the Spirit's honour that God's nurſery and plantation, committed to his charge, ſhould not thrive and proſper: it is not for the Spirit's honour, to dwell in defiled temples: it is not to the Spirit's honour, that any, committed by the Father and the Son to his charge, ſhould miſcarry or fall away, either totally, from all grace; or finally, for all time: nay, this, or any thing that looks like it, is ſo far from being to his honour, that it is to his greateſt diſhonour: yea, it is a great grief to the Spirit, when the work of grace doth not go on and proſper in the ſoul; for, it is he that worketh us to this very thing; and therefore is called the *Spirit of holineſs*. — The Father hath left the Son in charge to be the Captain of our ſalvation, to *bring many children to glory*: the Son hath left the Spirit in charge, with all his Father's children, to *guide them by his counſel, and bring them to his glory*: Father, Son, and Spirit are one, and agree in one, for our ſanctification. Chriſt *ſends the Comforter* for this end, to *lead his people in all truth*, John xiv. 16. And how is the Spirit glorified in his graces, glorified in his comforts; glorified in his influences, glorified in his operations, while we give evidence, by our walk, that he is perfecting his own work, and ripening our ſouls for heaven! Whereupon this walk in Chriſt, is alſo called a *walking in the Spirit*. — Now, believer, what think ye, or what ſhall you and I think of this great motive,

motive to this Christian walk, the glory of God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost? Surely, when we speak to believers, we cannot be supposed to speak to such, as have no regard to the glory of God, the praise of Christ, or the honour of the Holy Ghost: why then, I think it may melt our hearts, for our unchristian walk hitherto, and move our souls to a more Christian walk hereafter; that by the glory of God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, we stand obliged to this Christian walk: *As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.*

2dly, The *advantage of man* is another motive, that may be branched out into many particulars; whether we consider the necessity of this Christian walk, with respect to our *own advantage*, or the *advantage of others*.

(1.) It is necessary in respect of *ourselves*, and the advantage that accrues to the children of God, by this Christian walk, in these particulars.

1. Advantage of this Christian walk is, that it is the *porch of communion with God*: none but those that walk in Christ, *have fellowship with the Father, and with the Son*. While a man is profane and unsanctified, *what communion can there be between light and darkness?* God is light in the abstract, and an impure sinner is darkness in the abstract. As a man cannot have communion with beasts, because they live not the same life; so, a natural man cannot have communion with God, because he lives not the same life; nay, he is alienated from the life of God: but when a man walks in Christ, then he walks with God; and when you walk in Christ, God walks in you. *Ye are the temple of the living God: as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them: I will be their God, and they shall be my people*, 2 Cor. vi. 16.

2. Advantage of this Christian walk is, that it *exalts a man above his neighbours*; lifts him up above the sphere of other men: *The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour*. A gracious poor man is far more excellent than a graceless great man, notwithstanding all his titles of honour. The saints are God's jewels; the rest of the world are but lumber, with all their land and lordships.

3. Advantage of this Christian walk is, that it *turns moral virtues into graces*. Some persons are naturally more meek, and sober, and patient than others: and some natural men are morally just and righteous, in their dealing and conversation in the world; honest dealers, good pay-masters, make their word their deed: all this, a man may be, and do, and yet perish for ever. But whenever grace, and a Christian walk enters, and sanctification in the power of it, then the principle of grace turns these moral virtues into graces: his natural and moral actions are now performed from inward and renewed principles; he now acts FROM God, and FOR God in all that he doth; whether he eats or drinks, or buys or sells. As carnal hearts are always carnal, even in spiritual performances; for the streams never run higher than the head; so, on the contrary, gracious hearts are spiritual, even in natural and moral actions; for, *they that are in Christ are new creatures*; acting from new principles.

4. Advantage of this Christian walk is, that it is the *matter of our joy*. There is the joy and peace of our justification, that is founded upon the righteousness of Christ's merit for us: this is the greatest ground of the believer's joy. But next in virtue to that, there is the joy and peace of sanctification, flowing from the righteousness of Christ's Spirit in us; of which the apostle speaks, when he says: *This is our rejoicing, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world*: and the psalmist, when he says; *Great peace have they that love thy law*, Psal. cxix. 165. Whereas, *there is no peace to the wicked*: and therefore Christ's coming at death and judgment, will be terrible to them, both because they are destitute of the righteousness of justification and sanctification; for it is only *the pure in heart that shall see God*. At death and judgment, a dram of saving grace will be more valuable, more comfortable, than mountains of gold, and millions of worlds. Oh! the midnight cry at death and judgment, saying, *Behold the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him!* How terrible will it be to the foolish virgins, that have no oil in their lamps, nor grace in their hearts! Alas! how dolefully will you cry in that day, man! How dreadfully will you shriek! But Christ will not hear you; yea, he will *shut the door against you*, Mat. xxv. 10. Then knock never so hard, cry never so loud, the *door is shut*; there is no hope of entrance.

5. Advantage of this Christian walk is, that it is *an evidence of a gracious state*, for the confirmation of our faith: hence Abraham shewed his faith by his works; whereby it was justified from the calumny of a false faith, James ii. 21,—23. And this, indeed, contributes to make this holy walk a comfortable thing; because it is the fruit, effect, and evidence of justification; though it be no ground or foundation thereof, yet it is an evidence of it, and of a gracious state: How shall a man evidence that he hath *received Christ Jesus the Lord*, but by *walking in him?*

6. Advantage of this Christian walk is, that it is a *walking toward heaven*; heaven is at the end of the walk: hence it is said, *Without holiness no man shall see the Lord*, Heb. xii. 14. And *no unclean thing shall enter into heaven*, Rev. xxi. 27. Without are dogs and swine, but within are the pure and holy. Believe it, man, without holiness on earth, there is no happiness in heaven. This Christian walk is the very beginning of heaven, where the saints *walk with him in white*: this holy walk is a great part of heaven and salvation itself; hence in that golden chain, Rom. viii. 30. *Whom he called, them he justified; whom he justified, them he glorified*; no mention is made of sanctification; to show that sanctity and holiness is heaven and glory begun: it is not only the way to heaven, but it is heaven itself. The more we walk in Christ, the more do we live the life of God, and anticipate the life of heaven; that glorious life, which the angels of God, and the blessed spirits of just men made perfect, live there. This Christian walk makes a man *meet for the inheritance of the saints in light*. What would a carnal heart do with heaven, that knows no other heaven but to eat, drink, and wallow in sensual delights? So the glutton at a feast cried, *There is no heaven like this*: We must not look for a Turkish paradise in heaven; but for a pure sinless state: perfection of grace, and fulness of joy, in the presence of God's glory, is the saints heaven. An unsanctified man cannot truly

truly desire heaven; he may desire it as a privation of suffering and misery, but not as it is a perfection of grace, a privation of all sin, and perfection of holiness: when a man begins to be holy, then he begins to enter into the white cloud of glory.——O then, seeing every one would be happy, and would be with Christ for ever, who would not desire to be holy and to walk in him? A graceless man is very miserable in both worlds; he misses heaven in this world, and loses heaven in the world to come; nay, he has a hell of sin here, and a hell of suffering hereafter: fire and brimstone is his portion. But the gracious man is the happy man: indeed he hath heaven begun here, and heaven perfected hereafter. Here then are some of the advantages of this Christian walk to the children of God.

In a word, this Christian walk is the way, to bring down the blessing of God, on every work of your hand; Psal. i. 4. *Whatsoever he doth shall prosper.* Whereas, to walk in the way of swearing, drunkenness, whoredom, Sabbath-breaking, cursing, lying, cheating, is the direct way to bring down the curse of God, upon all the works of your hand.

Now, I think the consideration of these advantages, should move us to this walk; while the disadvantages of the contrary walk must be as grievous, as the advantages of this are precious. And though, when we speak to them that are in Christ, we cannot denounce against them the curse of the covenant of works, which they are altogether freed from; yet, if they be untender in their walk, there are many other things, besides the curse, which belong only to, and lie heavy upon Christless sinners, that may be the believer's motive.——Is it nothing to you, believer, that your heavenly Father should chastise you, hide his face from you, deny an answer to your prayers, conceal your evidences of heaven from you, give you up to the tyranny of your lusts, and then take vengeance on your inventions? Yea, he will thus *visit your iniquities with rods*, if you walk not in Christ, and in his way, *though his loving-kindness he will not take away, nor suffer his covenant to fail.*——Thus much for the advantages of it with respect to *ourselves.*

(2.) The necessity of this Christian walk, with respect to *others*; and the advantage of this walk with respect to our neighbour, both godly and wicked, and all in general.

1. Our Christian walk would be for advantage to the *wicked*; for it may tend for their conviction and conversion. On the one hand, this walk may tend to their *conviction*, and to stop their mouths; 1 Pet. ii. 15. *This is the will of God, that by well-doing, ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.* See also, chap iii. 16. *Having a good conscience, that whereas they speak evil of you, as of evil-doers, they may be ashamed that falsly accuse your good conversation in Christ.*—On the other hand, your walk may tend to their *conversion*; 1 Pet. ii. 12. *Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles; that whereas they speak against you as evil-doers, they may, by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.* The holiness of professors hath sometimes tended to the conversion of the profane, who, in the day of their gracious visitation, have glorified God on that account. See also, 1 Pet. iii. 1, 2. How advantageous and profitable such a walk may be, the apostle tells us, Tit. iii. 8. *This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God, might be careful to maintain good works: these things are good and profitable unto men.*

2. Our Christian walk may be for advantage to the *godly*, who are thereby excited and encouraged to be the more holy, by the strict conversation, which they behold in others; and to say with those, Zech. viii. 23. *We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.* Whereas, an untender walk doth grieve and stumble them; but a Christian walk will rejoice the hearts and strengthen the hands, both of godly people, and godly ministers; *I have no greater joy*, says the beloved disciple, *than to hear that my children walk in truth*, 3 John ver. 4.

3. Our Christian walk may be of advantage to *all in general*, that are round about us; yea, to the whole generation we live among: for, in this way we would become a public good, a common good; not only in communicating good to them, but in diverting judgments from them, among whom we converse; so ten righteous men would have preserved Sodom: and surely, if *the Lord had not left us a remnant*, in this generation, *we had been like Sodom and Gomorrah*, in respect of judgments, as we are in respect of sins; for the most part of the generation are declaring their sin as Sodom.—Thus the advantage of man, is a great motive to this Christian walk.

3*dly*, The *credit of the gospel* is another great motive, to this Christian walk; by this we are called to *adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour, in all things*, Tit. ii. 10. By this walk we adorn the gospel of Christ. As the glory of God, the advantage of man, so the credit of the gospel obliges unto this walk. The gospel is honoured thereby in many respects.

1. Gospel *doctrine* is honoured by this walk, while thereby we are taught, in an efficacious manner; *The grace of God, that bringeth salvation, which teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts*, and to *live soberly, righteously, and godly in a present world*, Tit. ii. 11, 12. Every doctrine of the gospel teaches this holy walk.—The doctrine of *election*, 2 Thess. ii. 13.—The doctrine of *redemption*, Eph. v. 25, 26, 27.—The doctrine of *vocation*, 1 Thess. iv. 7.—The doctrine of *justification*, which is to take away the *guilt* of sin, Rom. iii. 25—The doctrine of *sanctification*, which is to take away the *power* and *filth* of sin, 1 Cor. vi. 11.—The doctrine of *glorification*, which takes away the very *being* of sin, and admits of no sin at all.——Every doctrine of the gospel tends to the advancement of this holy, Christian walk. And,

2. Gospel *promises* are honoured thereby, in that this walk is excited powerfully thereby; 2 Cor. vii. 1. *Having these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.* The promises are the cords of love, whereby we are sweetly bound to the service of God, and the acceptable performance of religious duties.

3. Gospel *rules* are honoured by this walk, which is the law of God, as a rule of holiness and righteousness, and as disburdened of the covenant of works, in his fœderal requisition of the condition of life from us; for, we are no more commanded to DO that we may LIVE, while we walk in Christ: we *live*, that we may walk in Christ; and *do not walk*, that we may live.

live. The law here is also disburdened of its terrible curse, and of its irritating power; and therefore may well be called a *law of liberty;* to the man in Christ; an *easy yoke;* and *commandments that are not grievous.* James i. 25. Mat. xi. 30. 1 John v. 3.

4. Gospel *examples* and *patterns* are honoured by this walk, it being a walk according to these examples; it being a walking after the example of Christ. A gospel walk is a walking after God Jehovah, as our Father; and after Christ, as our leader; and after the Spirit, as our guide; and after the example of the saints, as they were followers of Christ: we are to *follow them who, through faith and patience, do inherit the promises*; and to *follow the footsteps of the flock.*

5. Gospel *ordinances* are honoured by this walk, while we are careful and conscientious, in our attendance upon these, with an eye to the God of ordinances, for his blessing upon them, whether public or private; particularly upon the hearing of the joyful sound, the gospel message; and regular participation of the gospel sacraments.

6. Gospel *privileges* are honoured by this walk; and particularly, all the privileges that go along with the gospel state, while we walk worthy of, and suitable to these privileges, and that state.—Are you believers in a gospel state, being effectually called? Why then, you are to *walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called.*—Are you in a justified state? then you are to evidence your justification, by your sanctification.—Are you in a sanctified state? wherefore got you a new nature, but to *walk before God in newness of life?*—Are you in an adopted state? then it is suitable to that state, that you be *followers of God as dear children.*——O Sirs, if we be believers, is it not a shame for us, to live so unsuitable to our state? Is this all the thanks we give to God, for these privileges, that we trample his statutes under our feet, dishonour his name, break his law, and grieve his Spirit? Oh! shall we render acts of enmity for all his acts of love towards us! Fy for shame! *Tell it not in Gath.*——Have we the hope of glory, and shall we not, having *this hope, purify ourselves, even as he is pure?* Are we *separate* from the world? and shall we walk in the broad way with the rest? Hath God *pitied* us? and shall we not study to please him? Hath he *washed* us in the blood of his Son? and shall we wallow in the mire of our lusts? or rather, shall we not study to let it be known to the world, that his blood hath a virtue to sanctify us? Well, brethren, if we do not walk in Christ, we do discredit the gospel doctrine, gospel promises, gospel rules, gospel examples, gospel ordinances, and gospel privileges, and counteract the design of a gospel state.——These are the motives to this gospel walk.

The *fourth* and and *last* thing upon this second branch of the exhortation was, the *directive* part of it, namely, to give some *directions*, in order to our walking with Christ. In general, I hope I need not tell you, that you must be in a *gospel state*, otherwise you cannot have a *gospel walk:* we must first be *married* to Christ, before we can *bring forth fruit unto God*, Rom. vii. 4. We must first be in Christ, the true vine, before we can *bear good fruit*, John xv. 5. And therefore, let this be your principal study, to be sure that the state be changed, and that you *receive Christ Jesus the Lord*, otherwise you cannot walk in him. All other directions will be in vain without this. And now, as we go along, lift up a prayer with your heart, that the Lord may bless the following advices and directions, wherewith I design to put a period to this subject.

[1.] Direction in order to your walking in Christ, is to *beware of all impediments that hinder this walk.* And I will mention you a few of these hinderances of the Christian walk; both that you may beware of them, and seek to be rid of them.

1. *Darkness* hinders walking. A man that wants light, and is in the dark, cannot walk comfortably: even so, the darkness of ignorance hinders this Christian walk; *They that walk in the night stumble.* O pray, that God may take away your gross darkness. It is midnight with many, in respect of black and dark ignorance: and therefore, no wonder that they stumble and fall; some into one open wickedness, and some into another.

2. *Heedlessness* hinders walking. When a man doth not take heed to the way, but is gazing about him, he is ready either to dash his foot against a stone, and so to fall and break his bones; or else he is ready to wander out of the way, while he doth not notice the road: even so, spiritual heedlessness and unwatchfulness, is the cause of many wandering steps out of God's way: *Watch therefore and pray*, saith Christ, *that ye enter not into temptation.*

3. *Weakness* hinders walking. If a man be sick and weakly, he is hardly able to walk abroad: even so, as there is a bodily weakness, so there is soul weakness. As all by nature are *without strength;* even so, those that are sometime strengthened by grace, may turn weak and powerless: while corruption is strong, grace is weak, faith is weak. Seek to have this impediment removed, by being *strong in the Lord*, saying, *I will go in the strength of the Lord, making mention of his righteousness, even of his only.*

4. *Fetters* hinder walking. If you bind a man, he will walk at leisure. Many are bound with the strongest fetters; even believers may be under the conduct and influence of some secret lusts, and these are so binding, that they are like fetters: they have the binding power of a law; and hence are called, *the law of the members, warring against the law of the mind*, Rom. vii. 23. And again, *I find a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me.* Seek therefore, that *the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, may make you free from the law of sin and death.* Seek to be free of your fetters, to be loosed of your bands: *Surely, I am thy servant, thou hast loosed my bonds.*

5. *Weights* hinder walking. If a man hath a clog at his heels, a heavy weight on his back, he will not walk hard. There is a twofold weight that hinders the Christian walk much: the weight of *worldly incumberances;* the *cares of the world* are a dead weight, that keep many from walking. O Sirs, cast off that weight. There is also the weight of *predominant sin:* whatever be the weight, we are to lay it aside; that we may be in case to walk, yea, and to run in God's way; *Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth more easily beset us; and run with patience the race set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of faith*, Heb. xii. 1.

6. *Diversions* hinder walking. There is some company,

company, if a man meet with, in his way wherein he walketh, they will mightily hinder and retard him in his journey; ſo it is with the carnal company of the men of this world. They will not walk faſt in God's way, but make many a ſtop, who haunt the company of graceleſs and profane perſons, that mock at religion, idle away their time, and neglect their ſouls.

7. *Diſcord* hinders walking. If men fall out by the way; if, inſtead of walking together with concord, they fall by the ears, this will hinder and marr their walking; yea, perhaps, they may diſable one another, that they can walk no more, but muſt ly by the way: ſo here, diſcord and contention hindereth the ſpiritual walking. They that live in the fire of ſtrife, have little of the life of religion: they that are fighting in the way, are not walking in it: they that are occupied in ſlandering, backbiting, reproaching their neighbours; and eſpecially that fall out with the godly, and cannot live at peace with them, or in love to them, their walking is marred: therefore, beware of diſcord; where there is much diviſion, there is little devotion.

8. *Doubting* and *diſcouragement* hinder walking. If a man doubt about the road wherein he walketh; if he doubt that it is not the way, that will carry him to his deſired journey's end, or to the place he hath in view, then he is diſcouraged, and hath little heart to walk therein: even ſo, doubting, inſtead of believing, marrs our ſpiritual walk, and fills the ſoul with diſcouragement. David reaſons himſelf out of his diſcouragement, ſaying, *Why art thou caſt down, O my ſoul? and why art thou diſquieted within me? hope thou in God, for I ſhall yet praiſe him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God*, Pſal. xlii. 11. Many reaſon themſelves out of their faith, inſtead of reaſoning themſelves into faith. Doubting is no duty; nay, it is a ſin that hinders our walk: diſcouragement is no duty; no, no: *the joy of the Lord ſhould be our ſtrength.*

9. *Intemperance* hinders walking. If a man intoxicate himſelf with drink, and overcharge his belly with meat, he is more fit for loitering and ſnorting in a bed, than walking on the road; it impedes his walking: hence we will ſee ſome beaſtly drunken perſons attempt to walk in the ſtreet; but inſtead of walking, we will ſee them ſtaggering from ſide to ſide, or tumbling down, and expoſing themſelves to open infamy. Well, this intemperance is ſuch a hinderance to all ſpiritual walking, that if a man be ſtuffed with meat and drink, and immoderate cares, he is altogether unfit for ſpiritual work and worſhip: therefore Chriſt warns his diſciples, even them, to beware of it; *Take heed to yourſelves, leſt at any time your hearts be overcharged with ſurfeiting, and drunkenneſs, and cares of this life, and that day come upon you unawares. —Watch therefore, and pray always*, Luke xxi. 34, 35. Let habitual drunkards and tipplers conſider whither they are walking; for ſurely they are not walking in Chriſt, but in the broad way that leadeth to deſtruction. Let thoſe, that cannot make a bargain, without drinking to exceſs, as many uſe to do at your public markets, conſider this.

10. *Slothfulneſs* and *lazineſs* hinder walking. When people ſhut themſelves up in a cloſe chamber, as it were, to ſleep and ſlumber, ſurely their walking is marred: even ſo, nothing hinders this Chriſtian walk more, than ſpiritual ſloth and ſecurity.——I will tell you two chambers wherein eſpecially, the ſlothful, lazy, and ſecure ſinner ſhuts up himſelf to ſleep into. There is the chamber of *lies*, and the chamber of *eaſe*.

(1.) The chamber of *lies*, or, as the prophet Iſaiah calls it, the *refuge of lies*, chap. xxviii. 15. *They have made lies their refuge, and under falſhood have they hid themſelves.* Whether it be the lying refuge of their legal righteouſneſs, their phariſaic profeſſion, their cradle faith, their falſe hope, partial repentance, legal convictions, their carnal dreams and deluſions; if they ſleep on there, God's curſe will hale them out of that chamber; for, *the hail ſhall ſweep away the refuge of lies.* Some are brought out in mercy, but moſt part are dragged out in wrath.

(2.) The chamber of *eaſe; Moab hath been at eaſe from his youth*, Jer. xlviii. 11.: never truly awakened, never duly concerned about their ſoul and their eternal ſtate, nor concerned about the affairs of Chriſt's houſe; notwithſtanding of all the trouble of Zion, or dangerous circumſtances that the church of Chriſt is into: there is a wo upon the bed, and a wo upon the covering of thoſe that are lying at eaſe; *Wo to them that are at eaſe in Zion*, Amos vi. 1. Now, that partial ſecurity may overtake believers themſelves, is too evident, not only from common experience, but alſo from the parable of the virgins; where it is ſaid, both of the wiſe and fooliſh, that, *while the Bridegroom tarried, they all ſlumbered and ſlept:* but ſlothfulneſs and walking are inconſiſtent. Seek therefore, that God would deliver from ſloth and ſecurity: *The ſlothful man ſaith, there is a lion in the way;* he will not walk forward.——Theſe are ſome hinderances of walking: ſeek to be free of theſe, and beware of them, if you would walk in Chriſt.

[2.] Direction, in order to this walk is this, *O endeavour, through grace, that every action may be a ſtepping in this way;* then would we walk in Chriſt to purpoſe, if we could learn to make every action of our life, a ſtep of our walk in this way. It is poſſible to a child of God, through grace, that any action of his life may be a part of his Chriſtian walk: *e. g.* even in his *natural* actions, of eating and drinking; when, *whether he eats or drinks, or whatſoever he doth, he doth all to the glory of God in Chriſt;* then he is walking in Chriſt, even when he is eating and drinking. But I inſtance eſpecially in our religious, and in our civil actions.

1° Let all your *religious* actions be a part of your walking in Chriſt; for this walk extends to all religious duties. When a man is reading the word, with the Spirit and underſtanding, then he is walking in Chriſt. When he is hearing the word, with faith, he is walking in Chriſt. When he is praying in the Holy Ghoſt, in the Spirit of Chriſt, then he is walking in Chriſt. When he is ſinging and praiſing, with grace in his heart, he is walking in Chriſt. When he is communicating worthily, then he is walking in Chriſt; for then he is *eating the fleſh, and drinking the blood of the Son of God.*—And ſince I have mentioned this, I ſhall take liberty to ſay, that I underſtand there are ſeveral obliged to be hearers in this place to-day, who may ſee it incumbent upon them, to be communicants elſewhere the next Lord's day; and therefore, though I drop a word ſuitable to them, I think it cannot be reckoned amiſs; and though there is no direction I am offering, but they

they may find abundantly ſuitable to their caſe, yet I would here ſay, that this Chriſtian walk is ſo extenſive, that it comprehends all the duties, both before, in, and after communicating; and right partaking of the Lord's ſupper, is a ſpecial part of this walking in Chriſt. As a man may be ſtanding in the church, and yet walking in Chriſt, if ſpiritually exerciſed; and as a man may be lying in a priſon, and yet walking in Chriſt, as Paul and Silas was, in the ſtocks: ſo, much more, may a man be ſitting at a communion-table, and yet walking in Chriſt; for walking in Chriſt doth not ly in bodily exerciſe, but in ſoul exerciſe; as in the exerciſe of faith, the exerciſe of love, the exerciſe of repentance, and godly ſorrow for ſin, the exerciſe of joy in the Lord: when a man is in that exerciſe, under the conduct of the Spirit of Chriſt, then he is walking in Chriſt.

What is the duty then before communicating? It is to walk in Chriſt. What is the duty in communicating? It is to walk in Chriſt. What is the duty after communicating? It is to walk in Chriſt.

There are two words I have to tell thoſe, and take the liberty to offer them. The firſt is, that none can communicate worthily, that are not in Chriſt, by having *received Chriſt Jeſus the Lord*, that are not believers. The ſecond is, that people may be believers, that have *received Chriſt*, and yet communicate unworthily, if they be not *walking in him*.

(1.) I ſay, that none can *communicate worthily*, that are not in Chriſt, by *receiving of him*. It is the childrens bread, and is not deſigned for the converſion of ſinners, but for the confirmation of ſaints. Why? may not, and have not ſome been converted at ſacraments? It may be ſo; but yet this ſacrament is not in itſelf deſignedly inſtitute, for the converſion of ſinners: ſome have, indeed, been converted at communion ſermons; but I have not heard of any Chriſtleſs ſinner converted at a communion-table, where he himſelf was partaking. It may be, there have been inſtances of this, that I have not heard; but yet that doth not falſify what I aſſert, that it is not a converting ordinance: muſt we run a man through with a ſword to ſave his life, becauſe one did ſo once, and let out a ſecret impoſthume? Becauſe ſome miniſter hath been converted at his ordination, is therefore the laying on of hands inſtitute as a converting ordinance? No; by no means. Becauſe a man hath been converted at his marriage, when the ſermon and bleſſing hath wrought upon him, is therefore marriage a converting ordinance? No; not at all. Let this then be remembered, that none can communicate worthily, that are not in Chriſt, by receiving him.

(2.) That people may be believers, that have received Chriſt, and yet *communicate unworthily*, if they be not *walking in Chriſt*. Let communicants then endeavour, through grace, to prepare and examine themſelves; *Let a man examine himſelf, and ſo let him eat.* Why, a man may examine himſelf, and find himſelf both out of Chriſt, and out of a courſe of walking in him: ſhall he eat in any caſe upon examination? No, no; the meaning is, let him examine whether he be *in Chriſt*, yea, or not; and ſee if he can prove his being *in Chriſt*, by his *walking in him*. As a man that tries gold with a touch-ſtone, will not take it becauſe he tried it, but becauſe he found it true gold: and as a man will not go abroad, becauſe he hath beheld himſelf in a looking-glaſs, for he may find deformity and filthineſs; but becauſe he hath corrected what was amiſs, and compoſed his dreſs by looking at himſelf: and ſo unleſs we will prevaricate with the ſcripture, the Holy Ghoſt means, by that word, a fitneſs and preparation found; and yet thoſe that prepare for that ordinance, muſt never expect ſuch a preparation, as will not ſtand in need of Chriſt: nay, Chriſt himſelf muſt be the great preparation; for this ordinance hath a ſpecial relation to Chriſt: and it is by walking in him, that we have communion with him in that ordinance.

QUEST. *How ſhall I attain this privilege to walk in Chriſt?*

ANSW. How doth a man come to walk in his cloaths? Is it not even by putting them on? So, if you would *walk in Chriſt*, you muſt *put on Chriſt*; Rom. xiii. 14. *Put on Chriſt Jeſus the Lord, and make no proviſion for the fleſh to fulfil the luſts thereof.* Put off your filthy garments, Eph. iv. 22. put on Chriſt. It is true, many put on Chriſt, as a man puts on his ſhoe, to trample upon him. Some put on Chriſt as a man doth his hat, which he lifts to every paſſenger; they will compliment every company with their religion, and put on or put off their profeſſion of Chriſt, according as the company goes. Some put him on, as people will put on a fine glaring embroidery upon their cloaths, for ornament, and not for uſe. But they that truly put on Chriſt, as they put him on, never to put him off again; ſo they put on Chriſt as a robe; particularly the robe of his righteouſneſs, for their juſtification; and the robe of his grace, for their ſanctification: that is, they take him in his merit, to juſtify them; and in his Spirit, to ſanctify them: and as a man walks in his robes that he hath put on, ſo they that go to a communion-table in this robe, they go walking in Chriſt; and ſo they have the wedding-garment, and ſhall have the Bridegroom's favour. Here is the robe we ought all to walk in: it is heaven's parliament-robe; and to walk in it, is to wear it; and to wear it, is to walk in it. To have Chriſt, and to uſe him, is the ſum of all true religion.

But to return, I was ſaying, firſt let all your religious actions be a part of your walking in Chriſt, whether it be your reading, hearing, praying, praiſing, communicating, or the like.

2. Let all your *civil* actions alſo, be a part of your walking in Chriſt. A man may be walking in Chriſt, when he is buying and ſelling, if he be acting ſpiritually, conſciencioufly, and in the name of Chriſt; and acknowledging the Lord in all his ways.——And becauſe of the market you have now in view, I ſhall tell you what are the finful ways that people take, in buying and ſelling, which declare that they are not walking in Chriſt, when about theſe actions.—There is the diſparaging and underrating of what you are to buy; and the raiſing and over-valuing of what you are to ſell; and both without juſt cauſe; ſee Prov. xx. 14. *It is nought, it is nought, ſaith the buyer; but when he is gone his way, then he boaſteth.*—There is the ſin of abuſing men's ſimplicity and unſkilfulneſs, and uſing falſe weights, balances, and meaſures to deceive; Prov. xi. 1. *A falſe balance is an abomination to the Lord.*—Again, ſome will, I underſtand, ſet off the goodlieſt face of their wares outmoſt

outmoſt to the market, the buyer takes all to be of the ſame ſort, at the word of the ſeller. Thus they are guilty of a double cheat; they cheat their neighbour's eye with their wares, and cheat their mind with their words; and thus both their hands and lips are full of cheating and deceit: but they ſhould know that they cannot cheat God, who ſurely will not let them thrive that way; or if they ſeem to thrive, it is with his curſe upon their gain. God hath ſaid, *None that worketh abomination, or maketh a lie, ſhall enter into heaven; but only they that are written in the Lamb's book of life;* Rev. xxi. 27. Intimating, that thoſe, among others, who are cheaters and liars, they may well read their names written in the black book of death and damnation: but they cannot read ſuch foul names as theirs, in the fair little white book of life, the Lamb's book of life. O Sirs, there is a way of walking in Chriſt, even in all your natural, religious, and civil actions. The direction then that I was giving is; O endeavour, through grace, that every action of your life, may be a ſtep forward in this way, by doing all in his fear, and through his grace.

[3.] Direction, with which I cloſe, is to endeavour, through grace, to *improve all theſe means*, and to make conſcience of the diligent uſe of all the means, that tend to advance this Chriſtian walk: and here I mention theſe four means.

1. A punctual and ſerious attendance upon goſpel-ordinances; Prov. viii. 34. *Bleſſed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, and waiting at the poſts of my doors.*

2. Frequent converſation with goſpel-profeſſors, whoſe walk adorns the ſame: *He that walketh with the wiſe, ſhall be wiſe.* See Heb. vi. 12. *Be not ſlothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promiſes.*

3. Prayer; *Continue in prayer, and watch in the ſame, with thankſgiving*, Col. iv. 2. Seek the aſſiſtance of the *goſpel-ſpirit*, who only can enable you to this walk, Luke xi. 13. Seek him as a Spirit of *power* to ſtrengthen you; for, *it is he that worketh in you, both to will and to do*, Phil. ii. 13. Seek him as a Spirit of *faith*, that by faith in exerciſe you may abide in Chriſt: for, *except ye abide in him, ye cannot bring forth fruit*, John xv. That by drawing virtue and water out of theſe wells of ſalvation, and fountain of life, and receiving out of his fulneſs grace for grace, ye may live on him, and walk in him. And that, by faith, ye may make uſe of the goſpel-promiſe, and thereby be *partakers of the divine nature*, 2 Pet. i. 4. And that by this faith ye may fix all your reſolves for duty, in the ſtrength of the Lord God, with a deſign to make honourable mention of the Mediator's righteouſneſs, in every performance, as that alone whereby ye are juſtified in your perſons, and accepted in your performances, Pſal. lxxi. 16, 19, 24.

4. Spiritual meditation; *I thought upon my ways, and turned my feet to thy teſtimonies.* Meditate on your ways, how ſinful and ungrateful they have been; how unlike unto the ways of the children of God, and thoſe who have received ſo many favours. Again, meditate on the Lord's way, how ſweet, pleaſant, profitable, and honourable it is.——And though, through much tribulation you may enter into the kingdom of heaven, and muſt reſolve upon the croſs; yet amidſt all the croſſes of the way, meditate upon two things in this way you are called to walk in.

(1.) The *red carpet* that is laid over all the way; that is, the red carpet of the blood of Chriſt: and as the ſaints have always overcome by the blood of the Lamb; ſo by this blood of Chriſt you ſhall overcome all the difficulties in the way, and walk upon the red carpet.

(2.) The *white pavement* that is below the carpet, all along the way you walk in; and that is the white pavement of love, the love of God in Chriſt. Song iii. 10.; there Solomon's chariot, repreſenting the goſpel covenant, is ſaid to have a *covering of purple*; there is the red carpet of the blood of Chriſt: and it is ſaid to be *paved with love, for the daughters of Jeruſalem*; there is the white pavement of divine love. Now, the holy meditation and perſuaſion of God's ſpecial love in Chriſt, to you in particular: his love already manifeſted, in what he hath done for you, and in you: his love to be manifeſted, in what he is to do for you, in conducting you to the actual and full poſſeſſion of the glorious inheritance reſerved in heaven for you; nothing will more engage to a goſpel-walk, than this; *the love of Chriſt will conſtrain you*, 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. Gal. ii. 20. 1 Pet. i. 3, 4. Pſal. lxxiii. 24, 35, 26.

Neglect not theſe means; and if Satan tempt you, ſaying, What need the uſe of means, ſince God hath promiſed, to *cauſe you to walk in his ſtatutes?* Anſwer him as Chriſt did, when Satan tempted him, to caſt himſelf down from the pinacle of the temple, by adducing the promiſe that God had given his angels charge over him, to keep him in all his ways: his anſwer to Satan was; *It is written, Thou ſhalt not tempt the Lord thy God.* So when Satan tempts you, to caſt yourſelf from the pinacle of the temple, from temple means and ordinances, let your anſwer then be, *Thou ſhalt not tempt the Lord thy God.* To neglect the means, is to tempt the Lord. Let means be uſed in dependence on the Lord, who only can put a bleſſing in the means: they are like pipes and conduits, which convey nothing, unleſs the fountain let forth of its water; ſo they convey nothing, unleſs the Lord ſend forth a ſtream thereby. Therefore, in the uſe of means, be ſtill looking to the Lord, both for grace to uſe the means, and grace to bleſs the means.

Now, all the ſermons I have preached upon this text, will be ſo many ſtanding witneſſes, againſt all the unbelievers of this congregation, who do not *receive Chriſt Jeſus the Lord*; and all believers that, having received him, do not *walk in him.* Be reſtleſs then, till he be received into your hearts and ſouls; and, having *received him, ſo walk in him.*——May the Lord himſelf put a bleſſing, in all that hath been ſaid from this text. To his name be praiſe.

*** It having been agreed upon to range the diſcourſes according to the order of time in which they were delivered: when the preceding one was begun to be printed, there was but a ſmall part of it tranſcribed from the Author's ſhort-hand characters, and therefore the preciſe number of diſcourſes that it conſiſted of could not then be poſitively aſcertained, in regard they were not particularly divided by the Author; though, now upon a view of the whole, from the Author's concluding addreſſes and introductory preambles, with other marks of diſtinction, the ſubject appears, to an attentive reader, to have been diſcuſſed in ten ſermons, and might eaſily have been ſo divided, had it been permitted: but ſhall be ſuſtained as ſo many in the enumeration of them.

SERMON.

SERMON XX.–XXVII.

The HAPPY CONGREGATION; or, the *great gathering* of the *People* to SHILOH.*

GEN. xlix. 10.

The ſceptre ſhall not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him ſhall the gathering of the people be.

THE twelve ſons of Jacob were very remarkable in their day: but the twelve tribes of Iſrael, that were deſcended and denominate from them, were yet more remarkable and renowned; for we find their names upon the twelve gates of the new Jeruſalem, Rev. xxi. 12. In the view hereof, their dying father, Jacob, ſays ſome things remarkable concerning each ſon, and his tribe. Holy Jacob, the nearer he was to his death, the nearer to God; his ſoul had not only a kind of divinity, but of divination alſo, whereby he propheſies of what ſhall take place concerning them, and come to paſs in the latter days. From Jacob's couch, and death-bed prophecy, we may learn ſome new leſſons, though it be an old ſtory, and ſpoken more than three thouſand years ago. Many great things are ſaid to and of the ſeveral ſons of Jacob, when now they were gathered together at his bed-ſide: but eſpecially very glorious things are ſpoken of Judah and his tribe; as, 1. That it ſhould be an *honourable* tribe; ver. 8. *Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren ſhall praiſe.* 2. That it ſhould be a *victorious* tribe; *Thy hand ſhall be in the neck of thine enemies.* 3. That it ſhould be a *ſuperior* tribe to the reſt; *Thy Father's children ſhall bow down before thee.* 4. That it ſhould be a *powerful* and *courageous* tribe, ver. 9. *Judah is a lion's whelp.* 5. That it ſhould be a *royal* tribe, from which the Meſſias the Prince ſhall come, ver. 10. *The ſceptre ſhall not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him ſhall the gathering of the people be.*

As Abraham ſaw Chriſt's day afar off, ſo did Jacob here: though his bodily eyes were dim, yet ſuch a clear-ſighted ſoul hath he, that he ſees that which the eye of mortality never ſaw, even an object at ſuch a far diſtance, that he ſpake clearly of it more than ſixteen hundred years before the accompliſhment thereof; and while there was nothing but ſhadows that interveened betwixt the prophecy and the event. And, notwithſtanding all the legal interveening ſhadows, and that his ſun was going down in his hemiſphere of nature, his eyes dim through infirmity of age; yet his mind being irradiated by the Spirit of God, he ſees *the Sun of righteouſneſs*, the *Morning-ſtar*, the *Lion of the tribe of Judah*, the *Light of the Gentiles*, and the *Glory of his people Iſrael.* As Moſes, from the mount, beheld the land of Canaan afar off; ſo Jacob from the mount of his divine contemplation, even when his heart and eye-ſtrings are breaking, ſees to the furtheſt end and period of all the prophets.

This text is the more remarkable, that it is the third promiſe of grace and of Chriſt to mankind ſinners after the fall. The firſt promiſe was, Gen. iii. 15. *The ſeed of the woman ſhall bruiſe the head of the ſerpent.* The ſecond was, Gen. xxii. 18. where God ſays to Abraham, *In thy ſeed ſhall all the nations of the earth be bleſſed.* But this is the third, both fuller and plainer than the former two; for theſe ſhew *that* it ſhall be, but this ſhews, *when* it ſhall be; pointing out the very preciſe period of time when Chriſt ſhall come: So that, if any one demand, When ſhall this Meſſias be revealed? The anſwer is, When the ſceptre is departed from Judah.

This text hath two parts: the firſt pertaining to the Jews, *The ſceptre ſhall not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet until Shiloh come*; the ſecond pertaining to the Gentiles, *To him ſhall the gathering of the people be.* He ſhall come to the Jews, and be received by the Gentiles: for Chriſt, *the king of the Jews*, came to them; *He came to his own, and his own received him not.* The Gentiles ſhall be ſubject to the King of the Jews, and at laſt the Jews ſhall be ſubject to the King of the Gentiles. The former part of the verſe ſpeaks forth the *conviction* of the Jews, the latter part the *converſion* of the Gentiles.

Now, in the *firſt part* of the words, relating to the Jews, you may notice two things, *firſt*, a *ſign*; and, *ſecondly*, an *event*. The ſign is, the departing of the ſceptre from Judah, and the government. The event is, the coming of Chriſt the Shiloh.

1. You have the *ſign*; and this ſign, if it be not doubled, is at leaſt twice mentioned in the text; for the ſame may be underſtood by the *ſceptre* and the *law-giver*: where there is a ſceptre, there muſt be a legiſlator. They may be either conſidered to be the *ſame*, namely, *the ſceptre*, OR *the law-giver*; or *ſeparately*, as ſome read it, *the ſceptre* OF *the law-giver*; making the one the *principality*, and the other the *magiſtracy*, as it were, at the feet of the former; as Paul at the feet of Gamaliel. Jacob here foreſaw, that the ſceptre and government would come to the tribe of Judah, which was fulfilled in David, on whoſe family the crown was intailed. He foreſaw alſo, that the ſceptre would continue in that tribe, at leaſt a government of their own, till the coming of the Meſſias, in whom, as the King of Zion, and great High-

* This ſubject is the ſubſtance of eight diſcourſes, preached at ſeveral places, on ſacramental occaſions. The firſt three were delivered at the ſacrament of Kinglaſſie, June 5*th*, 6*th*, and 7*th*; and end about the middle of the third general head. The next three were preached at the ſacrament of Airth, June 19*th*, 20*th*, and 21*ſt*; and end with the fifth general head. The laſt two were delivered at the ſacrament of Carnock, July 4*th*, and 5*th*; all in the year 1725. It hath undergone four editions.

prieſt,

prieſt, it was fit that both the prieſthood, and the royalty, ſhould terminate and centre.

I know it is objected here, eſpecially by the Jews, who deny that the Meſſias is come, that in the captivity of Babylon, *where was the ſceptre of Judah?* And that the Maccabees were of the tribe of Levi; *where then was the tribe of Judah?* For clearing of this, you are to remember, that when the ſceptre entred upon Judah, it remained there. You may ſee Judg. i. 1, 2. *That after the death of Joſhua, the children of Iſrael aſked the Lord, ſaying, Who ſhall go up for us againſt the Canaanites, to fight againſt them? The Lord anſwered, Judah ſhall go up, becauſe I have delivered the land into his hand.* But when it is ſaid, *The ſceptre ſhall not depart from Judah*, it is not meant, the ſceptre ſhall ſtill remain there in the ſame *ſplendor* and *glory:* it is not taken away, when it pleaſes God to eclipſe the glory, and obſcure the ſplendor of it, as a puniſhment of their ſins. Now, as until the captivity, all along from David's time, the ſceptre was in Judah; ſo in their captivity they had their princes exiles. You ſee the king of Babylon lifting up the head of Jehoiakim king of Judah, when he was his captive, and advancing him above the other kings that were with him in Babylon, 2 Kings xxv. 27. And after the captivity, their rulers were either by the father or mother's ſide, deſcended from the tribe of Judah. They had ſtill a governor of that tribe, or of the Levites, that adhered to it, which was equivalent, till Judah became a province of the Roman empire, juſt at the time of our Saviour's birth, and was at that time taxed, as one of the provinces of that empire, Luke ii. 1. And though the *act* of government might, at ſome time or other, ceaſe, yet the *right* of government was ſtill in Judah; the crown ſtill did belong to Judah, and the principality had its denomination from Judah: and to this day, they have the name of Jews from Judah, and will ever be ſo called; the name ſhall not wear out, till Chriſt's ſecond coming: however, his firſt coming did not take place, till the ſceptre was departed from Judah: and when the government was actually departing, or departed from Judah, that was the time when Chriſt came into the world; for when Herod, a ſtranger, and of another nation, was made king and governor of Judah, and thereby the ſceptre and royal power departed from Judah, our Lord appeared on earth. Therefore, in the narrative of Chriſt's nativity, Mat. ii. 1, 2. it is particularly recorded, that he was born in the days of Herod the king, namely, when this notable prophecy of the patriarch Jacob was fulfilled. The Jews then may hold their peace, and be ſilent, otherwiſe we can condemn them out of their own mouths; for, at the time of Chriſt's death, they expreſly owned, ſaying, *We have no king but Cæſar*, John xix. 15.; no king but the Roman emperor: and now, the ſceptre, that was removed from Judah before this time by conqueſt, is departed from them by conſent. Now, they ſolemnly own, that the right of government was fallen into the hands of the emperor, and ſo departed from Judah to Cæſar; from Judea to Rome. The ſceptre is here publicly reſigned: *We have no king but Cæſar;* a plain indication, that the time for the Meſſias to appear, even the ſet time, was now come: for, if the ſceptre was departed from Judah, and the law-giver from between his feet; hence our Lord Jeſus, by their own confeſſion, is he that ſhould come, and we are to look for no other; for he came exactly at the time appointed. Now, from that time, to this very day, they have had no king, no magiſtracy, no governor among themſelves: their tribes are confounded, they are vagabonds in the earth, without any rule or government at all. This ſign of the coming of Shiloh cannot now take place among them: this may confirm our faith of his being come, and condemn their unbelief, who obſtinately deny it, though they cannot but acknowledge, that the ſceptre hath ceaſed from Judah ſeventeen hundred years ago.—So much concerning the *ſign*.

2. The *event* is the coming of *Shiloh*. If the queſtion now be, Where is this *Meſſias*, in our text? Here it is ſaid, *Until Shiloh come*. But what is this to the ſign? where is any mention made of the Meſſias? It is univerſally received, that this *Shiloh* is *Chriſt:* but the queſtion is, How *Shiloh* may ſignify and be called *Chriſt?* The impoſition of the name does agree with the nature of the perſon, and his work; and from diverſe roots proceed diverſe reaſons of this name: as the lines drawn in a circle may be many, yet all agree in one centre; ſo, among all the diverſe opinions about the ſignification of the word *Shiloh*, yet all agree that it is the *Meſſias*, who is here meant. I ſhall lay before you ſome of the ſignifications of the word. 1. Some notice, that *Shiloh* ſignifies *peace*, *proſperity*, and *happineſs:* now, Chriſt is the *Prince of peace;* he preſerves againſt the gates of hell, ſin, and death: and the *pleaſure of the Lord ſhall proſper in his hand;* and they only are happy that are found in him. 2. Some make it to ſignify *reſt:* Chriſt is indeed the true reſting-place for weary ſouls, Mat. xi. 28, 29. *Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you reſt. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me,—and ye ſhall find reſt unto your ſouls.* 3. Some notice, that *Shiloh* ſignifies a *repoſitum*, a thing laid up in a ſtore: and this agrees to him who is the *deſire of all nations*, kept up in the ſtore-houſe of God, until the fit time in which he might come abroad, and appear: *In the fulneſs of time, God ſent forth his Son, made of a woman.* And ſo, 4. Some obſerve, that *Shiloh* ſignifies, *Filius ejus*, his Son; that is, the ſon of Judah, or the Son of David: but a certain author puts *ejus* in the *feminine* gender, HER Son; that is, the Son of the virgin: and ſo, in both theſe ſenſes, Chriſt is the Son of David, the *Son of the virgin*, the *ſeed of the woman*. 5. To this purpoſe is the obſervation of theſe that make *Shiloh* to ſignify the *membrane;* that is, the ſkin that wraps the infant in the mother's womb: Chriſt, according to the fleſh, was the Son of the womb, even of the virgin's womb. 6. And more eſpecially, *Shiloh* ſignifies *Sent;* and Chriſt is indeed *the Sent of God*, and the beſt preſent that ever God ſent, John iv. 7. A man that was blind was bid go and waſh in *Siloam*, which is by interpretation *Sent*, to heal, not bodily diſeaſes only, but ſoul diſeaſes. As God ſaid to Moſes in the mount, *Get thee down, and viſit thy brethren, that commit ſin below;* ſo God ſaid to Chriſt, Go down, and viſit thy brethren, which are below in ſin, and in the ſhadow of death: how frequently is he therefore called, *the Sent of God?* Whatever of theſe meanings you put upon the word, they are all ſignificant, and ſhew, that *Shiloh* agrees to the perſon of Chriſt; and put them all together, they

they make his name to be as *ointment poured forth*, that fills the whole world with a sweet savour. He is the *King of Zion*, to whom the sceptre belongs; for, *the sceptre was not to depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet, till Shiloh came.*——And thus you have the portion of Judah, or that part of the words that belongs to the Jews.

Now, the *second part* of the words is what relates to us, *To him shall the gathering of the people be.* Here is a happy confluence, and concourse of people propheſied of; where you may notice, 1. The *place* of their reſort, *to him.* 2. The *manner* of their reſorting to him, there will be a *gathering to him.* 3. The *perſons* reſorting, or the members of the meeting or aſſembly; it is a gathering of *the people.* 4. The *certainty* of this event, *to him* SHALL *the gathering of the people be.* Notice then, I ſay,

1. The *place* of their reſort, or to what centre of reſt their motion will tend; even *to him*; that is, to *Shiloh*, the promiſed *Meſſias*; *to him*, who is the *Son of God*, the *Sent of God*; *to him*, as the only temple, the only ſhelter and Saviour; *to him*, who is the *Lion of the tribe of Judah*; *to him*, on whom the ſceptre is devolved.

2. The *manner* of their reſorting, *To him ſhall the* GATHERING *be.* I find this word in the original Hebrew, to be ſuch as gives occaſion to render it thus, *To him ſhall the* EXPECTATION *of the people be*; or thus, *To him ſhall the* OBEDIENCE *of the people be:* but our own tranſlation being moſt excellent and agreeable to the original, I ſhall eſpecially hold by it, yet ſo, as not to exclude the other ſignifications; for they agree upon the matter, and declare the manner of this reſort of the people to Chriſt; that it is not a *ſimple* aſſembling to him, or an *outward* gathering, like a confuſed multitude, not knowing wherefore they meet together; but that Chriſt ſhall be ſo the *deſire* of the people, the *hope* of the people; that it is not only a gathering of bodies, but a gathering of ſouls, and a gathering of hearts unto *Shiloh.* They ſhall not only lend an outward ear, but an inward heart-obedience; not a gathering of external attendance upon him and his ordinances only, but a gathering alſo of ſpiritual attendance, and dependence on him, complacency in him, and reverence towards him. In a word, this is ſuch a gathering here, as imports all the acts of faith and hope in him, and all the outgoings of the ſoul after him in the exerciſe of grace internally, as well as in the performance of duty externally.

3. You have here the *perſons* thus reſorting or aſſembling unto *Shiloh*, namely, *the people*; *To him ſhall the gathering of the* PEOPLE *be*; that is, the Gentiles: for the bleſſed *Shiloh* was to break down the partition-wall betwixt them and the Jews. The promiſe here reſpects the Gentile nations. It is not a particular ſett of people here intended; it is people in the *plural number.* All our Latin commentators tranſlate it either *aggregatio gentium*, or *aggregatio populorum*; Junius and Tremellius, *obedientia populorum* *. The coming of *Shiloh* was to turn the ſingular number to the plural; he was to turn *Gens* to *Gentes*, and *populus* to *populi*; that is to ſay, (for I deſign not to ſpeak to you in an unknown tongue) he was to turn a nation in particular, to nations in general; and, inſtead of making a feaſt only for one ſort of people, to wit, the Jews, he was to *make unto all people a feaſt of fat things, and wines on the lees, well refined,* Iſa. xxv. 6.; yea, he was to turn out the Jews, and take in the Gentiles in their room for ſo many hundreds of years. And, alas! they have been turned to the door theſe ſeventeen hundred years bygone, and we need to pray that the time of their rejection may be of no longer continuance; for it will not fare the worſe with us, that they be received in again. Nay, *If the caſting away of them*, ſays the apoſtle, *be the reconciling of the Gentile world, what ſhall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?* Rom. xi. 15. However, at preſent, they that were the only church, are unchurched; they are cut off from *Shiloh*, and there is a gathering of the people in their room: what people? even the people that were *afar off*, the Gentiles; for the Jews had been long the people near to him: they were the children of *Abraham*, and we the *ſtones*; and glory to him, that *out of theſe ſtones can raiſe up children to Abraham.* They were the *garden of God*, when we were a *deſolate wilderneſs.* The Gentiles were contemned by the Jews: the Levite-prieſt would ſcarce look upon a poor Samaritan, but paſt by on the other ſide. We were the dogs that were without, and looked upon them as a curſed people, as indeed we were: but now, by the gathering of the people to *Shiloh*, the curſe is turned to a bleſſing: the Gentiles are invited, and the Jews neglected. Where nature made a ſeparation, grace makes a gathering and conjunction; where ſin made a diſjunction, grace makes an aggregation: *To him ſhall the* aggregation, or *gathering*, *of the people be.*

4. You have here the *certainty* of this event; *To him* SHALL *the gathering of the people be.* God revealed this counſel of his to old Jacob; and he by the inſpiration of God, declares it, that it *ſhall* be. It is very true the *ſhall be* in the text here is not in the original, but it is very fitly ſupplied by our tranſlators; and the certainty of this event is as ſtrongly aſſerted, when theſe two words are left out, as when they are put in, and in my opinion ſomewhat ſtronger: for, if you read the text without ſupplying of theſe two words, then it runs thus, *The ſceptre ſhall not depart from Judah, nor the law-giver from between his feet, till Shiloh come, and* THE GATHERING OF THE PEOPLE TO HIM. And this way of reading the text ſays, I think, four things.

(1.) That the gathering of the people to *Shiloh*, is a *certain evidence* that the *ſceptre is departed from Judah*; for the ſceptre was not to depart from them, till *Shiloh* ſhould come, and gather the people to him. Now, the ſceptre is departed from Judah; therefore *Shiloh* is come, and the gathering of the people is to him.

(2.) That the *coming of Shiloh*, and the *gathering of the people to him*, was of *equal certainty* by the counſel of heaven: the gathering of the people to Chriſt was as certainly foreſeen, as it was certainly foreſeen that he was to come; and that according to the counſel of God, the gathering of the people hath been and ſhall be to Chriſt, is as ſure and certain, as it is ſure that he is come already; for thus they ſtand connected, namely, the *coming of Shiloh*, and the *gathering of the people to him.*

(3.) It ſays, that the coming of *Shiloh*, and gathering of the people to him, was to *take place together*; and indeed the gathering of the Gentiles

* That is, *the gathering of the nations, the gathering of the people*; or *the obedience of the people.*

Gentiles took its remarkable accompliſhment with his coming. Whenever he was born in Bethlehem, behold there came wiſe men from the eaſt, enquiring after him: we are ſure they were Gentiles, and belonged not to the commonwealth of Iſrael; and the reſpect they paid to Chriſt, the King of the Jews, was a happy preſage of what would follow, when theſe that were *afar off ſhould be made nigh by Chriſt*. It is true, they were magicians; but ſome take it in a good ſenſe, for the *Magi* among the Perſians were their philoſophers and their prieſts: but though we take it in the worſt ſenſe, it was an early inſtance of Chriſt's victory over the devil; whatever ſort of wiſe-men they were before, now they begin to be wiſe-men indeed, when they ſet themſelves to enquire after Chriſt. In this there were ſome early trophies erected of Chriſt's victory over Satan's territories, abſtract from the Gentiles that were religious proſelytes of old; herein commenced the gathering of the people to him.

(4.) This reading ſays, that as upon the coming of *Shiloh*, the gathering of the people ſhould be *no more delayed;* ſo, upon his coming, their gathering ſhould be *no more diſcontinued;* but that the gathering of the people ſhould continue and run parallel with the period wherein it can be ſaid that now *Shiloh* is come. The text ſpeaks of a twofold period: the firſt is the time before Chriſt's coming, wherein it could be ſaid, *Shiloh is not come;* and, ſo long as that could be ſaid, the ſceptre was to remain with Judah. The ſecond is the time of Chriſt's coming, and after it, wherein it can be ſaid, that *Shiloh is* NOW *come*, and the gathering of the people to him; therefore ſo long as that period remains, ſo long muſt the gathering be.

In a word, this reading of the words imports, that while the ſcene is now ſo far altered, that it can be ſaid, *The ſceptre is departed from Judah*, which will be to the end of the world; ſo long we have ground to expect, that *the gathering of the people ſhall be to Shiloh*, who is now come. The ſceptre is departed from the Jews, and the Saviour is come to the Gentiles: whatever way we read it then, it ſtands eſtabliſhed for a firm certainty, that to *Shiloh ſhall the gathering of the people be.*

Now, omitting many obſervations that might be drawn from the words, I confine myſelf to that which eſpecially concerns ourſelves, namely,

OBSERV. *That it is eſtabliſhed in the council of heaven, concerning Jeſus Chriſt the Meſſias, that to him ſhall the gathering of the people be.*

Now, that this is eſtabliſhed in the council of heaven, is plain from the ſacred records of that council, which you have in your hand. I need not cite all the ſcriptures that ſpeak of the converſion of the nations to him; I will but name two or three. Pſal. ii. 8. where God is declaring the decree concerning our Meſſias; he ſays to him, *Aſk of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermoſt parts of the earth for thy poſſeſſion.* ASK OF ME; what ſhall I give thee in conſideration of that noble undertaking of thine, which I am ſo well-pleaſed with, and ſo much glorified by? Why, might Chriſt ſay, all that I aſk is, that I may have a ſeed to ſerve and glorify thee and me; that I may have my friends among the loſt heathen pagan world: let me ſee in them, as well as in others, *the travel of my ſoul, and be ſatisfied.* Well, ſays the Father, it is granted; *I give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermoſt parts of the earth for thy poſſeſſion.* See Iſa. xi. 10, 12. Iſa. xliii. 5, 6. Iſa. lvi. 8. and lx. 4,—9.

The method we would propoſe for illuſtrating this propoſition, through divine aid, ſhall be the following:

I. To offer ſome *remarks* with reſpect to the *nature* of this gathering, and the *qualities* of it.
II. Who are the *people* of whom it is ſaid this gathering ſhall be.
III. To *whom* this gathering of the people ſhall be, and in what reſpect it is to Chriſt.
IV. The *manner* of this gathering; by what *means*, and in what *method* it ſhall be.
V. When are the *ſpecial times* and *ſeaſons* wherein this gathering to Chriſt does, or ſhall take place.
VI. Why, or for what *reaſons* this gathering ſhall be to him; why the *people*, and why to *Shiloh*. And then,
VII. Shut up all with ſome *inferences* from the whole.

I. The *firſt* thing propoſed was, to offer ſome *remarks* with reſpect to the *nature* of this gathering, eſpecially theſe four.

1. You may remark, that there are *ſeveral ſorts* of gatherings that we would diſtinguiſh. There is an *outward corporeal* gathering, and an *inward ſpiritual* gathering: outward gatherings are not here eſpecially intended. It is true, that a flocking to ordinances is very pleaſant, as it was to the pſalmiſt, when he ſaid, *I was glad when they ſaid, Come let us go up to the houſe of the Lord;* and when that word is accompliſh, Iſa. ii. 3. *Many people ſhall go and ſay, Come let us go up to the mount of the Lord, to the houſe of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us his ways, and we will walk in his paths.* But many gather about a tent, and gather together to ordinances, that never are gathered to Shiloh. Some, like the Athenians, gather to ordinances, to hear if the miniſter will tell them any news: ſome, like the Phariſees, watch for a word to carp at, and play the part of the devil in accuſing of the brethren: ſome, like the Jews, ſeek after the law, and legal duties, that they may eſtabliſh their own righteouſneſs: ſome, like the Greeks, ſeek after wiſdom and eloquence, and flowers of rhetoric; ſome gather only to gaze, and others to muſe; and perhaps they muſe upon their market, their journey, their dinner, their ſupper, their diverſion; and may be the ſermon is done before they know well where they are: ſome gather to hear, but ſo ſoon as the miniſter begins, they fall aſleep, as though they had been brought in for dead corpſes, and the miniſter were preaching their funeral-ſermon: ſome gather to ordinances and hear; but they hear, and ſcorn; they hear, and mock; they hear, and deſpiſe. May we not ſay with Chriſt, *What went ye out to the wilderneſs for to* SEE? rather than, *What went ye out to* HEAR? For people remember that which they ſee, but forget all that they hear; which ſays, that they came rather to ſee than to hear. Some indeed will mind what they think to the miniſter's reproach, or what will afford matter for their own diverſion; but, with reſpect to the main thing, they depart from ſermons with their hearts like a bottomleſs

bottomleſs purſe, that can hold no money; and ſo they go home without gathering any fruits that fall from the tree of life, which ſhould be the greateſt deſign of their gathering together. Nay, as Satan pointed Adam to another tree, leſt he ſhould go to the tree of life; ſo he points to ſome other buſineſs, and to ſome other exerciſe and ſtudy: hence they go home, ſaying, The miniſter hath not an edifying gift; ſays another, I cannot profit by him; ſays another, He does not keep his text; ſays a fourth, He preached too long, and I cannot mind all; as if the ground ſhould complain of the ſeed, which yet will not receive the ſeed. Few gather to ordinances, or attend upon the word, as the ſtar, that ſhould lead them to Chriſt; as the ladder that ſhould mount them to heaven; as the manna, that ſhould refreſh their ſouls. Many gatherings of the people conſiſt only in preſenting their bodies like dead carcaſes before the Lord; *They worſhip God with their mouth, and honour him with their lips; but their heart is far removed from him.* The ſpecial gatherings here intended, is an *inward* and *ſpiritual gathering*. The gathering of the people to *Shiloh*, is the gathering of ſouls to Chriſt, a gathering of hearts, a gathering of affections to him. An outward gathering, like bodily exerciſe, profits little, where there is no ſpiritual gathering and holy approach to a God in Chriſt: and it is a pity, where there is a great congregation of people, there ſhould be but a ſmall aggregation to Chriſt; while the ſoul comes not along with the body to his ordinances. O that only is a bleſſed gathering, when God gathers ſouls to himſelf, and Chriſt gathers hearts to himſelf! *Bleſſed is the man whom thou chooſeſt, and cauſeſt to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: we ſhall be ſatisfied with the goodneſs of thy houſe, even of thy holy temple*, Pſal. lxv. 4. And indeed there will be no gathering to *Shiloh* here, if God himſelf do not cauſe us to approach.——Hence, as you are to diſtinguiſh betwixt a corporal and ſpiritual gathering, that you may not think it enough when you bring only your bodies before the Lord, while yet you leave your hearts behind you, and the deſire of your ſoul is not to his name; ſo you are to diſtinguiſh betwixt a *paſſive* and *active* gathering: as a bodily-gathering is unprofitable, where there is no ſoul-gathering; ſo active gathering to *Shiloh* is impoſſible without a paſſive gathering. That there ſhall be an active gathering to Chriſt, is as certain as the firm decree of heaven; John vi. 37. *All that the Father hath given me, ſhall come to me;* but it is as certain, that there can be no active, without a paſſive gathering; ver. 44. *No man can come to me, except the Father which hath ſent me draw him.* Both theſe are expreſſed by the ſpouſe in one word, *Draw me, we will run after thee.* The paſſive gathering is God's drawing ſinners to Chriſt, the active gathering is their running to him when drawn. This is ſuch a neceſſary diſtinction, that it muſt be taken along with the whole of our diſcourſe upon this ſubject; wherein we muſt conſider this gathering ſometimes in an active, and ſometimes in a paſſive ſenſe, becauſe the one cannot be without the other. When irreſiſtible power is put forth, there muſt be a gathering, Pſal. cx. 3. *Thy people ſhall be willing in the day of thy power:* and where there is ſuch a gathering it is a fruit of that exerting of divine power in its irreſiſtible efficacy. Hence I offer,

2. A *ſecond* remark, that in this gathering of the people to *Shiloh*, there are *certain gatherers* employed. The great and glorious gatherer is God himſelf, when he draws ſinners to himſelf with the cords of love and bands of a man; that is, in a powerful, irreſiſtible manner; and yet not violenting the will, as Arminians dream; but, with loving and rational arguments, conquering, carrying, captivating, and overpowering the whole ſoul. God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, are employed in this gathering-work: it is done by the *care* of the Father, by the *pains* of the Son, and by the *power* of the Holy Ghoſt: it is done by the *motion* of the Father, by the *mediation* of the Son, and by the *might* of the eternal Spirit. God the Father is the gatherer; he is ſaid *to gather into one all things by Chriſt*, Eph. i. 10. Chriſt himſelf, to whom the gathering is, is alſo the gatherer, John xi. 52. where it is ſaid of him, that he *would gather together into one, the children of God that were ſcattered abroad.* And that the Holy Ghoſt is the immediate gatherer, is plain, in that as the Father ſends the Son to gather, ſo the Son ſends the Spirit to gather the people to him: hence the Spirit is ſaid to *reveal Chriſt*, to *teſtify of Chriſt*, to *glorify Chriſt*, to invite the people to Chriſt, Rev. xxii. 17. *The Spirit and the bride ſay, Come:* And he not only ſays it externally to the ear by his word; but internally to the ſoul, by his common motions; and efficaciouſly to the heart, by his irreſiſtible operation: like that word by which the world was made, when God ſaid, *Let there be light, and there was light;* ſo, when the Spirit ſays, Let there be faith, there is faith. Hence, he that is called *the Spirit of faith*, 2 Cor. iv. 13. is alſo *the Spirit of power*, 2 Tim. i. 7. For he both begins and carries on the work of faith with power, and ſo powerfully draws ſinners to Chriſt, and effectually gathers the people to *Shiloh*. The principal gatherers then are the bleſſed perſons of the glorious Trinity: the Father does it, through the Son, by the Holy Ghoſt. This adorable three-in-one work to each other's hand.——There are ſubordinate gatherers, which God does employ; particularly miniſters of the goſpel, whoſe greateſt work lies in winning ſouls, and gathering people to Chriſt; therefore called, *workers together with God*, 2 Cor. vi. 1. Their principal buſineſs is to ſound the trumpet, and gather the people to *Shiloh*: they are to preach Chriſt, to proclaim Chriſt, to offer Chriſt, to invite ſinners to Chriſt, and that is all they can do. They may caſt down the goſpel-net, but they will take nothing, unleſs the Lord himſelf gather in the fiſh; *Except the Lord build the city, the builders build in vain.* The goſpel is then the *power of God to ſalvation;* that is, his organical power, the inſtrument of his power, when it is the miniſtration of the Spirit; *Not by ſtrength, nor by might, but by my Spirit, ſaith the Lord.* Seek then, that his power may accompany the word, otherwiſe it will not be a gathering word——Now, as miniſters are the ſubordinate gatherers under Heaven's influence by office; ſo may private Chriſtians, whoſe ſouls are gathered to Chriſt: they may be gatherers in their ſtation, not indeed by office miniſterially and authoritatively, but by private admonition and counſel charitatively. Thus parents, by their precept and example, may be the inſtruments of gathering their children to Chriſt; maſters, their ſervants; and private Chriſtians, their neighbours. And happy theſe that,

through

through grace are thus employed, whether as miniſters or Chriſtians! for they are wiſe; *He that winneth ſouls is wiſe. And they that be wiſe,* Dan. xii. 3. or, as it may be read, *they that be* TEACHERS, *ſhall ſhine as the brightneſs of the firmament: and they that turn many to righteouſneſs, as the ſtars for ever and ever.* But then again,

3. The *third* remark I offer is, that there are *certain airths*, or particular quarters from whence the gathering of the people is made. Whence are they gathered, may you ſay? Why, this is to be conſidered both in point of *place*, and in point of *ſtate*.

1ſt, In point of *place*. Whence is the gathering to *Shiloh*, and from what airth? Why, even from every airth; *They ſhall come from the eaſt, and from the weſt, and from the north, and from the ſouth, and ſhall ſit down in the kingdom of God*, Luke xiii. 29. This gathering to *Shiloh*, conſidered even literally and extenſively, will be from all the four quarters, and from all the four corners of the earth; from Europe, Aſia, Africa, and America. Hence it is ſaid of Chriſt's dominion, Pſal. lxxii. 8. that he ſhall have it *from ſea to ſea, and from the river to the ends of the earth:* and not only the large continent, but the *little iſles* are included, ver. 10, 11. *The kings of Tarſhiſh and the iſles ſhall bring preſents, and the kings of Sheba and Seba ſhall offer gifts: yea, all kings ſhall fall down before him, and all nations ſhall ſerve him.* You have all the four airths mentioned, Iſa. xliii. 5, 6. *I will bring thy ſeed from the eaſt, and gather thee from the weſt; and will ſay to the north, Give up; and to the ſouth, Keep not back: bring my ſons from afar, and my daughters from the ends of the earth.* While the iſles and ends of the earth are ſo much mentioned, even the outmoſt ends of the earth, to be Chriſt's poſſeſſion; we may therein ſee and wonder at the grace of God, that in his council of old, concerning the gathering of the people to *Shiloh*, he had a view to our remote northern iſles among the reſt; even Britain and Ireland, Scotland and Zetland. When God will count the people that were gathered to *Shiloh*, it will be ſaid of poor remote Scotland, *This man and that man was born there:* and, O that the number were increaſed, and a greater gathering-time would come than ever hath been! O for a gathering power, a day of power! However, it is from all airths that the gathering of the people ſhall be to Chriſt: it is not confined to one place; to him ſhall the gathering be, from Aſia in the eaſt, and from America in the weſt, from Africa in the ſouth, and from Europe in the north, not forgetting the European iſles in the midſt of the northern ſeas.

2dly, In point of *ſtate*. Whence is the gathering of the people to *Shiloh*, and from what airth? from what ſtate and condition are they to be gathered? Here let me allude to the four elements, water, fire, earth, and air, out of which they are gathered.

(1.) Some are gathered as it were out of the *water*, and fiſhed out of the *flood*; and hence, as miniſters in gathering ſouls, are called, *Fiſhers of men*, and the goſpel, the *fiſh-net caſt into the ſea for gathering of every kind*, Mat. xiii. 47.; ſo they are gathered out of the ſea of a troubleſom tempeſtuous world, out of the floods of ſin and miſery, where they are ſwimming. When the Lord gathers people to himſelf, he muſt fiſh them, and gather them out of many waters and great depths, even out of the depth of ſecurity, out of the depth of ſenſuality, where they were ſwimming pleaſantly, yet dangerouſly, ready to ſwim in to the dead ſea of everlaſting deſtruction. Nothing but the hand of God could reach to the bottom of the depth whence the Lord does gather his elect.

(2.) Some are gathered as it were out of the *fire*; Zech. iii. 2. *Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?* There is the fire of luſt and lewdneſs that ſome are burning in; *For wickedneſs burns as the fire*, Iſa. ix. 18. and to be gathered out of the Torrid Zone, and brought to a temperate climate, is a great matter. Out of this fire they muſt be gathered, that are gathered unto *Shiloh*. There is the fire of God's wrath, which is a *conſuming fire*, wherein they are in utmoſt danger of being conſumed for ever; but when the Lord gathers the people, he puts his hand, as it were, into the midſt of the fire, and *plucks them as brands out of the burning*. Again,

(3.) They are gathered out of the *earth*; out of the duſt and dung of the earth. Some are groveling on the earth, and licking the duſt like ſerpents, having their hearts and affections clogged with the clay, in reſpect of their worldly-mindedneſs, earthly diſpoſitions, and covetouſneſs, while the heart is ſo ſet upon earthly things, that they are loſt, and hid among the clay, and covered with the duſt; and from thence they muſt be gathered; *For the iniquity of his covetouſneſs was I wroth, and ſmote him: I hid me, and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart. I have ſeen his ways, and will heal him; and lead him alſo, and reſtore comforts unto him, and to his mourners*, Iſa. lvii. 17, 18. O the kindneſs of God, in gathering ſouls out of ſuch a diſmal ſituation! Yea, ſome are not only covered with the duſt, but lying among the dung of this earth, ſticking in the miry clay, and wallowing in all the groſs abominations and pollutions of the world, ſuch as theſe mentioned, 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, 11.; yet out of the very dung does he gather the people to *Shiloh*; *Such were ſome of you, but ye are waſhed, but ye are ſanctified, but ye are juſtified.* He gathers his ſheep out of the moſt dirty mire. Let none preſume; for he is ſovereign, and lets ſome ſtick and periſh in the mire: let none deſpair; for he is merciful, and draws out ſome from the very dung. When Antigonus, a king, paſt by a ditch, into which a ſheep was fallen, the hiſtorian ſays, he pulled it out, though foul and dirty, with his own hand; for which he was exceedingly beloved, and commended by his ſubjects. But behold, the King of Iſrael is yet kinder: he not only ſtoops to filthy ditches of ſin, into which his ſheep are fallen, and *gathers them with his arm*, but *lays them in his boſom*, Iſa. xl. 11. that he may warm them with his heart-love, and waſh them with his heart-blood. Again,

(4.) They are gathered out of the *air*, in a manner; while the prince of the power of the air is flying away with them, they are gathered out of his claws. Some that are Satan's captives, they are flying in the air, as it were, with the wings of pride and vanity, *exalting themſelves above all that is called God.* They learn of Lucifer to be proud and lofty; looking down upon others, as if they were the dregs and offſcourings of the earth: when God gathers any ſuch, he hath them to bring down from lofty elements, and airy vanities, that he may humble them under his mighty hand, and make them ſtoop to *Shiloh*. Others are, as it were, build-

ing caſtles in the air: ſuch are theſe, who *being ignorant of God's righteouſneſs, and going about, to eſtabliſh their own righteouſneſs, will not ſubmit to the righteouſneſs of God*, Rom. x. 3. This is a high and lofty building; but it is like a caſtle in the air, having no foundation, but the high and airy imagination of theſe that build it; which the Lord will bring down, when he gathers them out of their heights and altitudes, as you ſee he does, 2 Cor. x. 5. *The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God, to the pulling down of ſtrong holds, caſting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itſelf againſt the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Chriſt.* There you ſee high things, high thoughts, high imaginations, all high and airy buildings exalted againſt Chriſt, and his righteouſneſs; yea, *ſtrong holds*, ſuch as nothing but the mighty power of God can pull down: ſuch are all the falſe hopes, and legal dreams of poor ſinners. They hope they will mend before they die; they will turn a new leaf, and live a new life, and ſo pay their own debt, and do their own buſineſs themſelves: thus they build in the air a *refuge of lies, which the hail muſt ſweep away.* And indeed God raiſes a ſtorm in the air, that he may gather his remnant from thence. As in a dangerous ſtorm, the mariner will caſt ſilk and ſattin over board, and the moſt valuable things, rather than periſh; even ſo God raiſes a ſtorm of conviction in the man's conſcience, that threatens everlaſting ſhipwreck, that he may caſt away his confidence, and legal righteouſneſs; that *what things were gain to him, theſe he may count loſs for Chriſt.*——Thus, I ſay, there are ſome airths from whence they are gathered. And this leads me to,

4. A *fourth* remark, *viz.* that there are ſeveral things *ſuppoſed* and *imported* in this gathering of the people to *Shiloh*. To mention ſome of theſe,

(1.) It ſuppoſes *ſtraying* and imports *converſion*. It *ſuppoſes* STRAYING; and indeed the natural ſtate is a ſtraying and wandering ſtate. The man is wandering away from God, wandering from his commandments, wandering in a wilderneſs, wandering he knows not where away; for the devil hoodwinks him; *The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not:* and ſo they wander in the dark; in the darkneſs of ignorance, unbelief, error, deluſion, and confuſion; and yet, in the darkneſs of deep ſecurity, never imagining but that they are in the right enough way, though it be the high way to hell, thinking that God is altogether like unto themſelves, and approves their way, and allows them in all theſe things, wherein they allow themſelves. Hence it is impoſſible to bring them off from their carnal thoughts, and wicked ways, where they are wandering, unleſs God himſelf gather them by his converting grace.—This gathering *imports* CONVERSION, wherein God ſays with power (as he made the world with an omnipotent LET IT BE, ſo here,) *Let the wicked forſake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return to the Lord*, Iſa. lv. 7, 8. But this power of God, whereby he converts ſinners, rides in the chariot of grace, ſaying, as it follows, *I will have mercy on him; I will abundantly pardon.* And here is the cord of love and mercy, with which he draws. The goſpel of grace is the power of God to ſalvation, the power of God to converſion; without the faith and apprehenſion of this mercy, there is no goſpel repenting, nor return, no effectual converſion; *Let him return, for I will abundantly pardon.* There is the motive, which muſt be viewed, before any can be moved thereby. But when this mercy of God in Chriſt, in multiplying pardon where ſin hath been multiplied, is once viewed, then the ſoul is melted and moved. What! is there *mercy* for the like of me? *Pardon* for the like of me? And *abundant pardon*, where ſin hath abounded? O! will I, for great ſins, get great pardons, and for a multitude of ſins, a multitude of pardons? Will the mountains of mercy overtop and cover all the mountains of my ſins? O! ſays God this, even to wicked me? This makes all my bowels melt, and all my bones to ſay, *Who is like unto the Lord?* Thus he gathers in converſion, ſaying, Wicked man, turn; for I will abundantly pardon: and, O that is a powerful FOR; like a loadſtone, that hath a drawing virtue upon the hard ſteel; ſo will this draw the hard heart, and diſſolve it. This *for* is backed with another, *For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor my ways your ways*; q. d. With reſpect to the proud ſecure ſinner, do you think that I am altogether like unto yourſelf, and that I approve of your ways, as if they were my ways, and your thoughts, as if they were my thoughts? Becauſe you allow yourſelf in that way, you think I allow you alſo; and your thought is, that *you ſhall have peace, though you walk after the imagination of your own heart:* nay, *my thoughts are not your thoughts.*—Or, with reſpect to the *ſelf-righteous* ſinner, what are your thoughts? You think that your way is a very good way, and ſo that it is God's way: and you think that God will accept of you, becauſe you ſay you do your beſt, and do as well as you can, and no-body can impeach you, or ſay black is your eye; you are a good neighbour; you are honeſt in your dealings: and ſo you think you are every way right; and that God thinks as well of you, as you do of yourſelf; and that his thoughts are your thoughts, and that your way that you are walking in is his way: Nay, nay, ſays he; *My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither my ways your ways; for as the heavens are above the earth, ſo are my thoughts above your thoughts and ways.* O do not meaſure God's thoughts and ways by your ſinful or ſelfiſh thoughts and ways: if you would not run into a miſtake, man, woman, look to the clouds, and ſee how far they are above the earth; yea, look to the heavens, and ſee how far they are above the clouds; yea, look to the God that made the heavens, and ſee how far he is exalted above the heavens: and if the heavens be ſo far above you, that you cannot reach them, or meaſure them; O how far is God above you, that you ſhould attempt to meaſure his thoughts and ways by yours!—Or, again, with reſpect to the *humbled* ſinner, that is like to be moved and melted with the view of mercy, but yet is tempted to doubt and deny it, ſaying, O my thoughts are, that God will never have mercy on the like of me, ſuch a God-provoking ſinner; and I fear God's thoughts are the ſame with mine: Nay; *My thoughts are not your thoughts*, ſays God; look to the heavens, man; look to the heavens, woman; look to the heavens, laſs; look to the heavens, lad; for as the heavens are above the earth, ſo are my ways of grace, and thoughts of mercy, above your thoughts and ways:

your

your thoughts are; that I have no way to shew mercy on you; and therefore, that my thoughts are to ruin and destroy you: but I have found a ransom, through which my mercy does make way, and vent to the credit of justice; therefore, *My thoughts are thoughts of peace, and not of evil.* Judge not my thoughts then by the standard of yours, but rather make the height of the heavens above the earth to be the standard, whereby to judge the height of my mercy, for overtopping all your sins with abundant pardon; therefore turn: here is the *for*, the threefold *for*, or motive, upon which turning, or conversion, is urged.——This gathering, I say, supposes straying, and imports conversion.

(2.) It *supposes* SCATTERING, and *imports* CONVENTION; it is a *gathering together into one, the children of God that were scattered abroad*, John xi. 52. The natural state is a scattered state; and God's remnant whom he hath amind to gather, are not only scattered here and there through the earth, but before the Lord gather them, they are *like dead and dry bones scattered about the grave's mouth*, Psal. cxli. 7. They are *dead in trespasses and sins*: dead spiritually, under the power of sin; dead legally, under the sentence of death and damnation: and not only DEAD bones, but DRY bones; no sap of grace or goodness in them; and not only so, but SCATTERED bones; *How shall these dry bones live*, or *these scattered bones be gathered together?* You see this represented, Ezek. xxxvii. 1,—10. The Spirit of life must come, and gather together the bones, and make them live; and then, and not till then, are the scattered souls conveened, and gathered to Christ. Then the scattered thoughts, that were scattered among the stuff of the world, are gathered to Christ; *every thought being brought in captivity to the obedience of Christ.* Then the scattered affections, that were lost among *the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eye, and the pride of life*, are gathered and conveened together unto Christ, as the proper centre. O then, there is a convention of hearts, that were scattered among other objects; *My son, give me thy heart.* Then there is a convention of desires, to him is the *desire of all nations*; a convention of delights, to him who is the delight of God and angels. Instead of the desires of the flesh, and the delights of sense, the *desire of their souls comes to be towards him, and the remembrance of his name*, saying, *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none in all the earth that I desire besides thee.* Oh! are there not here dead and dry bones scattered about the mouth of the grave? dead and dry hearts and affections scattered about the mouth of hell? Oh! what need of a gathering?

(3.) It *supposes* REJECTION, and *imports* RECEPTION. The natural state is a state, wherein the man is rejected of God; he hath forsaken God, and God hath forsaken him. But when God gathers the people to Shiloh, he receives them into favour; Isa. liv. 7. *For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercy will I gather thee*; that is, *I will love thee freely, and receive thee graciously.*

(4.) It *supposes* SEPARATION, and *imports* UNION. The natural state is a state of separation from God, wherein the man is like the prodigal, in a far country; far from God, and far from Christ, and far from grace; *Aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world*, Eph. ii. 12. There is an infinite moral distance, as well as natural, betwixt God and them. The wall of separation is such, as none but God can pull down; which he must do, when he gathers the people to Shiloh: and hence, in gathering sinners, he not only *preaches peace to them that are afar off*, but, in Christ Jesus, they that *were afar off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ*: they that were separate from God, and without a head, since the first Adam fell, are gathered together to God, under a new head, the second Adam, and unite to him: it is called, *A gathering together into one, all things in Christ*, Eph. i. 10. They are thus unite to God, and one among themselves in Christ. This union is by the bond of the holy Spirit, and instrumentally of saving faith: and the gathered soul becomes one building with Christ, whereof Christ is the foundation; one temple, one body, one Spirit; *He that is joined to the Lord, is one Spirit.*

(5.) It *supposes* REBELLION, and *imports* SUBJECTION, RECONCILIATION, and OBEDIENCE. The natural state is a state of rebellion, alienation, and enmity. Before people are gathered to Shiloh, they are gathered under the standard of the devil, and carrying on a rebellion against heaven; every man and woman is a rebel: *The carnal mind is enmity against God*: every thought of every man is a rebel against God; *Every imagination of the thoughts of the heart is evil, and only evil continually.* Now, when God gathers people, he brings them into subjection to his Son: as they are unite to him as their Head, so they are subject to him as their King. This subjection and obedience is imported in the original word, as I told in the explication. The gathered people are brought to say, *Other lords beside thee have had dominion over us: but now*, by thee only *will we make mention of thy name.* As the Jews said, *We have no king but Cæsar*: so they are brought to say, We have no king but Shiloh; no lord but the Lord Jesus. Rebellion is turned to subjection and obedience; and their alienation, to amity and love.

(6.) In a word, it *supposes* an AMISSION, or LOSING, and *imports* RESTORATION and RECOVERY. The natural state is a lost state: we are lost in the rubbish of the fall of Adam. We are lost *privately*, in that we are not what we were, in a state of innocence and uprightness, nor in a state of friendship and fellowship with God, nor in a state of power, strength, and ability to do God's will; we have forfeit all this by our sin and fall; *All have sinned and come short of the glory of God*, Rom. iii. 23. We are lost *positively*, in regard we are that which we should not be, even filthy sinners, and guilty criminals: filthy, and so are *children of disobedience*, Eph. ii. 3.; guilty, and so are called, *children of wrath*, Eph. ii. 3. Our bodies, and all their members, are corrupted, which is called, *the filthiness of the flesh*; our souls, and all their faculties are corrupted, this is *the filthiness of the spirit*: being filthy and guilty sinners, we are positively lost. —We are lost *judicially*, as being under a sentence of death, and under the curse of the law, Gal. iii. 10. The law saith, *The soul that sinneth shall die.*—We are lost *meritoriously*, in that our sins deserve death, which is the *wages of sin*, Rom. vi. 23. And no wonder, for it is a violation of God's holy, just, and good law, Rom. vii. 12. It is a contrariety and contradiction to God's holy, just, and good nature, Hab. i. 13. In a word, we are lost in point of power and ability

ability to save and recover ourselves; lost as to all capacity in the creature to help us: *We are by nature without strength*, Rom. v. 6. We are not *subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be*, Rom. viii. 7. We cannot *know or discern the things of God*; yea, they are *foolishness to the natural man*, 1 Cor. ii. 14.: far less can we by any atonement satisfy God for our offences; therefore, *The redemption of the soul is precious, and ceaseth for ever.*——Thus we are every way lost.

Now, as this is the lost state supposed, so this gathering of lost souls, imports *the Son of man his coming to seek and save that which was lost*, Luke xix. 10. While yet the sinner is stout-hearted, and far from righteousness, unwilling to be saved and gathered, like these, Mat. xxiii. 37. *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered you, but ye would not!* He makes inquiry after them by his word, by his rod, by his Spirit, saying, as to Adam, when he made inquiry after him, *Adam, where art thou?* Man, woman, where art thou hiding thyself? I am come to seek, to save, and gather you. And as he seeks them out by his word, so he finds them out by his Spirit, and restores them to a state of salvation. Thus he gathers them preparatively by the law, formally and immediately by the gospel, meritoriously by his blood, procuratively by his intercession, occasionally by his providence, and effectually by his Spirit; drawing them with grace, covering them with his righteousness, quickening, sanctifying and sealing them to the day of redemption. But how he gathers, may come to be more particularly shown upon the fourth head. Only so much for the remarks I promised concerning the *nature* and *import* of this gathering.

II. The *second* general head proposed, was, To shew who are *the people* of whom it is said, the gathering of the people shall be to him. Why, in general, by the people you are to understand the Gentiles, Rom. xv. 11.; and therefore here is a door of faith open to us, to gather in by it unto *Shiloh*: for the promise is to us, whose forefathers were as black and blinded pagans as any in the world; *To us is the word of this salvation sent*, that the gathering of the people shall be to *Shiloh*. And here is encouragement to us to gather in to him by faith; here is a foundation of faith for all the people that hear this gospel; God says, *The gathering of the people shall be to Christ, the Messias*, insomuch that whoever of all the people shall be persuaded to gather in under his wings, they shall be welcomed to him, and saved by him. Why, says one, it may be I am none of the people here intended, none of the elect that shall be effectually gathered; and therefore my attempting to come to him may be vain. In answer hereunto, you would consider, that there are two distinct questions here, namely, 1. Whom he designs in this *decree*? 2. Whom he defines in his *word* to be the persons that shall gather? And we would consider which of these especially is proposed in the gospel for our encouragement in gathering unto *Shiloh*.

As to the *first*, *Whom he designs in his* DECREE *to be gathered?* These are indeed the *elect*, who are said to be *chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world*, Eph. i. 4. They are said to be *predestinate*; and *whom he did predestinate, them he also called*, Rom. viii. 30. They are said to be *given to Christ*; and, *All that the Father hath given me, shall come to me*, John vi. 37.; and, *All that are ordained to eternal life, shall believe*, Acts xiii. 48. The *election shall obtain*, Rom. xi. 7. And indeed, if God had not, in his eternal purpose, designed to gather some, none at all would be gathered. Now, I think it is observable, that in all these places, where God's design of gathering the elect to him is mentioned, it is readily brought in either as an encouragement to them that are gathered, that they may have the comfort of their election from eternity; or as an encouragement to ministers that are gatherers, that they may know their labour shall not be without success; or else as a check and blow to these that are final rejecters of Christ, and refuse to be gathered to him: but never is it brought in for a discouragement to any people in the world to gather unto *Shiloh*; hence, to the Jews, that obstinately and finally rejected Christ, he says, John vi. 36, 37. *Ye will not come*; but know to your confusion, that *all that the Father hath given me, shall come*. But, that none may be hereupon discouraged, he says, *Whosoever comes, he will in nowise cast out*. Where, as he shuts the door upon final rejecters; so he opens the door to all comers, that they may flock into him; and the rather because it is impossible they can know their election of God, till once they come and gather to Christ. It is deviliſh reasoning therefore to say, I know not if I be an elect, and therefore I need not come to Christ; for it is divine reasoning rather to say, I know not my election, therefore I will come unto him that I may know it, since it cannot possibly be known otherwise. Election is in Christ, Eph. i. 4. *We are chosen in him*; and therefore out of Christ it cannot be seen. But, if I be not elected, say you, I will not get grace to come. Indeed if you have no will to come, you have no grace to come; and if you have no will to come, whom can you blame for your enmity but yourselves, that will not come to Christ? Will you complain you have not grace to come, and yet reject the gospel of grace, that only can make you willing? O then, *Why will you die, O house of Israel?* But, Sir, is it not true, that all will not be gathered; and therefore perhaps not me? Well, but is it not as true, that many shall be gathered; and therefore why not you? Is there any irritant clause in the gospel, excluding you from gathering to *Shiloh* among the rest? Non-election can be no hinderance to you, if a lying devil and deceitful heart do not make it so; for it is a secret you are not concerned with: it is a *secret thing that belongs to God*, Deut. xxix. 29. Your business is to notice what belongs to you, namely, what warrant you have from the word for your gathering unto *Shiloh*. When the gospel-call is among your hands, it belongs not to you to demur upon that question, *Whom he designs in his decree?*

But it belongs to you to answer to your name in the *second* question, namely, *Whom he designs in his* WORD *to be the persons that should gather, and shall be gathered to Shiloh?* And that all may press themselves in upon him, without fear of presuming when they are gathering to him, they are defined by the most general terms, namely, THE PEOPLE; *To him shall the gathering of* THE PEOPLE *be*. And that none may have any reason to think that they are cast out, but that all and every one may be encouraged to venture their perishing souls upon Christ,

Chriſt, I ſhall ſhew what ſort of people are here intended.

1. It is a gathering of *pagan* people and *heathens* that is here meant; *Shiloh ſhall come, and the gathering of the people to him:* accordingly Chriſt came, that the Gentiles might be gathered, and might glorify God for his mercy; he came to the Jews for the good of the Gentiles: ſee Rom. xv. 8,—12. And now, for accompliſhing of theſe promiſes, he allows us to preach among you Gentiles *the unſearchable riches of Chriſt.* This is a part of *the myſtery of godlineſs*, Chriſt *preached among the Gentiles*, 1 Tim. iii. 16. It was a myſtery to the Jews and primitive Chriſtians, when Chriſt was firſt preached among the Gentiles, Rom. xi. 17, 18. Why, the Gentiles were the uncircumciſion; they were abominable outcaſts, whoſe very entering into the temple was enough to pollute it. They were ſtrangers and aliens: but now God declares in the goſpel, that he will juſtify the *uncircumciſion through faith*, Rom. iii. 30. And the *ſcripture foreſeeing that God would juſtify the heathen through faith, preached the goſpel before to Abraham, ſaying, In thee ſhall all nations be bleſſed.* Gal. iii. 18. The Gentiles here meant were called *dogs*, and the Jews were called, the *children*; hence ſaid Chriſt to the woman of Canaan, when trying her, *It is not meet to take the childrens bread, and caſt it to dogs. Without are dogs*, Rev. xxii. 15.; but ſuch dogs have been gathered, 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, 11. *Such were ſome of you, but ye are waſhed, but ye are ſanctified, but ye are juſtified.*—Thus the people that may and ſhall be gathered are defined, they are *Gentiles, uncircumciſed, heathens, dogs*; and if that be a deſcription of you, man, woman; then the promiſe concerns you, and you are called to embrace it with application.

2. It is a gathering of *graceleſs* and *ungodly* people that is here deſigned. Though he makes them gracious and godly when once he hath gathered them; yet, before they be gathered, and while he is ſeeking to gather them to himſelf, they are graceleſs and ungodly; *I came not to call the righteous, but ſinners to repentance.* Mark ii. 17. And, indeed, if he would except ſinners, he would except all mankind, and call none at all; for, *All have ſinned:* therefore ſay not, you are a ſinner, and therefore cannot be of that number to whom this word of grace belongs; for if you be a ſinful creature of Adam's family, we are charged to hold out the word of ſalvation to you; *Go preach the goſpel to every creature*, Mark xvi. 15.

3. It is a gathering of the moſt *ſinful* people that ever were, that is here intended. Chriſt, ſay you, may gather ſinners, but none ſo *groſs* as me: therefore I tell you, that even the *groſſeſt* of ſinners are included in this *gathering*; hence the ſtout-hearted people are encouraged to come to him; *Hearken, ye ſtout-hearted, and far from righteouſneſs, I bring near my righteouſneſs; and my ſalvation ſhall not tarry*, Iſa. xlvi. 12, 13. Hearken to his reaſoning, Iſa. i. 18. *Though your ſins be as ſcarlet, they ſhall be as white as ſnow; though they be red like crimſon, they ſhall be as wool.* Why ſays he thus, but that the *greateſt* and moſt *guilty* ſinner may not be diſcouraged from gathering about the throne of infinite grace? Hence neither the cruel maſſacres and curſed ſorcery of Manaſſeh, nor the blaſpemy and perſecution of Paul, did exclude them from *obtaining mercy* and being gathered to Shiloh; yea, the Jews, who *murdered the Lord of glory*, ſee them both called and converted, Acts ii. 14.

4. It is a gathering of *diſeaſed* people that is here meant, Mark ii. 17. When Shiloh comes, it is to *gather* the ſick and diſeaſed about him to heal them; *They that be whole need not the phyſician, but they that are ſick:* multitudes gathered about him to touch him; and, *as many as touched him, were made whole.* All that are ſick are called to come to him, and all that want the phyſician. We need not underſtand it of theſe that are ſenſibly ſick, and ſee their need, ſuch only will indeed come; but it is true without a figure, *That all that are really ſick, and ſtand in need of a phyſician, ought to come.* Now, what is your diſeaſe, man, woman? For the phyſician is come here to gather all diſeaſed perſons about his hand, that he may get the glory of healing them. Is darkneſs and ignorance your diſeaſe? Behold, Shiloh is come to be a *light to lighten the Gentiles.* Is deadneſs your diſeaſe? Behold, *He is come to give life, and to give it more abundantly.* Is blindneſs your diſeaſe? *He is come to open the eyes of the blind.* Is hardneſs of heart your diſeaſe? *He is come to take away the heart of ſtone, and give the heart of fleſh.*—Whatever be the diſeaſe, let the gathering of diſeaſed people be to him. If your diſeaſe be unbelief, ſo as you cannot for your life elicite one act of faith; he hath the Spirit of faith to give for curing that. If your diſeaſe be impenitency, ſo as you cannot repent of one ſin; he hath the Spirit of repentance to give for curing of that. If your diſeaſe be enmity and hatred againſt God and Chriſt; he hath the the Spirit of love to give for curing that. If your diſeaſe be carnality, ſo as your thoughts and affections are carnal and fleſhly; he hath the Spirit of holineſs to give for curing that. If your diſeaſe be weakneſs, that you cannot think, you cannot act, you cannot pray; he hath the Spirit of power to give for curing that. If your diſeaſe be error and deluſion, as well as dimneſs and confuſion; he hath the Spirit of truth to give, to lead you into all truth. If your diſeaſe be ſecurity, fearing nothing, but ſleeping in the arms of the devil, deſtitute of all grace, filled with all atheiſm and blaſphemy, and ſuch unconcernedneſs and indifference, that no arguments in the world can awaken you; Behold, Shiloh is come, who is the *reſurrection and the life*, having the Spirit of all grace to give, Iſa. xlii. 1. *Behold my Servant, whom I uphold; mine Elect, in whom my ſoul delighteth: I have put my Spirit upon him, he ſhall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.* There is one diſeaſe, called the unpardonable ſin, which the man that is under would never ſo much as wiſh to be cured of; abſtracting from that, I know no diſeaſe excluded out of the Mediator's commiſſion. Whatever be the diſeaſe then, of which you would wiſh and need to be cured, if you be among the number of diſeaſed people, that is the people of which the gathering muſt be to Shiloh.

5. It a gathering of *diſtracted* people and *mad* fools. This is ſet forth in the parable of the prodigal, who played the fool and madman, till he came to himſelf, and came home to his father, who, notwithſtanding of his former madneſs and folly, kindly received and entertained him, Luke xv. 17,—24. What is all the people in the world but a company of mad fools, and beſide themſelves; feeding up-

on ſwines huſks, ſenſual pleaſures, and lying vanities? yet of ſuch people is the gathering to Shiloh. Therefore, O Sinner, do not exclude yourſelf from the benefits of this promiſe, though you have been carrying like one that hath been out of his wits all your days. Some in the world are called wits, and think themſelves ſo, who yet are mad and out of their wits, ſo long as they do not think of gathering to Shiloh, *In whom are hid all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge*; and *who of God is made unto us wiſdom.*

6. It is a gathering of *impriſoned* people that is here meant; for Shiloh is come *to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the priſon to them that are bound*, Iſa. lvi. 1. Now, what ſort of a priſon are you in, man? This word of ſalvation is to you; *Turn ye to your ſtrong hold, ye priſoners of hope*, Zech. ix. 12. The people that are gathered to Shiloh, are deſigned *priſoners*; and if a *priſoner* be your name and deſignation, be it never ſuch a deep, dark, and dreadful priſon, here is a door of hope for you. Is your priſon-door barred and bolted, ſo as no man or angel can open? Behold, he proclaims *the opening of the priſon to them that are bound.* When he in the goſpel-proclamation is ſaying, Open priſon-doors, open, open; O take hold of his ſtrength, and invite his power to be put forth, and you ſhall find all the bands ſhall be broken in pieces. To give him employment to open your priſon, is one of the ways of gathering to him. Do you look upon yourſelf as a priſoner in the further corner, hidden in the deepeſt and darkeſt hole of the priſon? Behold the gathering hand of him that can ſave to the uttermoſt, can reach to the furtheſt corner in the priſon, and bring you forth, ſo as your name ſhall be called *Sought out*, and *found out*, Iſa. lxii. 12. But, on this ſubject, ſee my notes on Iſa. xlii. 6.*—Now, if the people to be gathered to Shiloh be of that ſort, if it be a gathering of pagans, to make them Chriſtians; a gathering of graceleſs people, to make them gracious; a gathering of great ſinners, to make them great ſaints; a gathering of diſeaſed people, that they may be made whole; a gathering of fools and mad-men, that they may be made wiſe; a gathering of priſoners, that they may be made free: if this be the deſignation of theſe people of whom the gathering ſhall be to Shiloh, O then, is your name and deſignation touched at here? What hinders, but you put in for a ſhare of this gathering grace! By what clauſe are you excluded, if you be one of the people here mentioned, man, woman? And why will you exclude yourſelves from coming to Chriſt? The goſpel excludes you not, for it names you in a manner; and you ſhould anſwer to your name, ſaying, *Lord, here I am:* I find I am mentioned among theſe of whom the gathering ſhall be to Shiloh; therefore, behold I come to him; let my ſoul, and all its faculties, be centred on him.

But, in caſe you think that I have miſſed your name, I muſt tell you, that all that are called by the goſpel of Chriſt are allowed to gather under his wings; and it is by the free univerſal call given to all the people to whom the goſpel comes; it is by this, that God gathers all his choſen in to Chriſt; and the promiſe, given forth indefinitely to all the people, is a ground of encouragement to them all to come to Shiloh by faith: therefore, ſays the apoſtle to them whom he was calling to come to Chriſt, whom they had crucified, Acts ii. 39. *The promiſe is to you, and to your children; and to all them that are afar off, even to as many as the Lord our God ſhall call.* And here, as all that are afar off are called, ſo more particularly there are two ſorts of people called, that ſome do not dream to be ſo, namely, 1. They that exclude themſelves. 2. They that are excluded by men, they are included in the call.

(1.) They that *exclude themſelves*; and you will find, they are moſt particularly called, who are moſt ready to exclude themſeles. They that are weary and heavy laden, under a ſenſe of ſin, and apprehenſion of God's wrath, are ready to exclude themſelves; therefore they are particularly called, *Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you reſt*, Mat. xi. 28. I do not confine the ſenſe of theſe words indeed to the humbled and convinced; for I think that even theſe that are wearying themſelves in purſuing vanities, and living contentedly under a heavy load of ſin or guilt, or wearying themſelves with a load of legal and unprofitable ſervice, are called alſo by that text to come to Chriſt, in whom alone they can find that reſt and ſatisfaction which they are vainly ſeeking in other things. Now, though I judge it would ſtraiten the goſpel-call there, to confine it only to the firſt ſenſe; yet I reckon the firſt to be ſo much imported, that ſeeing ſuch perſons as find a load of ſin and wrath upon them, are readieſt to exclude themſelves, therefore they are expreſly called. Thus again, they that ſee themſelves deſtitute of all good qualifications, have no money nor money-worth; nothing but poverty, and want, and worthleſneſs: theſe are ready to exclude themſelves, as being broken and loſt; therefore they are particularly encouraged, as Ezek. xxxiv. 16. Again,

(2.) They that are *excluded by men*; yea, whom miniſters are ready to exclude, yet the call reaches them. Men are ready to exclude from the call of the goſpel, ſuch as *refuſe* the call, and pour contempt upon it, *viz.* Mockers and ſcorners; yet we find ſuch are called, Pov. i. 22, 23. Men are ready to exclude from the call of the goſpel, or the invitation to come, and gather unto Shiloh, ſuch are not ſenſible of the want of him, and think themſelves happy enough without him.—Men exclude *unſenſible* ſinners, that have no thirſty deſire after Chriſt, but are ſatisfying themſelves with other things: yet theſe are particularly called, as you may ſee in theſe two paſſages, Iſa. lv. 1, 2. *Ho, every one that thirſted, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye; buy and eat, yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price. Wherefore do ye ſpend your money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which ſatisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your ſoul delight itſelf in fatneſs.* Now, you may notice, that the thirſting here is no deſirable quality, it was a *thirſting* for that which did *not ſatisfy*, and a *labouring* for that which was *not bread*; and yet they are invited to come to him, as one that hath a variety of ſupply; water, to refreſh; wine, to cheriſh; milk, to nouriſh: and all offered freely; *Without money, and without price*: ſo that here, even theſe that are thirſting after their luſts, and after the world, and unſatisfying vanities, are called. See alſo, Rev.

* Sermon IV. intitled, *Chriſt the People's Covenant*, p. 66.

Rev. iii. 18. *I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed; and eye-salve, that thou mayest see.* But who are they that are thus called? Even these, that, in the preceeding verse, said they were *rich, and increased with goods, and stood in need of nothing*; even these that had no sense of their need of Christ: true, these that do not see their need will not come; but whether they see it or not, they are called and obliged to come.—Now, men are ready to exclude from the call these that are *unhumbled, unsensible* sinners, that are not convinced of their sin and misery; but because God's free and gracious call can effectually work upon unsensible, stupid, brutish sinners, as well as upon the objects that we reckon most prepared; therefore sinners want of sense, and due conviction, is brought in as a reason why they are called to come to Christ: *I counsel thee to buy of me tried gold, white raiment, eye-salve*; why, because thou sayest, *I am rich, and encreased with goods, and stand in need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked.* Let none think then, because they do not see their wretched and undone state without Christ, therefore they are not concerned with his call: nay, upon that very account you are concerned, says the Spirit of God; and you may object what you will, but you will not get it put by you. Shift this call as you will, it will rise up in judgment against you, if you do not answer it. If you are an unsensible sinner, not knowing that you are *poor* and *miserable*, thinking that you are *rich enough already*, and does not see that you are *wretched, blind*, and *naked*, you have the more need to come to Christ, that he may give you eye-salve, that you may see your misery without him, and your remedy in him.—Thus we are warranted to open the mouth of the gospel-net: and I hope, by this time, you may see, that you are all concerned with this call. And, what do you think we intend by this universal call? Why, there is one of two things will follow; either, to the glory of God's justice we get you all left inexcusable; or, to the glory of his mercy, we get you all gathered in to Christ; and if there be some of both sorts, then both these ends are reached. But, O to see the last especially, even a *happy gathering of the people to Shiloh!*——Thus you see who are the people, of whom it is said, the gathering shall be to the Messias. None are excluded, all are invited, and warranted to assemble to him; and when God says, *To him shall the gathering of the people be*, all the people should say, AMEN.

III. The *third* thing proposed, was, To shew to *whom* shall the gathering of the people be; or, what is the *gathering place*, and where is the gathering to be. Here we may enquire, 1. What *place* there is in Christ for the people to gather? 2. In what *respect* the gathering of the people is to him?

First, What *place* there is in Christ for the people to gather to? Christ is the *temple* to which we ought to resort; he is the only *refuge* and *sanctuary* of poor miserable souls; and there is room enough in this temple and sanctuary for all that shall gather in to it. In general, the very PERSON of Christ is the gathering place, the meeting place, to which people should gather. They that come to Christ, are to close with his person, and then they are interested in all his purchase: hence the many calls to come to him, to receive him, to rest on him, to trust in him, to flee to him, and so to God in him; for a God in Christ is the throne of grace, to which the gathering of the people should be, Heb. iv. 16. *Let us come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in the time of need.* More particularly, there is a six-fold place or chamber in the Lord Jesus, that I shall mention, for the gathering of the people into.

1. There is the chamber of his *righteousness*: no doubt this is one of the chambers spoken of, Song i. 4. *The King hath brought me into his chambers*; and Isa. xxvi. 20. *Come, my people, enter into your chambers, and hide yourself, till the indignation be overpast.* Indeed there is no escaping of divine wrath and indignation, but by gathering into this chamber of Christ's righteousness. It is one of the most splendid and well-adorned chambers that ever was; for it is hung with the red and white hangings which God himself wrought: I mean, with the fair and white obedience, and the red bloody sufferings and satisfaction of the Son of God. Guilty sinners cannot be saved, without a law-fulfilling, justice-satisfying righteousness: but when they gather in to this chamber, they are absolutely safe, and may say, *Surely in the Lord have I righteousness and strength*, Isa. xlv. 24. *The Lord is well-pleased, for his righteousness sake*; insomuch, that *none can lay any thing to their charge*, Rom. viii. 33. They may laugh at all challenges, while they shut their chamber-door upon themselves: they are then chambered, like Noah in the ark, which was pitched within and without, Gen. vi. 14. so as no drop of water could come in; so here.

2. There is the chamber of his *name*, for the gathering of the people into; *The name of the Lord is a strong tower, to which the righteous run, and are safe*, Prov. xviii. 10. He is the strength, as well as the righteousness of Israel; and to this chamber, in which there is everlasting strength, we ought to throng. Many a closet there is in this chamber: if we should mention all his titles, all his offices, all his relations, all his divine attributes and perfections which belong to his name, there would be no end of telling; but every one of them, and any one of them, is a fit place for gathering to: every corner of this chamber is perfumed, insomuch, that none are gathered into it, but they are ravished with the sweet smell thereof; *Because of the savour of thy good ointment, thy name is as ointment poured forth.* His name is, *Christ, the Anointed*; and every name he hath is an anointed name: He is an anointed Jesus, an anointed Surety, an anointed king. And when any of his names are cleared up, and opened, it is like the opening of a box of ointment; it is like the opening of a chamber-door, full of ravishing perfumes.

3. There is the chamber of his *bosom*, for the gathering of the people into; *He gathers them with his arms, and carries them in his bosom*, Isa. xl. 11.; his kind and merciful bosom and bowels, which yern towards sinners, Jer. xxxi. 20. This is a large chamber, Jam. v. 11. *The Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy*; the original is, πολύσπλαγχνος, he is of LARGE BOWELS, or FULL OF BOWELS: there is place enough in these bowels of infinite mercy for sinners to gather in into; and this chamber of his bosom is standing open for all comers. The chamber-door of his heart is open, that the gathering

ing of the people may be in to it: and as it is a large chamber, that can contain you all, being as broad and wide as the infinite mercy of a God in Chriſt; ſo it is a warm chamber: O it is a warm and heartſom chamber, to get in to the heart and boſom of Chriſt. They that gather in there, will ſit under the warm and benign influence of God's love and grace in Chriſt: their hearts are warmed, and made to burn within them; *Did not our hearts burn within us, when he talked with us by the way, and opened to us the ſcriptures?* Luke xxiv. 32. While he was opening the ſcripture, he was ſtirring up the fire of love; they were in the chamber of his warm heart and boſom, and it made them to have a warm heart too: ſurely, believer, you know what a ſweet chamber that is.

4. There is the chamber of *fulneſs*, to which the gathering of the people ſhould be. This is a chamber that comprehends all the reſt of the chambers within it; but becauſe it is ſo notable and glorious, we name it among the reſt. It is the beſt furniſhed chamber that ever you heard tell of, for, *all the fulneſs of the Godhead is* in it: *It pleaſed the Father, that in him ſhould all fulneſs dwell*, Col. i. 19.; and ii. 9, 10. *In him dwells all the fulneſs of the Godhead bodily; and ye are complete in him.* To this chamber ſhould all poor beggar and bankrupt ſinners, that have loſt their ſtock in the firſt Adam, gather together, that *out of his fulneſs they may receive, grace for grace*, John i. 16. In this chamber are hid all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge, all the treaſures of grace and glory, all the treaſures of God's perfections, and all the treaſures of the Spirit's graces. Your great want is the want of God; and you may find him in this chamber: your next want is the want of grace; and whatever grace you want, be it faith, repentance, love, or whatever elſe, it is lying treaſured up in this chamber: if you want pardon, purity, happineſs, holineſs, all the ſtock of riches that you can imagine, to make you up for ever and ever, is treaſured up in this chamber; and behold the chamber-door is open to you all, while *we preach among you Gentiles the unſearchable riches of Chriſt.* Let every ſoul here be like beggars gathering about this door.

5. There is the chamber of his *covenant*, to which the gathering of the people ſhould be; when God gathers people into it, he is ſaid to *ſhew them his covenant*, Pſal. xxv. 14.; and in ſhewing his covenant, he ſhews ſome divine ſecrets to them. When the people gather in to this chamber, they are ſaid to take *hold of his covenant*, Iſa. lvi. 4, 6. This chamber is remarkable for the wells that are in the midſt of it. There is both a well for waſhing, and a well for drinking; and both are open, that the people may gather together to them. The well for waſhing is the blood of the covenant; and that is the *fountain open for ſin and for uncleanneſs*, Zech. xiii. 1. It is juſt the boundleſs bottomleſs ſea of the Redeemer's blood, which *cleanſes from all ſin:* this fountain is open, that all guilty, filthy, polluted people may gather to it, and be waſhed. The well for drinking is not only that ſame blood of Chriſt, *which is drink indeed*, but all the bleſſings of the covenant, and all the promiſes of the covenant; to all or every one of which, people ſhould gather, and *draw water out of theſe wells of ſalvation with joy*, Iſa. xii. 3. Here is the *well of water ſpringing up to everlaſting life*, John iv. 14. and all the people are invited to gather to it; *Whoſoever will, let him come, and take the water of life freely*, Rev. xxii. 17. In this chamber there is the beſt of cheer; *bread enough, and to ſpare; all ſpiritual bleſſings of heavenly places in Chriſt Jeſus:* and this chamber, and all the cheer that is in it, whereof Chriſt himſelf is the all, it is dedicate of God for the uſe of the people, that their gathering may be to it; *I will give thee for a covenant of the people*, Iſa. xlii. 6.

6. There is the chamber of his *palace*, for the gathering of the people into: by his palace, I mean, his church; and by his church, I mean, both his church militant on earth, and triumphant in heaven.

As for the church *militant*, that is the *palace of the great King*, Pſal. xlv. 15; there he *deſires to dwell*, Pſal. lxviii. 16. It is his houſe where he would have the gathering of the people to be; therefore he calls it *a houſe of prayer for all people*, Iſa. lvii. 7. and all are to *flee unto it*, Iſa. ii. 2. The ordinances and proviſions of Chriſt's houſe are, in a peculiar manner, for the entertainment of the people; and the ſtewards of the houſe have a ſpecial commiſſion to invite all ſorts of ſinners, even theſe that have played the prodigal and the fool in the way of ſin, to come in to it; Prov. ix. 3. *Whoſo is ſimple, let him turn in hither: As for him who hath no underſtanding*, Wiſdom ſays to him, *Come eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled*, Luke xiv. 21, 23. *Go quickly*, ſays the Maſter of the houſe, *to the ſtreets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, the blind, the maimed, and the halt; yea, go to the high-ways, and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my houſe may be filled.* It is a pity indeed, that ever people ſhould be diſcouraged from gathering in to the Lord's houſe, while the proviſions of the houſe are mixed with unwholeſom food of corrupt or erroneous doctrine; while the ſtewards of the houſe do turn it to a den of thieves and robbers; robbing the people of their Chriſtian privileges; and while the ſervants of the houſe do fall by the ears, and begin to ſmite their fellow-ſervants, becauſe the Lord of the houſe is away, and delays his coming: while, in a word, the doctrine, worſhip, diſcipline, and government of the houſe is out of order, and in great confuſion, not garniſhed like the palace of the great King. This indeed is matter of lamentation, and will be ſo, till the King of Zion the Maſter of the houſe himſelf come by the power of his Spirit, and ſet matters right: and, as the prophet ſays, Hag. ii. 7. *I will ſhake all nations, and the Deſire of all nations ſhall come;* ſo, before the Lord comes in a glorious manner to his houſe, we have reaſon to expect he will give the houſe a terrible ſhake, and make it tremble. But in the mean time, let not the *diſorders* † of the houſe hinder the gathering of the people to it; for at beſt the lower chambers of our King's palace will never be ſo clean as the upper-chamber in the higher houſe. The church militant will never be in a ſtate of perfection here; only ſtudy you to keep always the cleaneſt and beſt ſide of the houſe, like ſick people betaking themſelves to the pureſt air. But withal, let never your gathering to his houſe or ordinances content you, without the preſence of the Maſter of the houſe, and the Lord of ordinances,

† See Serm. IV. p. 70. at the foot; and more fully Serm. VIII. p. 149, 150. Serm. X. p. 178.

ſo

ſo as you may have it to ſay, that not only you *was brought to the banquetting-houſe*, but alſo, *his banner over you was love*.

As to the church *triumphant*, that is his glorious palace, his higher houſe, of which Chriſt ſays, John xiv. 2. *In my Father's houſe there are many manſions*; thither all that have been gathered graciouſly, will be gathered glorioufly; *with gladneſs and rejoicing will they be brought, and ſhall enter into the king's palace*, Pſal. xlv. 15. This is, by way of eminency, *the ivory palace*, where all his *garments ſmell of aloes, myrrh, and caſſia*; where the people gathered to him, *will be like him; for they ſhall ſee him as he is*: where they will be for ever with him, *In whoſe preſence is fulneſs of joy, and at his right-hand pleaſures for evermore*. As he that drinks of the ocean, though his thirſt be never ſo great and inſatiable, yet leaves it as full and flowing as ever; ſo theſe that drink of the ocean of theſe heavenly pleaſures, will find the fulneſs of joy never ebbing, but ever flowing through all eternity. Chriſt himſelf will be the heaven of heaven, and the very temple, wherein the happy people will be gathered together; *I ſaw no temple there: but the Lord God almighty, and the Lamb are the temple of it*, Rev. xxi. 22. If the Lamb be the temple there, then the gathering of the people there muſt be to him.——Thus you ſee, what place there is in Chriſt, and what chambers for the gathering the people to.

The *ſecond* queſtion, upon this head, was, to ſhow in what *reſpect* the gathering of the people is to him, or in what *capacity*. The ſcripture is very copious, and elegant in ſetting forth the various reſpects, wherein this gathering of the people to Shiloh may take place; and that, for conveying a due apprehenſion thereof to our ſouls, it is ſet forth by what takes place, ſometimes among rational creatures, among ſenſitives, among vegetables, and among inanimate things; and it is not for nought, that the ſcripture is ſo copious this way, that our faith may have room and liberty to act upon Chriſt, in whatever reſpect he is repreſented.

1. From *rationals*; while we view political or œconomical affairs among men, or whatever ſtation or relation they are ſaid to be in, or actions they are ſaid to perform, by theſe we will find this matter repreſented unto us. Hence our gathering to Shiloh is like the gathering of ſcholars to a teacher, or of diſciples to a maſter, that we may be taught of him; and he is therefore called the non-ſuch teacher, Job xxxvi. 22. *Who teacheth like him?* Man's teaching reacheth the ear; but his teaching reacheth the heart: man's teaching may work upon the capacity where it is; but his teaching can work a capacity where it is not. O let all the people gather to his ſchool, who is the great Prophet, *who teaches with authority, that teacheth as never man taught*.—Again, it is like a gathering of purſued malefactors to a refuge: it is a *flying for refuge to the hope ſet before us*, Heb. vi. 18. To gather to him, is to ſay by faith, with David, *I flee to thee to hide me*; to hide with thy wings, with thy blood, with thy righteouſneſs, from the wrath of God, and from the curſe of the law.—Again, it is like the gathering of rebels to a ſovereign, caſting down their arms, and owning him to be their only King and Leige-lord: gathered ſouls put the crown upon King Jeſus his head, ſaying, *Other lords have had dominion over us*; but now, O let *the King of glory come in!* Pſal. xxiv. 7. *Let him reign, and let all his enemies be ſcattered*—It is like the gathering of wanderers to the right way home. *I am the way*, ſays Chriſt.—It is like the gathering of weary travellers to an inn, or weary labourers to a reſting-place: *Come to me, all ye that are weary, and heavy laden, and I will give you reſt*.—It is a gathering of gueſts to a feaſt, Mat. xxii. 10.; and of ſtrangers to their home, that *they may be no more ſtrangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the ſaints, and of the houſhold of God*, Eph. ii. 19. Before a man come to Chriſt, he is abroad in a far country; but whenever he comes to Chriſt, he is at home.—It is a gathering of children to a father, to be *pitied as a father pities his children*, Pſal. ciii. 13.—It is a gathering of brethren to their elder brother, as Joſeph's brethren did to their younger, that they might be ſupplied by him, and live upon him.—It is a gathering of beggars to a ſtore-houſe, that they may be enriched; of captives to a Redeemer, that they may be liberate; of debtors to a Surety, that they may be ranſomed; *Be ſurety for thy ſervant for good*; of lepers to a laver, that they may be cleanſed; *Purge me with hyſſop, and I ſhall be clean; yea, waſh thou me, and I ſhall be whiter than the ſnow*.—It is a gathering, as broken merchants, to a free market: what a gathering of people will be to a fair or market? But they are not all buyers that come to markets, far leſs that come to the market of ordinances; however the market is free, we may *buy without money and without price*. The wares are precious, *tried gold, white raiment, eye-ſalve*, and *the pearl of great price*. All things are nothing to this pearl; and therefore, when we ſell our all to buy this pearl, yet we get it for nothing. Right gathering to Chriſt, is to come to his market, and to take all his wares for nothing.—It is a gathering of members to an head; *For he is the head of the body, the church*, Col. i. 18. From the head is derived to the body all the light, life, beauty, motion, ſympathy, protection, proviſion, ſupply of good, and prevention of evil.—It is a gathering of fugitive ſervants to their maſters; of clients to an advocate to plead their cauſe.—It is a gathering of drowning men to an ark, to ſave their lives; and a gathering of patients to a phyſician, to heal their diſeaſes. Lord, ſays the gathered ſoul, my diſeaſe is mortal and incurable; I will die of this diſeaſe, if thou do not heal me. Well, ſays Chriſt, *this ſickneſs is not unto death*; I can cure the diſeaſe of death itſelf, ſpiritual death. Lord, ſays another, my diſeaſe is a lingering diſeaſe, it is an halt and lameneſs, that I cannot ſo much as come to the phyſician for healing, and I am like to go halting to the grave, under a certain ſore that no body knows of. Is that your diſeaſe, woman? mind that word, Micah. vi. 4. *I will heal her that halteth*: and be encouraged ſtill to be about the phyſician's hands.

2. From *ſenſitives*; this gathering of the people to Shiloh is repreſented in ſcripture in the following reſpects. This gathering to Shiloh is like the gathering of *ſheep* to a ſhepherd; *Ye were as ſheep without a ſhepherd, but now are ye returned to the ſhepherd and biſhop of your ſouls. Other ſheep I have, that are not of this fold*, ſays Chriſt; *theſe alſo I muſt bring*. He muſt gather them, and they muſt be gathered, according to his promiſe, Ezek. xxxiv. 11, 12. Iſa. xl. 11. O

wandering ſheep, here is the fold.—It is like the gathering of *doves* to their windows; Iſa. lx. 8. *Who are theſe that fly as a cloud, as doves to their windows?* The wounds of Chriſt, the holes of the Rock of ages, the promiſes ſealed with his blood, and all his offices, are the windows; and to gather to him, is to fly to theſe windows, and make your neſt in the rock.—It is like the gathering of *fiſhes* into a net; Mat. xiii. 47. *The kingdom of heaven*, or the goſpel, *is likened unto a net caſt into the ſea, gathering of every kind.* O when the goſpel-net is ſpread, do not ſwim away: it may be your thoughts are ſwimming in the air, when they ſhould be gathered about the mouth of the net.—Sometimes it is likened to the gathering of *chickens* under the wings of a hen; Mat. xxiii. 37. Luke xiii. 34. *O Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem, how often would I have gathered you, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but ye would not!* O the wings of his grace, the wings of his righteouſneſs, the wings of his merit, the wings of his mercy are ſtretched! If we will not be gathered, the ſilly chickens will witneſs againſt us; for they gather at the cluck of the hen under her wings.—Again, it is like the gathering of *eagles* to their prey; Mat. xxiv. 28. *Where the carcaſe is, thither will the eagles be gathered together.* Whither ſhould the eagles go, but to the prey? And, whither ſhould the ſoul go, but to Chriſt, who hath the words of eternal life? Chriſt's fleſh and blood is the carcaſe, which, like hungry eagles, we ſhould be gathering unto; for *his fleſh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed.*

3. From *vegetables*; this gathering of the people to Shiloh is repreſented, in the following reſpects. It is like the gathering of *wheat* into a barn; Mat. iii. 12. *He will gather the wheat into his garner.* Mat. xiii. 30. *Gather the wheat into my barn.* God will not loſe a grain of his wheat; he will not only gather it to the barn to be kept, but the granary to be purified.—It is like the gathering of *grafts* into a branch; *I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the ſame bringeth forth much fruit*, John xv. 5. When God gathers ſouls to himſelf, he takes a branch of the old Adam, cuts it off from the old ſtock, and ingrafts it into Chriſt, from whom, as the everlaſting root, it derives all ſap of grace, all the fruits of righteouſneſs.—It is like the gathering of *plants* into a garden or vineyard; *The vineyard of the Lord of hoſts is the houſe of Iſrael, and the men of Judah his pleaſant plant*, Iſa. v. 7. And theſe, whom he effectually gathers into his garden, are called *trees of righteouſneſs, the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified.* To be gathered unto Chriſt, is to be planted in his houſe.—It is like the gathering of *fruit* into a baſket, or of *flowers* and *lilies* for pleaſure and entertainment; *My beloved is gone down to his garden, to gather lilies*, Song vi. 2. Having gathered them into his garden, and planted them, and ſuffered them to grow, through his grace, till they be ripe, he gathers them to himſelf, and picks them one by one to put them in his boſom. But again,

3. From *inanimate* things, this gathering of the people to Chriſt is repreſented, in the following reſpects. It is a gathering of *veſſels* to an harbour; for, before the ſoul be brought in to Chriſt, it is like a ſhip toſſed in the tempeſt, and tumbling in the ſwelling waves, like the ſhip in which the diſciples were, when the ſea was tempeſtuous, and Chriſt came walking on the ſea towards them; but when they are gathered in to Chriſt, then they are at anchor in a ſafe harbour: *Which hope we have, as an anchor ſure and ſtedfaſt, entering within the vail, whither the Forerunner is for us entered*, Heb. vi. 19. It is a piercing, entering anchor; for, as an anchor will not hold a ſhip firm and faſt, if it only ly on the ground, and do not pierce deep into it; ſo faith will not eſtabliſh the heart, if it do not enter in to Chriſt, as it were, and pierce the vail; but when once it enters here, then the ſoul is at a ſafe harbour, and a ſure anchor both.—Again, this gathering of the people to Shiloh is like the gathering of *ſtones* to a building; *To whom coming, as to a living ſtone, diſallowed indeed of men, but choſen of God and precious; ye alſo, as lively ſtones, are built up a ſpiritual houſe*, 1 Pet. ii. 4. We are by nature hard ſtones, ſenſeleſs ſtones, ſtupid, inflexible, dull, heavy ſtones, having an heart of ſtone, Ezek. xxxvi. 26.; but *God can, even of theſe ſtones, raiſe up children to Abraham*, Mat. iii. 8. Luke iii. 9. And what does God condeſcend to do, when he comes to gather ſinners? Behold, he comes to gather ſtones! and he ſends us that are miniſters out to gather ſtones. It was a ſin for the man to gather ſticks on the Sabbath-day; but it would be no ſin, but a good Sabbath's work for us, if we were gathering ſtones this day, to bring them to the *chief corner ſtone*, the ſure foundation, as Chriſt is called, 1 Pet. ii. 6. Iſa. xxviii. 16. *This is the ſtone which the builders rejected; but the ſame is become the head of the corner*, Pſal. cxviii. 22. What we tranſlate the *chief corner ſtone*, ſome tranſlate it the *higheſt*, and ſome the *loweſt ſtone*: but it is beſt to reconcile both, and make him both the higheſt and loweſt, reaching from the firſt to the laſt; becauſe his name is ALPHA and OMEGA, *the firſt* and *the laſt*; and becauſe he is the ſtone, that reaches from earth to heaven, from the church militant to the church triumphant: he is the corner-ſtone to bring both ſides of the building together, Jews and Gentiles into one temple: and, *Another foundation can no man lay*, ſays the apoſtle, *than that is laid, which is Chriſt*; to this foundation ſhould the ſtones be gathered. Solomon ſays, Eccleſ. iii. 9. *There is a time to caſt away ſtones, and a time to gather ſtones together.* In alluſion to this, may I ſay, What ſort of time is this? It hath long been a time of caſting away ſtones, many are like caſtaway ſtones in the field, or deſert of nature, hard and dead ſtones; they never gather to the living temple, by all the gathering means and ordinances that ever they enjoyed: they look like ſtones ready to be caſt away to hell, to be fewel for God's wrath; becauſe the fire of love and grace, manifeſted in the goſpel, could never melt them. Oh! it hath been thus a time of caſting away ſtones: when it is not a gathering time, it is a rejecting time. But, O ſhall we now expect a time of gathering ſtones together! O cry for a day of power, a gathering day, a gathering time to Scotland again; a gathering time to yourſelves, even God's hand of power, for gathering ſtones together to Chriſt the foundation; and ſo for gathering the people to Shiloh!

IV. The *fourth* thing propoſed, was, to ſpeak of the *manner* of this gathering to Shiloh. That which I intend under this head, diſtinct from the

the former, is, to enquire, 1. Into the *means* of this gathering; 2. The *qualities* thereof.

First, As to the *means* thereof, or by what *means* the gathering to Shiloh is brought about. By what means, say you, does God gather the people, or are the people gathered to Christ? We have warrant from scripture to speak of these six gathering means.

1. A gathering *hedge* and inclosure; I mean, the hedge of *providence*, by which he gathers people *occasionally*, as sheep within an inclosure are gathered together, that they may not get leave to stray. This is the thorny hedge of affliction, whereby the Lord stops the sinful carreer of these, whom he hath aimed to gather in to himself; *Behold I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and make a wall that she shall not find her paths*, Hos. ii. 6. Thus Manasseh was catched among the thorns, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 11. And to this purpose, says David, *It was good for me that I was afflicted; for before I was afflicted I went astray*, Psal. cxix. 67. Thus some affliction or other many times is made use of, as the occasional mean of gathering straying souls to Christ, or some alarming providence, as that which Paul met with, Acts ix. and the jaylor, Acts xvi. when the foundation of the prison was shaken with an earthquake. But this leads me to another mean.

2. There is a gathering *storm* and *tempest*, with thunder and lightening from mount Sinai, whereby an earthquake is raised in the conscience, or rather an heart-quake in the soul. By this mean of *law-terrors* and *convictions*, according to the measure wherein it is dispensed, he gathers the people *preparatively*, as by the former *occasionally*. This dispensation is called a *tempest*, Heb. xii. 18. accompanied with *blackness and darkness, and burning fire*. And as a blowing storm, or beating tempest, makes a man chearfully to betake himself to a house for shelter; so the storm of legal conviction and humiliation makes people willing to gather unto Shiloh. Hence the law is said to be *our schoolmaster to* SCHOOL *us to Christ*, as the word there signifies, Gal. iii. 24. *By the law is the knowledge of sin*, and the conviction of wrath; and while the storm of law-threatenings, law-curses, law-vengeance is beating and battering on the soul, it is glad to cry out, *What shall I do to be saved?* And where shall I go to be sheltered? Under this dispensation, there are two things that the soul sees, when the law comes with force, namely, the spirituality of the command, and the severity of the threatening. The spirituality of the precept discovered makes the man cry, *Oh! I am unclean, unclean!* The severity of the threatening discovered makes him cry out, *Oh! I am undone, undone!* O the infinite holiness of God in the precept can never be gratified by any obedience of mine, for I am a sinful beast! O the infinite justice of God in the threatening can never be satisfied by any suffering of mine, for I am a finite worm; if there be not another shift for me, I am lost and gone for ever! Thus Rom. vii. 9. the soul that was *alive without the law once*, now *when the commandment comes, sin revives, and it dies*.

3. As the gathering inclosure of providence is the occasional mean, and the gathering storm and tempest of law-conviction is the preparative mean, so the gathering *trumpet* of the gospel is the more *immediate* mean. The gospel is the great gathering engine of infinite wisdom; for faith comes by hearing of the joyful sound of this trumpet, which is like the trumpet of the jubilee of old, Lev. xxv. 9. There is the joyful sound of gospel-revelations, and good news, *that Christ came to save sinners*. O! when this sound of the silver trumpet reaches not only the ear, but the heart of the sinner, that by the law hath got the knowledge and conviction of sin and misery, what a joyful sound is it, that now he hears of the remedy for him; that justice is satisfied, life is purchased, death is destroyed, wrath is appeased, and the law is magnified, and God reconciled in Christ? Many a gathering sound comes through this gospel-trumpet. There is a sound of gathering *calls*, saying, *Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved; This is his commandment, that ye believe.*—A sound of gathering *invitations*, saying, *Come to me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden.*—A sound of gathering *proclamations*, saying, *Ho, ho, every one that thirsteth, come; and he that hath no money, let him come; buy wine and milk without money and without price.*—A sound of gathering *expostulations*, saying, *Why will ye die?* joined with *complaints, Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.*—A sound of gathering *counsels*, saying, *I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye salve, that thou mayest see.*—A sound of gathering *intreaties* and *obtestations*, saying, *We beseech you in God's name, and pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.*—And, *finally*, A sound of gathering *music*, and charming *melody*; and as children gather to the sound of the pipe, so the Lord Jesus complains, Mat. xi. 17. when people do not joyfully gather at the sound thereof, *We have piped unto you, and you have not danced*; yea, such are compared to *deaf adders, that stop their ears at the voice of the charmer, though charming never so cunningly*, Psal. lviii. 5. O what melodious music in the world, so sweet as to hear the sound of gospel-promises, of pardon to the guilty, purity to the filthy, and pity to the miserable soul! This trumpet hath a sound of peace, a sound of grace, a sound of mercy, a sound of *glory to God in the highest*, and of *good-will towards men*: a certain sound, in opposition to all the legal trumpeters, sounding forth life and salvation, depending upon uncertain conditions and qualifications on our part: but, as says the apostle, 1 Cor. xiv. 8. *If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who goeth forth to battle?* There is no heart to go forth to the battle of the Lord, upon such an uncertain sound: but when the trumpet gives a certain sound of victory, peace, life, salvation, and all, to be had, only, and wholly, and freely for nothing, in and through Jesus Christ, then who would not go forth, under the standard of this Captain of salvation, at the sound of this golden trumpet!

4. There is the gathering *wind* of the *Spirit*. Besides the gathering inclosure of providence as the occasional mean, the gathering tempest of the law as the preparatory mean, and the gathering trumpet of the gospel as the immediate mean; there must be a gathering *wind* of the *Spirit*, which is the *efficacious* mean: the former means cannot be effectual without this, though the gathering trumpet of the gospel, and the gathering wind of the Spirit are most nearly related to each other; for it is the gospel only that is the *ministration of the Spirit*,

2 Cor.

2 Cor. iii. 8. It is this wind of which the Lord Jesus speaks, John iii. 8. which *blows where it listeth*, and is the great efficient of regeneration, and aggregation unto Christ. It is this wind that gathers dead sinners out of their grave of spiritual death; *Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon the slain that they may live*, Ezek. xxxvii. 9. It is this mighty wind that blows down the *strong holds of Satan*, and *casts down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God; gathering the thoughts, like captives, to him*, 2 Cor. x. 15. It is this wind that makes the spices of the believer's garden to flow out: for this gathering wind brings a gathering rain with it; *He shall come down like rain upon the mowen grass; as showers that water the earth*, &c. Psal. lxxii. 6, 8. *Awake, O north wind; come thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out*, Song iv. 16. O it is a happy wind, that can drive a sinking vessel to a safe harbour, and gather perishing sinners in to a Saviour! But, where is this wind to be had, say you? Why, it is in God's hand: it is said with respect to his kingdom of providence, that he *hath gathered the winds in his fist*, Prov. xxx. 4.; and it is true with respect to his kingdom of grace: this blessed wind is, as it were, gathered in his fist; and what a man hath gathered in his fist, he can easily distribute of it, by opening his hand; so our God can easily distribute of the Spirit: this wind is in his fist, and he hath no more ado, but to open his fist. O look to him, and cry to him, to cast a gale of this wind out of his fist, a handful of the gathering motions of his Spirit, a handful of the gathering influences of this heavenly wind, a gale of his gathering operations.

5. I may add, though it be very fib to the former, yet it is what may give us another distinct view of the Lord's way of gathering people; besides the gathering wind, there is a gathering *sun*: I allude to Psalm civ. 21. where it is said of the young lions, *The sun rises, and they gather themselves together to their dens; and man goeth forth to his work and labour.* As the rising of the sun makes the beasts gather to their dens, and men gather to their work; so the rising of the Sun of righteousness, in the manifestation of the favour of God in Christ, makes the lions of hell gather to their dens, in a manner, and men to gather to their work; I mean, to gather to Christ by faith: for, *this is the work of God, that ye believe in his Son, whom he hath sent.* It is promised, that men shall go forth when the sun rises; *The Sun of righteousness shall arise, and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves in the stall*, Mal. iv. 2. Indeed, they that go forth to meet the rising Sun by faith, they will grow up in all the graces and fruits of the Spirit of holiness. However, I say, it is the rising of the Sun of righteousness, and shining in his glory, that makes sinners gather to him by faith; *He manifested forth his glory, and then his disciples believed in him*, John ii. 11. The displays of his glory are his gathering arms; *He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arms*, Isa. xl. 11. He gathers with his arms, even the arms of his grace and mercy; yea, the displays of his glorious grace are his military arms, whereby he subdues them, and gathers them into his camp, Psal. xlv. 3, 4, 5.

6. In a subordination to all these gathering means, there is a gathering *fan*; Matth. iii. 12. Luke iii. 17. *His fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into his garner.* The devil hath his fan, wherewith he seeks to winnow God's people as wheat, in order to separate them from Christ, and from one another; but Christ hath his fan, wherewith he will winnow his church and people, in order to gather them to himself, and to one another in him. By the fan of his word, and the fan of his rod, he purges the floor of his church: it is his *threshing floor*; and sometimes he must take the flail of his doctrine and thresh upon his people, to separate the chaff of error from the grains of truth; and the sound from the erroneous. Sometimes he must take the flail of discipline, and severe judgments, rods, and calamities, to purge his floor, and gather the wheat from the chaff. Though the great day of judgment will be the great day of separating the precious from the vile, and gathering of his saints, yet there are trying days in this world, wherein considerable discoveries are made, and the Lord's scattered and divided sheep are gathered together, to be more unite in the Lord. It is necessary sometimes, that the Lord take his fan in his hand, for purging his floor; when it is foul, it needs to be swept with a besom. The floor of his house is sometimes very foul; and as when one sweeps a house, if there be dross and dirt in it, and also gold, and diamonds, and jewels, lying hid among the dust, all may be swept to the door together; but the jewels being soon mist, are gathered again from among the filth: so, when the besom of public judgment and calamities come, the godly, as well as the wicked, may be all swept to the door together, and share of the same outward strokes; but God, in due time, will gather the jewels to his cabinet: *They shall be mine, in the day when I make up my jewels*, Mal. iii. 17.——So much concerning the various means of gathering.

Secondly, The second question upon this head, was, To speak of the *qualities* of this gathering of the people to Shiloh. And here the qualities of this gathering may be considered, either *passively*, shewing how his power is exerted; or *actively*, shewing how their faith is exercised: or, 1. The qualities of *God's gathering* the people to Shiloh. 2. The qualities of the *peoples gathering* to him, under his conduct, influence, and assistance. Now, of both these particularly.

1*st*, PASSIVELY; the *qualities* of *God's gathering* the people to Christ; or, how his powerful grace is exerted, when, in a day of his power, he makes them willing, and gathers them.

1. His gathering power is exerted *congruously*, and agreeably to the rational nature; he *draws with the bands of love, and the cords of a man*, Hos. ix. 4. What is that? He even brings them over, by rational arguments upon the judgment, and powerful persuasion upon the will. While the minds of men are blinded with ignorance, their affections are bent upon their lusts; but now, the understanding being cleared, the affections are captivated, the man is bound with invincible reason: and so he gathers souls in a way congruous to the rational nature.

2. His gathering power is exerted *affectionately* and *lovingly*; Hos. ii. 4. *I will allure her, and bring her to the wilderness; and there will I speak comfortably to her.*—*I will*, as it were, BEGUILE *her, and speak to her* HEART, as the Hebrew signifies:

nifies: I will perſuade her, that there is more reaſon to yield to my intreaties, than to the devil's ſophiſtry. The Lord ſweetly draws up the lock of the heart, and gets in upon the affections; *I have loved thee with an everlaſting love, and with loving-kindneſs have I drawn thee*, Jer. xxx. 3. As a man puts on his beſt robes on his wedding-day; ſo Chriſt, in the day of eſpouſals, when he would gather the eyes of the people to look to him, and their affections to centre on him, he puts on his robes of glory and grace; clothes himſelf with a garment of ſalvation, with an alluring attire, when he addeſſes himſelf unto and courts ſinners.

3. His gathering power is exerted *efficaciouſly*: he comes with that argument of omnipotence, whereby he *commanded light to ſhine out of darkneſs*; by that ſame argument whereby he *commanded the dead to ariſe*, does he conquer and captivate the ſoul; by that ſame argument whereby *Chriſt himſelf was raiſed*, Eph. i. 19, 20. till there be no power to reſiſt, no ſtrength of corruption left to oppoſe. The infinite bounty of God, the infinite beauty of Chriſt, and the infinite power of the Holy Ghoſt, all concur to gain the ſoul, with infinite raviſhing ſweetneſs. Almighty love kills the mighty enmity; and, how can he be reſiſted? *Compel them to come in, that my houſe may be filled.* Before converſion, the ſinner is unwilling, and he cannot come to Chriſt, becauſe he will not; but in converſion, the man is made willing, and ſo he cannot reſiſt, becauſe he will not: the will is gained; *Thy people ſhall be willing.*

4. His gathering power and grace is exerted *ſeaſonably*, for, he *ſpeaks a word in ſeaſon to them*; Iſa. l. 4. *The Lord hath given me the tongue of the learned, to ſpeak a word in ſeaſon to him that is weary.* A word of power comes at a particular ſeaſon, at God's ſet hour; and people are never gathered till that hour come: *The hour comes, when the dead ſhall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear ſhall live.* "O happy hour, ſays one, "wherein the word and ordinances are im-"pregnated with almighty efficacy!" When the miniſter finds himſelf in a better frame than ordinary, he is ready to think that bleſſed hour is come; but he may be oft miſtaken. However, *the counſel of God ſtands ſure; the Lord knows who are his*: therefore we muſt preach in faith, and pray in faith, and wait in hope, and water in hope, till the accepted time come, the happy hour; and when it comes, it will be an hour never to be forgotten, a ſignal time, on which eternity depends. Beſides, it is ſeaſonable with reſpect to the ſoul that is gathered; it comes at the nick of time, when it is in the extremity of diſtreſs, plunged into the deeps, and deep calling unto deep, and the ſoul like to ſuccumb therein. Hence,

5. This gathering grace is manifeſted *ſurpriſingly*; it is freighted with preventing mercy: herein God anticipates the current of the carnal affections; when the ſoul is running poſt to hell, God ſtops his carreer, as he did that of Paul, Acts ix. Every ſinner that is converted, is gathered beſide his proper natural intention: little does the man foreſee what is God's deſign, in bringing him to ſuch a place, to hear ſuch a ſermon, to live under ſuch a miniſtry; even as little as Saul thought of finding a kingdom, when he went out to ſeek his father's aſſes. Some have come to hear the word, in a very cuſtomary careleſs manner, not knowing where elſe to ſpend an hour; when lo, on a ſudden, an arrow of conviction hath been ſhot into their conſciences, and awakened them to ſeek God. His gathering grace, both in the beginning and progreſs thereof, is ſtill exerted in ſuch a manner, as ſweetly ſurprizes the ſoul; *Or ever I was aware, my ſoul made me like the chariots of Amminadab*, Song vi. 12. When I was expecting that my ſoul ſhould be gathered among the damned, O! grace ſtepped in, and gathered me to Shiloh.

6. This gathering power is exerted *ſovereignly*; there is much ſovereignty manifeſted, both over the gathering means, and the gathered ſoul: Over the gathering *means*, ſuch as the word and ordinances; it is not every word that does the buſineſs: how many great ſermons, and ſpiritual diſcourſes have you heard, O believer, and yet never a word reached your heart, till the Lord ſent it with power? Hence the word that kills one, quickens another; the word that is unſavoury to one, is ſweet to another; the word that is galling to one, is gaining to another; the word that hardens one, ſoftens another.—Sovereignty is alſo manifeſted over the gathered *ſoul*; many hundreds are gathered together at a time, yet, perhaps, but one or two are touched, and reached by the word: the miniſter is ſpeaking to the heart of theſe, but only to the ears of all the reſt. O! is God finding you out by his word, and gathering you? He is ſovereign; *Shewing mercy on whom he will have mercy, and compaſſion on whom he will have compaſſion*, Rom. ix. 15.

7. This gathering grace is exerted *particularly*; for *he calls his ſheep by name*, John x. 3.; and leads them out: as by the law, the ſinner is convinced particularly, *Thou art the man*, the ſinful man, the guilty man; ſo by the goſpel, he is called particularly; *I have called thee by name*, Iſa. xliii. 1. and xlv 4. What is offered indefinitely and generally to all, is carried home particularly to the ſoul: it comes to be as particular, as if God were ſpeaking to none other in all the congregation. Chriſt came to ſave ſinners, and to ſeek loſt ſouls, and particularly, I am come for you, man; you, woman; *Riſe, for the Maſter calls you.* O, ſays the ſoul, it is me that God is ſpeaking to; there is good news for me!

8. This gathering power is exerted *ſucceſsfully*: the Lord comes to gather, and the people are gathered; he draws, and they run, and run in to the ark; *The name of the Lord is a ſtrong tower, the righteous run into it, and are ſafe*: the ſoul runs, not only to it, but in to it, ſo as to be found in Chriſt. People may be gathered to Chriſt, in a manner, and yet not gathered ſucceſsfully, unleſs gathered in to him: as in the days of Noah, when the deluge of water came upon the world, many might gather to the ark, and hing about the ſides of it, and climb up on it for ſhelter; but the waves at laſt waſhed them away: none came to it with ſucceſs, nor were ſaved, but ſuch as got in to the ark; ſo, unleſs you get in to Chriſt, be united to him, and implanted in him, as a branch to the ſtock, ſo as to derive life from him, and grow up in him; if you be not thus found in him, you cannot be ſaved by him, though in ſeveral reſpects you may lean upon him, and take hold of him. They gather to him with ſucceſs, that get in to him. O happy they, that are gathered to him, ſo as to *win him!*

him! Phil. iii. 8. He that wins, ſucceeds; and much winning, much ſucceſs; and *they may laugh that win;* for they win all, who win Chriſt: they win his perſon, for their Huſband; they win his purchaſe, for their jointure; his covenant, for their charter; his Spirit, for their counſeller; his righteouſneſs, for their robe; his grace, for their ornament; his glory, for their crown; and all his fulneſs, for their ſupply: they may live upon their winning for ever.

9. This gathering power is exerted *irreverſibly*, yet *gradually:* when God gathers ſinners to Chriſt, he gathers them irreverſibly; *For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance:* He never leaves drawing of them, and gathering them to him, till he hath gathered them all round about his throne in glory: his gathering grace works a laſting impreſſion, and abiding effect on them; the ſeed of God remains in them. Many hundred ſermons you have heard, and all theſe excellent truths evaniſh, and ſlip off from your memory, as water falling on a rock: but O, ſays the believer, though I forget much, yet I think I will never forget ſuch a word, that came to my ſoul with a glance of glorious majeſty in it, and filled all the powers of my ſoul with a divine ſeraphic enlargement: *I will never forget thy precepts; for by them thou haſt quickened me.* Chriſt having begun to gather, goes on with the ſoul conſtantly, till the buſineſs be done and ended; *For he waits to be gracious,* Iſa. xxx. 18. He will not take a refuſal, nor deſiſt for an ill anſwer; and whatever interruption may be after laying the foundation, yet he carries on the good work: it is not altogether ſtopt, as it is with others, that may be under ſome common operations of the Spirit; the Lord may leave them and never return: but here he renews his viſits, and gradually advances his gathering work; *For his going forth is prepared as the morning,* Hoſ. vi. 3.; and he comes to them *as the rain, as the latter and former rain upon the earth,* which makes the fruits of the ground gradually to ſpring up. "A "ſudden work is ſeldom a ſound work," ſays one. However his ordinary way of gathering is by various degrees; he gives them now a pull, and then a pull; *here a little, and there a little.*

10. This gathering power is exerted *remarkably:* Hence the ſoul can ſay, *Once I was blind, now I ſee.* Though the *kingdom of heaven comes not with outward obſervation;* yet either in the beginning, or progreſs, or both, it is remarkable, diſcernable, and ſenſibly felt, by the ſoul that is wrought upon and gathered: he hears the voice of the great Shepherd, he ſees his glory, he feels his power. Sometimes it is remarkable, in the very beginning; like a man born blind, and come to age, and getting his eyes ſuddenly opened, he cannot know the time: in others it is not ſo remarkable, till the progreſs thereof make it ſo; like rain dropping from a houſe-top on a flint-ſtone, that by conſtant dropping makes a hollow in the ſtone; when it begins to make the hollow at firſt, is hard to tell, but that it is made, is remarkably evident: even ſo here, by the conſtant dropping of the rain of the Spirit's influences, from time to time, there is an hollow made in the heart; the man is gradually emptied of ſin, and ſelf-righteouſneſs; and nothing can fill that hollow, but a God in Chriſt: when it began at firſt, he cannot tell; but now it is remarkable, if grace be in any meaſure exerciſed.——Thus you ſee the qualities of God's gathering people, yet after all, we are not capable to give an exact account of the outgoings of this mighty gathering grace: many feel it, who cannot tell the particular manner thereof; *For the wind bloweth where it liſteth, and we hear the ſound thereof, but know not whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth,* John iii. 8.*

2*dly*, ACTIVELY, viewed; the qualities of this gathering, that is, of the *peoples gathering* to Shiloh; or the way how faith is exerciſed, or how the ſoul acts, when it is prevailed upon to come to the Lord Jeſus, and ſo to be gathered unto Shiloh. In general, it is by FAITH that they gather to him; and hence this gathering to Shiloh is ſo frequently called a *coming* to him, and *believing* on him, *truſting* and *ſtaying* ourſelves upon him. In this gathering unto Shiloh, the ſoul acts *believingly;* and all the other qualities of this gathering are reducible to this, and are ſo many ways, wherein faith acts, in coming and gathering to Chriſt; or how, being acted they act: and here is matter for trial; particularly then,

1. In this *active* gathering unto Shiloh, people are made to act *ſpiritually;* for it is a ſpiritual gathering, under the conduct of the Spirit of God, as a Spirit of faith, making the ſoul to gather under the wings of Chriſt the Meſſias. It is not by natural might, but by the power of the divine Spirit, that ſinners gather to a Saviour: *Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, ſaith the Lord;* even *the exceeding greatneſs of his almighty power,* Eph. i. 19. There is a ſpiritual internal principle, from which the man acts, in his gathering to Shiloh, even the Spirit of God as the main, and the new heart as the ſubordinate principle of faith in the man. It is not the Spirit's working extrinſically upon the man; hypocrites may have the Spirit working on them extrinſically, to the production of great affections and enlargements, while they are not ſavingly gathered: but this ſpiritual act is from a ſpiritual principle, whereof the Spirit of God within is the ſpring. The former is but a natural acting by ſome external objects, it is like a pool fed by water from the clouds; the other is like a well fed by a ſpring within.

But here a queſtion may be propounded, *How ſhall I know the difference betwixt theſe two,* viz. *the Spirit's working on me by his common motions, and his working in me as a living principle?*

To which we might reply, Why, the common motions of the Spirit, externally moving the affections, differ from the ſaving operations of the Spirit, internally elevating the ſoul to a God in Chriſt, as a land-flood differs from a living ſpring: the land-flood is maintained externally by the clouds; the living fountain is maintained internally by its own ſpring: thus the hypocrites frames and affections are maintained only by external means and objects, ſuch as the tuneable voice of the miniſter; ſo Ezekiel was to his hearers as a *very lovely ſong of one that hath a pleaſant voice, and can play well on an inſtrument,* Ezek. xxxiii. 32.; and when the external object or excitement is over, then their frame and affection falls, becauſe the only

* What follows, to the beginning of the ſixth general head of the method, was delivered at Airth, June 19*th*, 20*th*, and 21*ſt*, 1725, in three diſcourſes.

thing

thing that maintained it is gone: whereas, in the ſpiritual acting of the ſoul that is gathering to Shiloh, though *faith comes by hearing externally*, yet the Spirit of God being *received by the hearing of faith*, this internal principle of ſpiritual life does many times animate the ſoul to ſpiritual work, when all external objects and operations fail; and this may be known, juſt as a ſpring-well is known by the bubbling up of the water. Thus is the Spirit's inhabitation known by the actings of the graces of the Spirit, ſuch as faith, love, repentance, joy in the Lord, and the like.

2. In gathering to Shiloh, people are made to act *knowingly* and *judiciouſly*, under the influences of the Spirit, as a Spirit of light; and to act as in a matter of the greateſt concern, with judgment and underſtanding, ſaying, as John vi. 68. *To whom ſhall we go? thou haſt the words of eternal life. We believe and are ſure that thou art Chriſt, the Son of the living God.* Many gather together in a confuſed way, and know not wherefore they meet together; but this gathering includes knowledge, and ſaving ſpiritual illumination: *They that know thy name, will put their truſt in thee*, Pſal. ix. 10. They that know him, will gather to him: there muſt be a *ſeeing of the Son*, before there can be a *believing in him*, or gathering to him. Many, inſtead of gathering to Chriſt, they gather to an idol of their own fancy; when they hear of Chriſt, their idolatrous carnal mind repreſents a carnal image of Chriſt in their own brain: as thoſe, Hoſ. xiii. 2. that are ſaid to have made *idols according to their own underſtanding*; ſo many, in their own imagination, form an idea of Chriſt; and this idea or image of Chriſt, that they have in their own mind, is all that they have for Chriſt. But, O Sirs, when Chriſt is externally revealed in the goſpel, there muſt be a marvellous light diſcovering him in himſelf, making him known, though not perfectly, yet really and truly as he is; not only as he is man, but as God-man, having *all the fulneſs of the Godhead in him*, and all *the glory of God appearing in his face*, 2 Cor. iv. 6. ſo as the ſoul cannot but cleave and adhere to him. A painted ſun will neither give light nor heat, but the real ſun gives both: ſo a painted image and repreſentation of Chriſt, in the imagination, gives no ſpiritual light, heat, nor communicates any transforming virtue; but the true *Sun of righteouſneſs ariſeth with healing under his wings.* It is true, this light is not without miſts and ſmoke, ſent forth from the bottomleſs pit, to darken all; but yet there is ſuch a clear diſcovery of the man's inability, of God's gracious offer, and Chriſt's good-will and mind to the bargain, as determines the ſoul to its duty.

3. In gathering to Shiloh, people are made to act *fiducially*: this is connected with the former; *They that know thy name, will put their truſt in thee*, Pſal. ix. 10. This I call an acting fiducially; that is, with a believing perſuaſion and particular application. The good news, that Shiloh is come, that *Jeſus Chriſt is come to ſave ſinners*, even *the chief of ſinners*, is received as a *faithful ſaying*, and ſo with believing perſuaſion; and as *worthy of all acceptation*, and ſo with particular application. Perſuaſion with application muſt be in the nature of faith, according to the meaſure and degree of faith. If it be weak faith, it is a weak perſuaſion; if ſtrong faith, a ſtrong perſuaſion: and it is not a natural perſuaſion, a man perſuading himſelf that all ſhall be well with him, and ſo no more of it; nay, it is ſupernatural and comes of God, which natural, carnal perſuaſion does not, Gal. v. 8. This perſuaſion comes not of him that *calleth you*, intimating, that right perſuaſion comes of God; like that of Abraham, Rom. iv. 20, 21. *He ſtaggered not at the promiſe of God through unbelief, but was ſtrong in the faith, giving glory to God; being fully perſuaded, that he that had promiſed was able to perform.* And like that of the old-teſtament believers, Heb. xi. 13. who *received not the promiſes by feeling, but by faith.* But how? why, they were *perſuaded of them, and embraced them.*

But here there is a twofold perſuaſion that ought to be carefully diſtinguiſhed, and the confounding whereof occaſions many miſtakes and miſrepreſentations; namely, a *fiducial* perſuaſion, and an *evidential* perſuaſion. The former is the *aſſurance of faith*, and in the nature of it; the other is the *aſſurance of ſenſe*, and conſequential to faith; and is not properly faith at all, but ſenſe. Now, this fiducial perſuaſion differs from evidential, in four reſpects.

(1.) They differ in their *acts*: by fiducial perſuaſion, the man *receives* and *reſts* upon Chriſt, and *truſts* in him for ſalvation to himſelf, believing and expecting this ſalvation according to the promiſe of the goſpel, and as Chriſt is offered and exhibite to him therein: but by evidential perſuaſion, the man *knows* and *feels* that he hath received Chriſt. The former every believer hath, when he acts faith; the latter many believers want even when they act faith, becauſe, though they may be conſcious that they are acting upon Chriſt for ſalvation, yet they may not be conſcious of the quality of the act, if it is ſaving or not.

(2.) They differ in their *order*: we firſt *believe*, by a fiducial perſuaſion; before we can be *ſure*, by an evidential perſuaſion: the one is the *cauſe*, and the other the *effect*. The perſuaſion, that is in faith, is like the heat in the fire; the perſuaſion, that is after faith, is like heat in the room, that is the effect of the former: and, becauſe aſſurance (that is commonly ſo called, namely, the *aſſurance of ſenſe*) is the effect of faith; this will not prove, that there is no aſſurance in faith, no more than heat in the room will prove, that there is no heat in the fire; for the contrary is rather evident.

(3.) They differ in their *objects* and *grounds*: the object and ground of fiducial perſuaſion, or of the aſſurance of faith, is *without* the man, and looks to the word and promiſe of God, the blood and righteouſneſs of Chriſt, the truth and faithfulneſs of God: but the object and foundation of evidential perſuaſion, or of the aſſurance of ſenſe, is *within* the man, and looks to the work of God within; ſuch as graces, attainments, and experiences. As there is a great difference betwixt a man's being perſuaded, that he hath ſuch a ſum of money, becauſe he hath it upon bond, or good ſecurity; and his being perſuaded thereof, becauſe he hath it in his hand, in his cheſt or coffers; ſo here, by the perſuaſion of faith, the man is perſuaded of ſalvation through Chriſt, becauſe he hath it upon bond, namely, God's promiſe ſealed with Chriſt's blood, which is good ſecurity: but the ground of the perſuaſion of ſenſe, is the man's having it in his hand, or ſo much of it, which is not faith, but ſenſe.

(4.) They differ in their *effects:* the effect of faith, or fiducial perſuaſion, is juſtification; the effect of ſenſe, or evidential perſuaſion, is conſolation: a man is not juſtified by his evidential perſuaſion, or by knowing and feeling that Chriſt is his; but he is juſtified by his fiducial perſuaſion, by his fiducial knowledge, whereby he receives and reſts upon Chriſt as his, and truſts in him for ſalvation to himſelf: by this fiducial knowledge, I ſay, is juſtification; *By his knowledge ſhall my righteous Servant juſtify many*, Iſa. liii. 11. *

Now, if theſe two were carefully diſtinguiſhed, and that people conſidered, that it is the former, namely, fiducial perſuaſion, that we put into the nature of faith, as eſſential to it, not the latter, namely, evidential perſuaſion, which is conſequential to it; it would prevent many miſtakes, and miſrepreſentations on this head; as if ſome placed aſſurance ſo in the nature of faith, as that none were to be reckoned believers, but ſuch as have this full evidential perſuaſion, and aſſurance of ſenſe, which is a groſs miſapprehenſion of matters, and flows from the confounding of this twofold perſuaſion, which differ as much as faith and ſenſe; aſſurance of faith carries in it the perſuaſion of the faithfulneſs of God in the promiſe; the aſſurance of ſenſe carries in it a perſuaſion of the reality of grace in the heart: by the one we ſee with our eyes, as it were; by the other we *handle with our hands the word of life:* the one, to wit, Faith, is begun viſion; the other, to wit, Senſe, is begun fruition: aſſurance of faith is eſſential to faith, the aſſurance of ſenſe is conſequential to it, and not always in, or with it. And hence we ſay, with reſpect to this *evidential aſſurance* and perſuaſion, as our Confeſſion hath it, "That it does not ſo belong "to the eſſence of faith, but that a true be- "liever may wait long, and conflict with ma- "ny difficulties, before he be partaker of it;" namely, of that aſſurance, that is grounded upon the inward evidence of grace, and teſtimony of the Spirit, which is the aſſurance of ſenſe there ſpoken of; but the *aſſurance of faith*, which is founded upon the *divine truth of the promiſe of ſalvation*, and upon the *word of God without us*, as the object thereof, this muſt be as eſſential to faith, as ſeeing is eſſential to the eye. And yet this will not ſay, that the believer hath always even this fiducial perſuaſion, unleſs his faith be in exerciſe: for, as it is the nature of the eye to ſee, though the man, that hath eyes, is ſometimes ſleeping, or winking, or dimſighted; ſo it is in the nature of faith, to be perſuaded of the favour and good-will of God in Chriſt, as revealed in the word of grace, though he, that hath this faith, is ſometimes doubting; ſometimes faith is not exerciſed; ſometimes the eye of faith is dimmed with the duſt of corruption and unbelief. It is with faith, as with other graces: as ſome have a true love to Chriſt, yet dare not ſay they love, becauſe they have ſo much enmity remaining: they have true grace, but dare not ſay they have it, becauſe they have too much ſin and corruption; but their doubting of their love and grace does not infer, that they have no love, no grace; ſo ſome have this fiducial perſuaſion, and aſſurance of faith, who yet dare not ſay they have it, becauſe they have ſo much unbelief and ſo many doubts: but as love is oppoſite to enmity, and grace oppoſite to corruption, though they are in the ſame ſubject; ſo is faith oppoſite to doubting, in its very nature, even though faith and doubting may be in the ſame believer, as light and darkneſs in the ſame air; yet their natures are oppoſite to one another.

As this *fiducial* act of gathering to Shiloh imports a *believing perſuaſion*, ſo alſo a *particular application.* In the offer of the goſpel, ſalvation is particularly held forth to every one, ſaying, *The promiſe is to you; to you is the word of this ſalvation ſent;* therefore in gathering to Chriſt, people are to lay hold on ſalvation to themſelves particularly: *Chriſt came to ſave ſinners, of whom*, ſays Faith, *I am the chief;* mercy is held out to me, and I lay hold on it as held out to me. As when the law comes with power, it ſays not only in the general, *All have ſinned;* but it comes in particular, ſaying, *you have ſinned;* and makes you ſay, *I am the man*, the ſinful man, the guilty man, the condemned man: ſo when the goſpel comes with power, it ſpeaks to the perſon particularly, ſaying, not only, *Chriſt came to ſave ſinners;* but, *Here is a Saviour for you:* and the ſoul is made to ſay, *I am concerned in this.* The goſpel offers life and ſalvation to the poor ſoul particularly, and he is commanded to believe for ſalvation particularly; and the man believes with particular application. Thus a certain divine illuſtrates it: "As the ſad ſentence of the law, generally and "indefinitely held forth in the ſcripture, is par- "ticularly applied for his [*viz.* the man's] con- "viction and condemnation; ſo the precious "promiſe of the goſpel, generally and indefi- "nitely held forth to all ſinners, that hear the "goſpel, is particularly applied for ſalvation:" and without this particular application, there is no effectually gathering to Shiloh. When goſpel-light ſhines into the heart of the awakened ſinner, it applies the promiſe particularly to itſelf, as it did formerly apply the threatenings of the law particularly; and as from the law it did particularly condemn itſelf; ſo now, from the goſpel, it does by faith particularly abſolve itſelf, or rather find itſelf abſolved from the law-ſentence, in its being helped to make particular application of the goſpel-promiſes. Again,

4. In gathering to Shiloh, the people that are brought to him are made to act *evangelically*, or to believe in a goſpel-manner; to receive and reſt upon him, as he is offered to us in the goſpel. — There is a *goſpel-ground*, on which the people gather: legal faith acts, upon a legal ground, ſuch as inherent ſtrength, and natural righteouſneſs; but true faith acts upon the ground of a borrowed ſtrength, and an imputed righteouſneſs of another, ſaying, *In the Lord have I righteouſneſs and ſtrength*, Iſa. xlv. 24. This gathering to Shiloh is a ſelf-renouncing buſineſs, ſtripping the man of his own righteouſneſs, of his own ſtrength, and taking him intirely off his own bottom: they that are gathered to Chriſt, are gathered out of themſelves. There is a *goſpel-rule* alſo, whereby they gather, in a ſuitableneſs to the goſpel-offer and diſpenſation; *So we preach, and ſo ye believed*, 1 Cor. xv. 11. Faith anſwers the goſpel-call, as the impreſs upon the wax does anſwer the engravings of the ſeal; ſo Chriſt offers himſelf, and ſo ſinners gather unto him, and believe in him for *wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification*, and *redemption.* Hence again, there is a *goſpel-order*, wherein

* See this point likewiſe treated of, p. 194, 195.

wherein the gathering of the people is to him; the ſoul, in coming to him, receives firſt the perſon, and then the portion; even as God gives Chriſt, and then with him all things, Rom. viii. 32. The people gather to him in a day of power, firſt, as JESUS, and then, as a LORD; firſt, for JUSTIFICATION, and then, for SANCTIFICATION*. Legal adventures invert this goſpel-order, ſeeking ſanctification firſt, that upon that bottom it may build its juſtification; *Seeking righteouſneſs, as it were, by the works of the law;* Rom. ix. 32. And however confuſed and indiſtinct the true believer's faith may be, in his firſt believing, yet repeated acts of faith may afterwards make it more and more evident to him; that right believing is in the foreſaid goſpel-order.—There is a *goſpel-warrant*, upon which this gathering proceeds; they that gather to Shiloh act warrantably, upon the warrant of an objective ſufficiency: there is a ſufficient Chriſt preſented. O the ſufficiency of his perſon; being God-man in one perſon! the ſufficiency of his offices and commiſſion, being ſealed of God to be a Surety, a Saviour, a Prophet, a Prieſt, and King! the ſufficiency of his righteouſneſs, his doing and dying, his obedience and ſatisfaction! the ſufficiency of his power, as being able to ſave to the uttermoſt! the ſufficiency of his will, while he proclaims his *good-will towards men*; and that *God is in Chriſt reconciling the world to himſelf!* They gather upon the warrant of a general goſpel-diſpenſation of grace through Chriſt, in the external revelation of the word, where the elect are not characteriſed more than others, but life and ſalvation through Chriſt is held out to ſinners of mankind, without diſtinction of nation, ſtate, or condition; and ſo in an indefinite way. Thus run all the promiſes, except theſe that are made to believers, or ſuch as have grace already: to them indeed the promiſes are definite; ſo alſo they are definite to the elect, in the decree of heaven; but in the external diſpenſation of the goſpel, they are indefinite and general, ſaying, *To you belongs the covenants and the promiſes*, Rom. ix. 4. And as the promiſe is indefinite, ſo the call is univerſal, whether by exhortations, invitations, intreaties, counſels, or commands, to all and every one, to come and receive Chriſt, and all his ſure mercies, *freely*, Iſa. lv. 1. And upon theſe goſpel-warrants do the people gather to Shiloh. In a word, the whole covenant, and all the promiſes of it, are held forth to all the people, that they may gather to it; *I will give thee for a covenant of the people*, Iſa. xlii. 6. Hence we are ſaid, *to receive the promiſe through faith*, Gal. iii. 14.; *to be perſuaded of them, and embrace them*, Heb. xi. 13: and the faith we are called to, is ſaid to be a *receiving of the word*, Acts ii. 41.; a *taking hold of his covenant*, Iſa. lvi. 4.; a *believing of the teſtimony*, 2 Theſſ. i. 10. Chriſt cannot be received, but as he is offered; he is not offered to us, but in a word, a promiſe, a teſtimony: hence the ſubſtantial act of faith being an aſſent, there muſt be a word, promiſe, or teſtimony, for faith's immediate object, wherein we ſee and receive Chriſt: if a man would ſee his ſhadow in a glaſs, he firſt looks to the glaſs, and through it ſees his own ſhadow, or image; the glaſs is the immediate object, to which his ſight is directed: ſo, in order to our ſeeing of Chriſt, the glaſs of the goſpel-promiſe is ſet before us. Thus a diſplayed covenant of grace, as ſtanding faſt in Chriſt, ſeems to be the warrant for the people gathering to Shiloh, Jer. l. 5. *Come and let us join ourſelves to the Lord, in a perpetual covenant* (ſays our tranſlation) *that ſhall not be forgotten:* I know this is viewed, by ſome, in another ſenſe, with reference to our covenanting; but I think the original reading that others notice is very pleaſant and evangelical; for it may be read, *Come and let us join ourſelves to the Lord, the perpetual covenant ſhall not be forgotten:* q. d. Come and let us gather together unto Shiloh; why, the everlaſting covenant, that ſtands faſt in him, who is the all of the covenant, ſhall never be forgotten. And ſo it may be viewed, as an encouragement of faith, and reaſon for the gathering of the people to him: behold he is given for a covenant of the people, and this perpetual covenant ſhall not be forgotten.——Thus they are made to act evangelically.

5. In gathering to Shiloh, the people that are brought to him are made to act *cordially* and *ſpontaneouſly*, with heart and will; yea, with a thouſand good-wills; *O take my heart*, ſays the man in the day of power; *take it, and a thouſand bleſſings with it.* It is true, there is no gathering, no approaching to him, without a draught of omnipotency; yet there is no violence in it, no force or compulſion, but when power comes, it takes away the backwardneſs and unwillingneſs; *Thy people ſhall be willingneſſes*, Pſal. cx. 3. Never did a mariner draw near to a ſhore with better will after ſhipwreck, than the ſoul comes to Chriſt, in the day of power: the perſon being drawn, yields neceſſarily and willingly both: *Draw me, we will run after thee*; DRAW ME, there is the almighty power exerted, in its irreſiſtible operation; WE WILL RUN, there is the voluntary motion of the ſoul. So that this gathering does not deſtroy, but eſtabliſh the liberty of the will of the rational agent. Reaſon is not hoodwinked; the perſon approaches to a God in Chriſt, upon the moſt rational grounds, ſeeing and apprehending his miſery while far from God, and the happineſs of nearneſs to him in Chriſt. And this gathering is as cordial as it is voluntary; as the will is inclined, ſo the heart is inflamed. Hypocrites may gather to ordinances, and gather to a communion-table with the outward man; they may *draw near to God with the mouth*, and *honour him with the lip*, while *the heart is removed far from him:* this is what God complains of, *Their heart is far from me.* But what do I regard a gathering of dead corpſes about my table and ordinances, a gathering of bodies, while there is no gathering of hearts? But in this gracious gathering, the language of the ſoul is, O many a time I have given my heart away to the devil; I gave my heart and affections away to luſts; I gave my heart away to the world; and now, ſhall I give Chriſt leſs than I gave them? It will be a miracle if he accept of it, after my manifold departures; but, O if I had as many ſouls as I had ſins, I would give them to him! O if I could believe in him with the whole heart, pray to him with the whole heart, ſerve him with the whole heart; and that all my affections, that have been ſtruggling among the creatures, may be gathered to him, and centred in him! Yea, in the day of power, a man finds himſelf ſo willingly and freely to come to Chriſt, that he is rolled upon him, as if he were carried on a wave of the ſea, or rather in a chariot

* See this important point of doctrine copiouſly handled, p. 197, 198, 206,—209.

chariot paved with love: formerly he found believing hard; yea, that it was impoſſible for him to come to Chriſt: but now he finds it impoſſible for him to ſtay away from Chriſt. Believing is ſo ſweet and eaſy then, that, as if he had wings, he *flees for refuge to the hope ſet before him*, Heb. vi. 18. Though, as a great divine, [*viz.* Dr. Owen] expreſſes it, "Faith is in "the underſtanding, in reſpect of its being "and ſubſiſtence; yet it is in the will and "heart, in reſpect of its effectual working. As "to its eſſence, it lies in aſſent, but the ſaving "quality of this aſſent is, that it is cordial; and "it is not true faith, if it be not a cordial aſſent "to God's teſtimony concerning Chriſt." And indeed there is a great difference betwixt a dead aſſent, and a cordial hearty aſſent to any truth: "Suppoſe, ſays one, you were in a fo-"reign land, and that you got a ſure account, "that the Turks have got a victory over the "Perſians; and at the ſame time you hear, that "your beloved ſpouſe is recovered of a dan-"gerous diſeaſe, that all your family is well, "and your affairs proſper: there is a great "difference betwixt the way of aſſenting to "theſe two; you believe the former, but it "hath no impreſſion on your heart, it is only "a naked, heartleſs, unconcerned aſſent; but "you would believe the other cordially and "gladly, becauſe you are much concerned "therein: hence you would welcome the meſ-"ſenger." Thus the goſpel is not only a *faithful ſaying*, but *worthy of all acceptation:* and in gathering to Chriſt, in the day of power, the ſoul acts cordially.

6. In this gathering of the people to Shiloh, they are made to act *humbly* and *reverentially*: the man comes with a *what am I? and what is my father's houſe? Behold I am vile!* and if the Lord ſhall have mercy on me, it is well; grace ſhall have the glory: but if not, I may even preach his righteouſneſs in hell, and declare he never wronged me; he is a juſt God. O the ſoul acts *humbly*, in the day of powerful gathering; *That thou mayeſt remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth, becauſe of thy ſhame, when I am pacified towards thee for all that thou haſt done*, Ezek. xvi. 63. O but a ſoul, convinced of its own unworthineſs, and deſert of hell, and that ſcarce can expect any thing but utter damnation; how does the firſt dawning of mercy melt and humble it! O whence is this, to ſuch a worm as I! He ſtands behind Chriſt weeping, and waſhing his feet with tears. When one of the firſt works of the Spirit in converſion, is, to give the ſoul a light in its hand, to go down into the dark cellars of his heart, and make diſcoveries, ſo as he ſtands amazed, trembling at the ſight of himſelf; and the next work of the Spirit, is, to lead him to the lightſom chamber of the King of glory, to bring him from darkneſs to light: O how is he melted with a ſenſe of mercy, and humbled with a ſenſe of his own monſtrous vileneſs! *Now mine eyes ſee thee; wherefore I abhor myſelf.* Oh! in ſuch a day, the man ſees his heart vile, his lips vile, his practice vile, his righteouſneſs vile and filthy rags; he ſees in his boſom, as it were, an hell of devils and unclean ſpirits; that when he thinks on himſelf, it makes him loath and ſcunner, as it were, like a man ready to bock or vomit, when he ſees ſome filthy naſty thing, eſpecially among his meat; or as a man's fleſh will creep, when he ſees ſome venomous toad or viper: ſo it is with theſe, that ſee themſelves in the Lord's light, in the day of their gathering to Shiloh. They that were never humbled, were never gathered; and they that have been deeply humbled, have come to God with ropes about their necks, as worthy to be caſt over the gibbet, and hanged over the fire of God's everlaſting vengeance: they have been humbled to the duſt; yea, humbled to nothing before the Lord; and to a thouſand times leſs and worſe than nothing; yea, they cannot ſee ſuch vile monſters among all the devils in hell as themſelves; they come therefore with humility, reverence, and godly fear.

7. In this gathering of the people to Shiloh, under the influence of gathering power and grace, they are made to act *boldly*, though humbly; Heb. iv. 16. *Let us come boldly to the throne of grace*, Heb. x. 19. *We have boldneſs to enter into the holieſt by the blood of Jeſus.* Eph. iii. 12. *In whom we have boldneſs, and acceſs with confidence, by the faith of him.* Here is the boldneſs of faith, in oppoſition to the boldneſs of preſumption. Bold faith comes walking on a ſea of blood, or rather upon the red and white pavement of the active and paſſive obedience of Chriſt. This boldneſs of faith's approach to a God in Chriſt is remarkable for ſeveral things.—It is remarkable for the *vehemency*, that is ſometimes in it: O how vehemently does the ſoul act, when it is laying ſiege to heaven, by the prayer of faith and importunate ſupplication, crying, *Lord, I believe, help my unbelief; Lord, increaſe my faith;* Lord, give a drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem! O for a drop of the precious blood of the Lamb! O man, woman, where are the bed-ſides, and ſecret corners, that can bear witneſs to your beſieging heaven with your vehement cries?—It is remarkable for the *violence* that is in it; *The kingdom of heaven ſuffers violence, and the violent take it by force.* The man acts, as it were, violently; *If I periſh, I periſh;* at Chriſt I muſt be. It acts in a manner wilfully; *Though he ſlay me, yet will I truſt in him: I will not let thee go, except thou bleſs me.* The ſoul, as it were, violently caſts itſelf upon the free grace and faithfulneſs of God, in the greateſt diſtreſs; and here it lies, as it were, at anchor in ſuch ſtormy days, Heb. vi. 19.—It is remarkable for the *confidence* that is in it: it hath the confidence to give God a teſtimonial, as it were; when faith is acted, not only does God give the man a teſtimonial, Heb. xi. 5, 6. *Enoch had this teſtimony, that he pleaſed God; but without faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe him;* but what is yet more ſtrange, faith not only gets a teſtimonial from God, but gives a teſtimonial to him, John iii. 33. *He that hath received his teſtimony, hath ſet to his ſeal that God is true.* Here is the confidence and aſſurance of faith; it acts upon an infallible teſtimony, the divine veracity and faithfulneſs; a *thus ſaith the Lord*, is the firm foundation, upon which faith is built. It is a receiving the record of God: and all the acts of faith, without this, are but as ſo many arrows ſhot at random in the open air. Many a confident addreſs does faith make; it ventures to go as far forward as *the holy of holies, by the blood of Jeſus;* it ventures the ſoul upon the blood of the Son of God, and upon the promiſe of a God in Chriſt: here is the boldneſs of faith. To gather in to Shiloh, and believe in him, is in effect to ſay, I adventure my ſoul

upon

upon nothing in the world, but upon the promiſe of a God, that I have provoked, and been an enemy to all my days; I have nothing, but the word of this God; and yet I muſt adventure upon it, even my everlaſting ALL. It is an adventuring act, like Peter upon the boiſterous water, with this in his mouth and heart, *Maſter, ſave me.* To venture upon the promiſe of a provoked God, and to believe him to be a *God in Chriſt reconciled*, according to his word, upon the account of the *ranſom he hath found out*, and the *propitiation he hath ſet forth:* here is the boldneſs of faith.—And again, it is remarkable for its *reſoluteneſs:* the perſon, like the woman with the bloody iſſue, preſſes reſolutely through crouds of devils and luſts; and with an irreſiſtible intenſeneſs of ſoul, forces a paſſage through all obſtructions, to get a touch of the ſceptre of King Jeſus. We are called to *come with full aſſurance of faith*, with an holy reſolution and courage. When a poor trembling Roman approached the emperor Auguſtus, he was in ſome fear; "What, ſays the emperor, "take you me for an elephant that will tear "you?" So we ſhould come with boldneſs to Chriſt. He encourages the worſt of ſinners; he hath given his word for it, which is as firm as the pillars of heaven and earth, and ſtable like mountains of braſs, that *him that cometh he will in no wiſe caſt out*: when he comes at firſt, he will not caſt him out; when he comes again afterwards, he will not caſt him out; he will not caſt out the vileſt and moſt deſperate ſinner that comes; he will not caſt him out of his favour now; he will not caſt him out of heaven at laſt: no, no; *He will in no wiſe caſt him out.* We may gather to Shiloh, and come with the greateſt boldneſs; and welcome, welcome, welcome ſhall we be for ever.—In a word, this boldneſs is remarkable for the *ſolemnity* that is in it, it is a ſolemn gathering: the people, that gather to Shiloh, come to him with a *behold*, Jer. iii. 22. *Behold, we come unto thee; for thou art the Lord our God.* The heart goes out with ſome kind of eminency and ſolemnity: *Behold we come;* let heaven and earth be witneſſes: we take inſtruments, as it were, in every angel's hand, in every creature's hand, in every ſpire of graſs's hand, that we come back to a God in Chriſt: we are ſatisfied the whole univerſe atteſt, and behold what we are going to do. Not that the believer loves to blaze abroad his religion indecently; no, no; it is eſpecially a ſilent, ſecret, heart-gathering, and ſoul-approach to Shiloh: but they are ſo far from being aſhamed of the match, and ſo well-pleaſed are they with it, that they are content it be regiſtrate in heaven, and that the whole creation atteſt it; *Behold we come!* The man acts with a ſolemn boldneſs.

8. In this gathering of the people to Shiloh, they that are under the conduct of gathering grace and power, are made to act *regularly:* no wonder, for in gathering to Shiloh, *their footſteps are ordered by the Lord*, and according to his word, the unerring rule of faith and manners. It is in many reſpects a regular addreſs and approach: and here I ſhall name ſome other particulars, which I ſuppoſe may be included in the regularity of this approach.

(1.) When there is a gathering to Shiloh, the regular approach and addreſs to him is made *penitentially:* and faith in its addreſſes to him acts penitentially, mournfully, and tenderly; *Going and weeping they ſhall go, and ſeek the Lord their God: they ſhall aſk the way to Zion, with their faces thitherward, ſaying, Come, and let us join ourſelves to the Lord*, Jer. l. 4, 5. *Going and weeping*, this manner of gathering is not inconſiſtent with the cordial and chearful acting, that I ſpoke of already; for the tears of goſpel repentance are tears of joy: it is ſaid of the new-teſtament believers, Iſa. xxxv. 10. *The ranſomed of the Lord ſhall return, and come to Zion with ſongs, and everlaſting joy upon their heads: they ſhall obtain joy and gladneſs, and ſorrow and ſighing ſhall flee away.* Though this will not take place in its perfection but in heaven, yet it hath its begun accompliſhment in all believers that are gathered in to Shiloh; *they obtain joy and gladneſs*, and LEGAL *ſorrow and ſighing do flee away;* for, according to the meaſure of their faith in Chriſt, *they have joy and peace in believing:* yea, in him believing, *they rejoice, with joy unſpeakable, and full of glory.* But goſpel-ſorrow, and godly-ſorrow does not marr the muſic in this joyful ſong; for, while *they look on him, whom they have pierced, and mourn*, Zech. xii. 10. and ſee him *wounded for their ſins*, Iſa. lv. 5. they ſee, at the ſame time, the blood iſſuing out at theſe wounds, to be juſtice-ſatisfying blood, wrath-appeaſing blood, hell-quenching blood, and heaven-purchaſing blood; hence a ſweet mixture of joy and ſorrow both. Theſe ſeem to be joined together; *They ſhall come with weeping, and with ſupplications will I lead them*, Jer. xxxi. 9. It may be rendered, as you may ſee, in the margin of ſome of your Bibles, *with* FAVOURS *will I lead them.* As the ſenſe of their own ſins and ingratitude makes them come with weeping; ſo, at the ſame time, the ſenſe of God's favours, and kindneſs in Chriſt, makes them come with rejoicing; for, with loving-kindneſs does he draw them, and with favours does he lead them. O! when he favours ſuch a guilty ſinner with a pardon, ſuch a filthy ſinner with a laver of blood, ſuch a naked ſinner with a robe of righteouſneſs, ſuch a black ſinner with a beautiful ornament, ſuch a hell-deſerving ſinner with a promiſe of glory, ſuch a backſliding profligate with a merciful viſit or return, and ſuch a prodigal wretch with a compaſſionate embracement; and thus with favours does lead them: O then it is hard to tell, whether the voice of joy, or the voice of weeping in the ſoul be loudeſt. But as we render it alſo, it is moſt expreſſive of this penitential addreſs, in gathering to Shiloh; *With weeping, and with ſupplications doth he lead them.* Indeed faith's approach is begun, maintained, and nouriſhed, by prayer and ſupplication, ſaying, *Lord, I believe, help my unbelief; Lord, increaſe our faith.* There are ſome who have a preſumptuous faith, that can believe when they will, without praying down the Spirit of faith from God; as they can eat and drink, and ſleep, and walk, and talk, though they pray not for ſtrength to do theſe things; ſo they can exerciſe their natural preſumptuous faith, ſaying, *I truſt in God's mercy;* and their falſe repentance, ſaying, *God forgive me, I am a great ſinner:* they can believe and repent, without prayer and ſupplication for grace and ſtrength to do ſo. But true grace, true faith and repentance is attained and maintained, in a way of ſupplication: and hence true faith does increaſe and decreaſe, according to the increaſe and decreaſe of the Spirit of prayer and ſupplication. If it be not ſo with you, man,

man, know it, that though your falſe faith may give you ſome falſe peace for a while, yet when death and eternity ſtare you in the face, then the rottenneſs of your faith will be diſcovered; *The hope of the hypocrite will periſh.* They that gather to Shiloh, they come *with weeping, and with ſupplication doth he lead them.*

I am not here to enter upon the diſpute concerning the *priority* of *faith* to *repentence*, in their natural order, and in their acting and exerciſe; it is well if you know both, whether you know the order or not: only, if *whatſoever is not of faith is ſin*, you may gueſs what ſort of repentance it is that is not of faith: and when the word of God ſpeaks any where of the proper order, let your experience, conſonant to the word, witneſs, and you will find, that ſuch as the faith is, ſuch will the repentance be. Legal faith works legal repentance; goſpel faith, goſpel repentance; true faith, true repentance. Thus, when the people of Niniveh believed God, then *they proclaimed a faſt*, and *put on ſackcloth*, Jon. iii. 5.: when they believed his threatening, and yet that he was not irreconcileable, nor implacable, then *they repented.* Thus, when a man believes, and apprehends that *God is pacified towards him*, then he is *confounded and aſhamed*, Ezek. xvi. 63. When you have harſh thoughts of God, and no hope of favour at his hand, I ſuppoſe then you will find your heart hard like a ſtone, and inflexible; but when you get kindly thoughts of God, and apprehenſion of his mercy and good-will, and love to you in Chriſt, then I imagine you will find joyful meltings, and goſpel ſorrow. O the fire of God's love melts the ſoul! And the hardneſs and impenitency is healed, when the *Sun of righteouſneſs ariſes with healing under his wings*, Mal. iv. 2. The qualities of this penitential approach you may ſee, 2 Cor. vii. 11. *For behold, this ſelf-ſame thing that ye ſorrowed after a godly ſort, what carefulneſs it wrought in you; yea, what clearing of yourſelves; yea, what indignation; yea, what fear; yea, what vehement deſire; yea, what zeal; yea, what revenge.* And this penitential acting of faith runs through the whole of the believer's life, in an univerſal tenderneſs of diſpoſition and deportment, according to the meaſure of faith. And there are ſix tender things in it, which the believer hath. 1. He hath a tender *heart*, called a *broken and contrite heart;* broken for ſin, and from ſin: Joſiah his heart was tender. 2. A tender *conſcience;* ſome have a *conſcience ſeared as with a hot iron*, and that is a ſilent conſcience: but the penitent hath a ſmitten conſcience; as David's *heart ſmote him, when he cut off the lop of Saul's garment.* 3. A tender *eye; They ſhall look on him whom they have pierced, and mourn: Rivers of tears run down their eyes*, becauſe of their own ſins, and the ſins of others, who break God's law. 4. A tender *ear*, which being circumciſed, does hear and fear; *To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite heart, and trembles at my word.* 5. A tender *lip* or *tongue*, that dare not lie, nor ſpeak prophanely: *I ſaid, I will take heed to my ways, that I ſin not with my tongue.* And, 6. A tender *hand*, that dares not touch the garments ſpoted with the fleſh, but ſtudies to ſhun all appearances of evil; or, if you will, you may add, 7. That he hath a tender *foot*, ſaying, with Hezekiah, *I will go ſoftly all my years in the bitterneſs of my ſoul.* And this leads to another quality of this regular approach.

(2.) When there is a gathering to Shiloh, the regular approach and addreſs to him is made *obedientially*, as well as penitentially: it is an obediential gathering. And as faith acts penitentially, ſo it acts obedientially; for it *works by love*, Gal. v. 6.; it *purifies the heart*, Acts xv. 9.; and the man that hath it *purifies himſelf, even as God is pure*, 1 John iii. 3. It ſtirs up to new obedience; for, *Faith without works is dead*, Jam. ii. 20, 26. Wherever it is, it is ſtill working, and it can no more be idle than the fire can be. It is true, *We are juſtified by faith, without works*, as the apoſtle ſays; that is, without the cauſality of works, without the conditionality of works, without the inſtrumentality of works, and without the influence of works upon our juſtification; but not without the preſence of works: for juſtifying faith is a ſanctifying thing, and natively works, as the fire natively burns. Common faith is a dead, uſeleſs faith, making no change or alteration on the ſoul where it is; but ſaving faith acts always obedientially: hence you read of the *obedience of faith*, Rom. xvi. 26.; importing, both that faith acts in obedience to the divine call at firſt, and that it influences the ſoul to all the acts of goſpel-obedience afterwards. O, ſays the returning ſinner, that is making this obediential addreſs to a God in Chriſt, I have been a fugitive ſervant to the moſt glorious Lord and Maſter; I have deſerted his ſervice, and denied my obedience; but now, Lord, nail my ear to the door-poſt, that I may ſerve thee for ever; nail my heart to thy ſervice, that no trouble, temptation, devil, or deſertion may drive me away from thee: nail my eyes to thy ſervice, that I may never look upon vanity; nail my hands to thy ſervice, that I may never do an ill turn; nail my feet to thy way, that I may never turn aſide from thee: let all the faculties of my ſoul be nailed to thy ſervice and obedience.

(3.) When there is a gathering to Shiloh, the regular addreſs to him is made *ſpeedily:* O the poor ſoul, that ſees itſelf ready to drop into hell, how ſpeedily, in the day of power, does it flee unto Chriſt! *I flee to thee to hide me*, ſays the Pſalmiſt: the flight of faith is very quick, quick and ſwift as lightning, that goes from the one end of heaven to the other in an inſtant; ſo when the ſoul is on wing, under the influence of the Spirit of faith, it can flee from earth to heaven in a moment. But this ſpeedy gathering, I underſtand eſpecially in oppoſition to delays, which are dangerous in religion: to delay coming to Chriſt one half-hour, is dangerous exceedingly; for, if you die within that half-hour, you are undone to eternity. Now, in a day of powerful gathering, the ſoul makes no longer delay; but is in an holy haſte; *I made haſte and delayed not to keep thy righteous judgments.* The man is made to flee with ſpeed, and to run with haſte out of Sodom.

(4.) When there is a gathering to Shiloh, the regular approach and addreſs to him is made *deliberately;* though it is with ſpeed, yet it is with deliberation: though none can believe too ſoon by a ſaving faith, yet ſome believe too ſoon by a temporary faith, never having weighed matters in the balance of the ſanctuary. The true approacher puts the matter in a fair balance: he puts the diſadvantages in one ſcale, ſaying, What will be my fare, if I come not to Chriſt? Why, *they that are far from him*

him ſhall periſh; he puts the advantages in another ſcale, and comes at length to that concluſion, Pſal. lxxiii. 28. *It is good for me to draw near to God.* O! of all gatherings, the gathering to Shiloh is beſt: *To whom ſhall I go? he hath the words of eternal life.* The man is not affected only with a tranſient flaſh; no, by no means: he ſees the wicked oft in proſperity, and the godly in adverſity; he ſees the large and allurring offers that ſin, Satan, and the world make; and yet after all, he deliberately affirms, *It is good for me to draw near to God and Chriſt:* Let others ſay, as Pſal. iv. 6. *Who will ſhew us any good?* But my *ſay* ſhall be, *Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance on me.*

(5.) When there is a gathering to Shiloh, the regular approach and addreſs is made *chaſtly* and *uprightly:* the ſoul views the ſaying, that *Chriſt came to ſave ſinners from ſin and wrath,* not only as a *faithful ſaying,* but as *worthy of all acceptation;* becauſe the beauty of Chriſt is diſcovered. Some have their reaſon conquered, but not their love; and, therefore, they come to Chriſt feignedly, and not with the whole heart: their judgment draws one way, and their affections another; for their judgment is gained, but not their affections: as if one ſhould marry a woman, not becauſe of her beauty, but becauſe of her patrimony; not from a regard to her perſon, but love to her portion. Some take on with Chriſt, and take hold of the ſkirt of this Jew, who yet ſee *no form or comelineſs in him, for which he ſhould be deſired.* But as it is ſaid, *The upright love thee;* ſo they that in gathering to him act chaſtly and uprightly, they come to him out of pure love, not for ſervile ends; not to gratify a natural conſcience, not for fear of hell only, but from a great love to him, and a juſt eſteem of him, and a ſtrong deſire of fellowſhip with him. The man is content to come to Chriſt on mount Calvary, as well as on mount Tabor; when going to Golgotha in ignominy, as well as when riding to Jeruſalem in triumph: he cleaves to him, when people cry, *Away with him, away with him; crucify him;* as well as when they cry, *Hoſanna to the ſon of David.* He loves him when lying in the grave, as well as when mounted on a throne. The chaſte and upright comer cleaves to him, when kings and princes are againſt him, when laws and governments are againſt him, when potentates and parliaments are againſt him, as well as when they ſeem to be upon his ſide. It is true, indeed, that there are many unchaſte thoughts, and looks, and luſtings after idols in the hearts of true believers, and many defections and declinings may take place; but theſe are wreſtled with and oppoſed by them, and that not only by their light and conſcience, but by their love and affection to the Lord Jeſus, ſaying, *Oh! ſhall I thus requit the Lord?* So that in the main they are upright. But, to the ſame purpoſe,

6. When there is a gathering of the people to Shiloh, the right and regular approach and addreſs to him is made *intirely* and *undividedly.* Falſe and hypocritical comers, they come with a divided heart to a divided Chriſt; but true comers, with a whole heart to a whole Chriſt. The legaliſt would marry Chriſt, while yet his other huſband, the law, is not dead to him, nor he dead to it: but it is an adulterous and unlawful match, to join with another huſband while the firſt is living: hence true believers in Chriſt are ſaid to be *dead to the law by the body of Chriſt, that they might be married to another, even to him who is raiſed from the dead,* Rom. vii. 4. And God throws down the old building, turns him out of that ſhelter, lets him ſee all his legal duties, beſt performances, and moſt glaring graces, are but fig-leaves, inſufficient to cover his nakedneſs; and diſcovers the neceſſity, excellency, and glory of Chriſt's righteouſneſs: and the man ſubmits cordially to it, renouncing all hope and expectation of life, favour, and juſtification by the deeds of the law.—The carnal man would have Chriſt and his luſts too; *But if you ſeek me,* ſays Chriſt, *let theſe go their way.* Gathering grace makes the man ſay, *What have I to do any more with idols?*—The covetous man would have Chriſt and the world too: Chriſt ſatisfies his conſcience, and he flies to him for that; the world ſatisfies his heart, and he cleaves to it for that: but in the day of gathering power, the emptineſs of the world is diſcovered, and the man *ſells all for the pearl of great price.*

The man that comes to Chriſt, he comes for all theſe four things, 1 Cor. i. 30. for *wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification,* and *redemption:* He comes to him as a *Prophet,* for wiſdom; as a *Prieſt,* for righteouſneſs; as a *King,* for ſanctification; and as his *all in all,* for complete redemption: and he can want none of theſe, becauſe he knows his own fooliſhneſs, guiltineſs, filthineſs, and miſery. The true believer dares not divide righteouſneſs from ſanctification, nor pardon from purity; yea, he comes to Chriſt for remiſſion of ſin for the right end. What is that? namely, that, being freed from the guilt of ſin, he may be freed from the dominion of it. Knowing that *there is forgiveneſs with him, that he may be feared,* he does not believe remiſſion of ſin that he may indulge himſelf in the commiſſion of it; no, no: the blood of Chriſt, that purges the conſcience from the guilt of ſin, does alſo *purge the conſcience from dead works to ſerve the living God,* Heb. ix. 14. They that come to Chriſt regularly then, they come ſo to him for righteouſneſs, that they may have him alſo for ſanctification; otherwiſe the man does not really deſire the favour and enjoyment of God, or to be in friendſhip with him who is a holy God. As the true lover loves him, not only becauſe he is good and merciful, but becauſe he is a pure and holy JESUS; ſo the true believer employs Chriſt for making him holy as well as happy: and hence draws virtue from him for killing of ſin, and quickening the ſoul in the way of duty. And the faith that can never keep you from a ſin, will never keep you out of hell: and the faith that cannot carry you to a duty, will not carry you to heaven. Juſtifying faith is a ſanctifying grace; it improves Chriſt undividedly. It is true, as it ſanctifies it does not juſtify; but that faith that juſtifies, does alſo ſanctify: as the ſun that enlightens hath heat with it; but it is not the heat of the ſun that inlightens, but the light thereof: ſo that faith that juſtifies hath love and ſanctity with it; but it is not the love and ſanctity that juſtifies, but faith as cloſing with Chriſt.

(7.) When there is a gathering of the people to Shiloh, the regular approach and addreſs to him is made *excluſively;* excluding all other Saviours, all other helps, all other props, ſaying, *I will make mention of thy righteouſneſs, and of thine only,*

only, Pſal. lxxi. 16. To depend partly on Chriſt and partly upon our own righteouſneſs, is to ſet one foot upon firm ground, and another upon quick-ſand. If a man ſet one foot upon a rock, and another upon the deep water, and lean to them both with equal weight; yea, if he give any of his weight to the foot that is on the water, he will be ſure to ſink into the deep; ſo here: theſe who rely partly on the merits of Chriſt, and partly upon their own good works for juſtification, will inevitably periſh in the iſſue: therefore, in the day of gathering to Chriſt, the ſoul is brought to ſay, *Surely in the Lord* only *have I righteouſneſs and ſtrength*, Iſa. xlv. 24. Thus Paul excludes the beſt righteouſneſs that ever he had, either before or after converſion, from the matter of his juſtification, Phil. iii. 8, 9. When he compares his beſt righteouſneſs with Chriſt's, he looks upon it as a dunghil, a ſtinging dunghil, where there is no pleaſure; and a ſinking dunghil, where there is no ſtanding. Such is our righteouſneſs, if it be not excluded from our juſtification before God, and acceptance with him. If we go about to eſtabliſh our own righteouſneſs, it ſtinks in the divine noſtrils as dung: and not only ſo, but it is a ſinking ground to ſtand upon, there is no firm footing; the more a man leans to it, the more he ſinks in it. Chriſt's blood is the only ſacrifice of a ſweet ſmelling ſavour to God; every ſacrifice ſtinks, that is not perfumed therewith: Chriſt's righteouſneſs is the only ſure foundation and firm ground for ſtanding on before God. As the way of ſin is a ſinking way, ſo the way of ſelf-righteouſneſs is little better; for the ſin that is in man's beſt righteouſneſs trips up his heels, and lays him in the mire, where he ſinks to hell, if he be not brought to build upon a ſurer ground, and to take a better way.

(8.) When there is a gathering to Shiloh, the regular approach and addreſs to him is made *progreſſively*, as alſo peremptorily and irreverſibly, ſaying, as Pſal. lxxx. 17. *Henceforth we will not go back.* O! after we have taſted of the bitterneſs of ſin, and the bitterneſs of wrath; after the wings of our ſouls have been ſinged with the flames of hell; after the arrows of conviction ſhot out of the bow of omnipotence have pierced our ſouls, ſo as no man, miniſter, or angel, could pull them out; Chriſt did it, with his own hand, and therein manifeſted his powerful grace, as being the *Man of God's right-hand*. Shall we again turn our back upon him? No; *Henceforth*, through grace, *we will not go back*. The true believer comes to Chriſt, ſo as never to part with him, ſaying, as Ruth to Naomi, Ruth i. 16. *Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goeſt, I will go: and where thou lodgeſt, I will lodge; thy people ſhall be my people, and thy God, my God. Nothing ſhall part thee and me.* Yea, the man, having once come to Chriſt, is ſtill coming nearer and nearer to him; *To whom coming as to a living ſtone, ye are built up a ſpiritual houſe*, 1 Pet. ii. 4. The building goes up gradually, and is ſtill going forward. Some profeſſors are like the mill-wheel, it goes round, yet ſtill it ſtands in the ſame place where it was: they go the round of duties, and morning and evening prayers; and attend Sabbath and week-days ſermons, which is well done: but they are at a ſtand; they are the ſame now, that they were ten, twenty years ago, if not more. But, in gathering to Shiloh, the people are made to advance nearer and nearer to heaven, getting more knowledge, more experience, more hatred of ſin, more love and likeneſs to Chriſt. It is true, the ſaints themſelves have their winter-decays, but they have alſo their ſummer-revivings, that ſet them forward again. And thus *the path of the juſt is as the ſhining light, which ſhineth more and more unto a perfect day.*

V. The *fifth* general head propoſed, was, To ſpeak of the *ſpecial ſeaſons*, wherein this gathering of the people to Shiloh does take place. When ſhall this gathering be? Why, in general, *When Shiloh is come*, then ſhall the gathering of the people be to him: and there are two remarkable ſeaſons of his coming, that the text intends, namely, his coming in the *fleſh*, and his coming in the *Spirit*. Now, his coming in the fleſh, I ſpoke of in the explication; and his coming in the Spirit, I ſpoke of, when I ſhewed by what means this gathering is brought about: particularly the gathering wind of the Spirit, when he gathers the dead ſinners, as it were, out of the graves; according to that word, *Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon theſe ſlain that they may live.* Ezek. xxxvii. 9. Chriſt's coming in the fleſh was the beginning, and commencement of the New-Teſtament diſpenſation, which is to laſt till his ſecond coming; and during the whole of that diſpenſation, there will be a gathering of the Gentiles, a gathering of the people to him. Chriſt's coming in the Spirit, is the very efficient cauſe of all the Spiritual and effectual gatherings, that do take place under that diſpenſation; and therefore, his coming in the Spirit, *to convince the world of ſin, righteouſneſs, and judgment*, is promiſed for that end, John xvi. 8. His coming thus is like the gathering ſhower ſpoken of, Pſal. lxxii. 6. *He ſhall come down like rain upon the mowen graſs, as ſhowers that water the earth*; whereupon a gathering enſues, ver. 8. *His kingdom ſhall be from ſea to ſea, and from the river to the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderneſs ſhall bow before him, and his enemies ſhall lick the duſt. The kings of Tarſhiſh and the iſles ſhall bring preſents, the kings of Sheba and Seba ſhall offer gifts; and all nations ſhall ſerve him.* O cry for a gathering ſhower of the Spirit's influences and operations; for there will be no gathering till then. But more particularly, the gathering ſeaſons may be conſidered under a fourfold view. 1. With relation to the *public* and *remarkable* gathering of the *church* in general. 2. With relation to the *initial* gathering of *ſinners* in particular. 3. With relation to the *progreſſive* gathering of *believers*. 4. With relation to the *conſummate* gathering of the *ſaints*.

1*ſt*, The gathering ſeaſons may be conſidered, with relation to the *public* and *remarkable* gathering of the *church* in general. And, there are *four* or *five* ſeaſons, that have been very remarkable, for public and numerous gatherings of the people to Shiloh. As,

1. *Reformation times*, in the church, have been gathering times, under the powerful influence of the Spirit of God accompanying reformation-work, and leading forward thereunto. Thus was it in the days of Hezekiah, when a multitude having deſtroyed the altars of idolatry, and Hezekiah having joined fervent prayers with his reforming meaſures, *The Lord hearkened*

ened to Hezekiah, and healed the people, 2. Chron. xxx. 20. Reforming times have been remarkable gathering times, in Britain and Ireland. The Lord brought goſpel-light very early, particularly into Scotland, by which our fore-fathers were delivered from heatheniſm and paganiſm: and we wanted not ſome goſpel-light, for the ſpace of five hundred years after Chriſt; about which time, popery came to put in its foot among us, when one Palladius was ſent from Rome to corrupt us: and though there was a ſtrenuous oppoſition for ſeveral hundred years after that, againſt the Romiſh rites and hierarchy; yet popiſh darkneſs did gradually overſpread theſe lands, till it came to the greateſt height, in the ſpace of a thouſand years; after which time, to wit, in the fifteenth century, I mean a thouſand five hundred years after Chriſt, which was the reformation period; and now, about two hundred years ago, the Lord was pleaſed to make reformation-light to ariſe by ſtirring up eminent inſtruments to preach the goſpel clearly, and to put their hands zealouſly to reformation-work; eſpecially in Scotland, even to the extirpation of Popery, Prelacy, and Eraſtianiſm, and the ſolemn renunciation thereof, and of all heretical and ſectarian errors, whether in doctrine, worſhip, diſcipline, or government. Then it was, that miniſters were clothed with *righteouſneſs and ſalvation*, and were eminent in their faithfulneſs to God, in his truth and intereſts, and zealous againſt ſin, and all lukewarmneſs in the Lord's cauſe: then it was, that the repreſentative body of the nation put to their hand for the reformation thereof: then it was, that Scotland particularly was famed through the world, under the name of PHILADELPHIA; becauſe of the purity of its reformation, having left all the rags of Popery behind it in the grave, from whence it aroſe; which could not be ſaid of many other churches, particularly of our neighbour church of England: for, as Lazarus came out of the grave, bound hand and foot, and his face bound about with a napkin, ſo was it with England in their firſt reformation. It was indeed like a reſurrection from the grave, in the days of king Edward and queen Elizabeth; but yet they came out of this grave, bound hand and foot with their grave-clothes, bringing many things out with them, which they ſhould have left behind, eſpecially all theſe ceremonies, ſuperſtitions, and modes of worſhip and government, wherein they ſymbolize with the church of Rome, and which they brought along with them, when they left her: theſe grave-clothes they have not caſt off to this day. And, alas! many in Scotland are fond of borrowing from them ſome of their old garments, which ſmell of the priſon of Popery, which they left. But with reſpect to Scotland's reformation-days, as Chriſt, when he aroſe from the dead, left all his linen's and grave-clothes behind him; ſo he helped Scotland, in riſing out of the grave of Popery, to riſe and reform ſo purely, as to leave all the rags of Popery, to be buried in the grave from whence they aroſe. And then in theſe days it was, that the *work of the Lord proſpered*, the goſpel flouriſhed, iniquity was made to ſtop its mouth: our church was glorious to all its beholders, *And terrible to her enemies, as an army with banners*, and multitudes of people were gathered to Shiloh. But, alas! one of the great reaſons why there are ſo few gathering to Shiloh now, is too plainly this, that reformation-work is much at a ſtand, little reformation-zeal and ſpirit among magiſtrates, miniſters, or people, as it is ſaid, Neh. iii. 5. *The nobles of Tekoah did not put their necks to the work of the Lord:* yea, deformity, defilement, corruption, and defection, inſtead of reformation, is too palpable in our day, wherein many pollutions have crept into our doctrine, much defilement into our worſhip, partiality and pithleſneſs into our diſcipline, and tyranny and diſorder in the church-government: manifold incroachments made upon the liberties of the Lord's people, and the privileges of the Lord's houſe, too well known that we need to mention them all; inſomuch, that the very foundations are ready to ſhake, and the garden is much grown over with weeds. Oh! cry for the return of reformation-days!! for till then, there is but little hope of remarkable gathering of the people to Shiloh. And as Chriſt commanded his diſciples to unbind Lazarus, when he was raiſed out of the grave, and to take away his grave-cloaths; ſo, ſeek and earneſtly intreat that the Lord may come and take away whatever is oppoſite to the doctrine, worſhip, diſcipline, and government of his houſe, and to the perfecting of the work of reformation, and whatever tends to hinder it. But, again,

2. *Covenanting times*, in the church, have been gathering times; as you may ſee in the time of Joſiah, 2 Kings xxiii. 3. when the *people made a covenant,—to walk after the Lord, and to keep his commandments, and his teſtimonies and his ſtatutes, with all their heart and ſoul,—and all the people ſtood to the covenant*, Thus it was with theſe lands, when, after the reformation, all ranks were brought into holy and ſolemn covenants with God: in thoſe days the Lord delighted in us, and our *land was married to him*; when, with uplifted hands, we ſwore allegiance to him, and abjured all rivals with him in his government. Never a nation was more ſolemnly bound to the Lord by national covenants, in the fifteenth century, the eightieth and eighty-firſt years thereof; and renewed again and again in the ſixteenth century, the thirty-eight and thirty-ninth years thereof, and in latter times alſo; together with the Solemn-league afterwards, for furthering the ends, deſigns, and obligations of the former. I know indeed ſome diſpute, and deny the obligation of theſe covenants upon poſterity: but as good Joſiah brought back the people, and *cauſed them to ſtand to the covenant of their fathers*, 2 Chron. xxxiv. 32.; ſo we find, that religious covenants, in ſcripture, comprehend abſent, as well as preſent; and poſterity to come, as well as the covenanting forefathers, Deut. xxix. 14, 15, 22, 24, 25. Now, our Solemn Covenants, that our forefathers entred into, being nothing but a ſuperadded, and accumulative obligation, to what we were previouſly bound to by the word of God, they cannot but ſtand binding upon us their poſterity. But as theſe covenanting days were gathering days, wherein many flocked in to Shiloh, and wherein God appended his ſeal to the covenanted work of reformation, by a numerous acceſſion of ſouls to the Meſſias, under the influence of the powerful Spirit of God, bleſſing his word and ordinances to their converſion; ſo our covenant-breaking days, on the other hand, are far from being gathering days.

days. Little wonder, when we have occaſion to lament, that our covenant hath been broken, burnt, and buried! and, if our covenant-breaking be not duly lamented, and covenanted reformation revived, we have ground to expect the *Lord will ſend a ſword*, a dreadful judgment, *to avenge the quarrel of his covenant*. Till there be a remarkable reviving hereof, we can hardly expect a remarkable gathering of the people to Shiloh.

3. *Confeſſing times*, in the church, have been gathering times; times of humble acknowledging of perſonal and national guilt, as you ſee, Ezra viii. 23. and ix. 7. and downwards, compared with chap. x. 1, 2, 3. No doubt, there were better days of the goſpel, in reſpect of the power thereof, with us than now, when there was a public and ſolemn acknowledgement of public ſins and breaches of the Covenant; ſuch as you have an account of in the ordinary Confeſſions of Faith among your hands. But in our days, we ſeem to be ſo far from taking with our public ſins and defections, that we are rather upon the ſelf-juſtifying lay, as if we had done nothing amiſs, and as if matters had never been better with us. May we not hereupon conclude, that the Lord is ſpeaking to us, as he did of old to Judah, Jer. ii. 34, 35. *Behold I will plead with thee, becauſe thou ſayeſt, I have not ſinned?* While our mother-church is not duly taking with her ſin, how can we expect a remarkable gathering of her children to Shiloh? Whereas, if our uncircumciſed hearts were humbled, and that we were *confeſſing our iniquities*, and the *iniquities of our fathers*, then we might expect the Lord would yet *remember his covenant*, and *heal our land*, as it is, Lev. xxvi. 40, 41, 42. Not that public reformings, covenantings, and confeſſings have any meritorious influence upon, or are procuring cauſes of remarkable gatherings unto Shiloh; only in this method and order he uſes to work, preparing the way of the people, Iſa. lvii. 14. and lxii. 10. He *gathers out the ſtones, lifts up a ſtandard for the people*, and then follows the gathering of the people to him: therefore, while none of theſe national revivings, or public acknowledgments of our own and our forefathers iniquities, appear; little wonder, that, inſtead of a gathering of the people to Shiloh, we ſee clouds gathering in our ſky, and more and more national bondage and thraldom taking place: *We walk contrary to God, and God walks contrary to us, and will puniſh ſeven times more for our iniquities*. Therefore, if you would wiſh for a remarkable gathering, O cry for a remarkable outpouring of the Spirit of repentance and reformation, whereof there is ſo little to be ſeen in church or ſtate in our day. O ſeek for a return of his departed glory, and that our land may not be called LO-AMMI and LO-RUHAMAH, as it is ſaid, Hoſ. i. 6, 9. but rather AMMI and RUHAMAH, Hoſ. ii. 1. and that we may be called HEPHZI-BAH and BEULAH, Iſa. lxii. 4. that the Lord may yet delight in us, and our land may yet again be married; ſo that every one may not only call him BAALI, but ISHI *, Hoſ. ii. 16. But,

4. *Suffering* and *contending times* in the church have been remarkable gathering times. It was in times of perſecution and ſuffering of the church, that ſuch great numbers of people were converted and gathered in to Chriſt in the primitive ages, as you ſee, Acts iv. 4. Times of *contending for the faith* have been times of conveening to Chriſt, the glorious object of faith: yea, ſcattering times have been gathering times, when the Lord hath ſcattered his ſervants abroad, that, by the preaching of the word in every airth to which they were ſcattered, there might be a gathering of the people to Shiloh, as you ſee it was, Acts viii. 4. and particularly, Acts xi. 19, 20, 21. Thus the Jewiſh perſecution firſt, and then the primitive Pagan perſecution next; eſpecially the ſecond under Domitian, which was about the ſixty-ninth year of Chriſt; and the ninth and tenth under Aurelius and Diocleſian, as hiſtorians relate, were the very means of bringing the goſpel firſt to Scotland, while eminent men fled from theſe dreadful tempeſts unto this land, and ſo planted the goſpel here. Suffering times, perſecuting times, and hiding times, have been gathering times in the church. Some old perſons here, perhaps, have been witneſſes to days of power in the time of perſecution, in the late ſuffering times in Scotland. Our fathers have told us, how the Lord appeared for them and with them, when men were appearing moſt bloodily againſt them: they have heard the beſt news from heaven, when they heard the worſt from earth. God many times ſmiles moſt upon his church, when the world frowns moſt againſt them: when the cauſe and truths of Chriſt are moſt oppoſed by men, God uſually puts the moſt remarkable ſeal to them upon the hearts of many. Some can ſay, When they were contending moſt for the truth, then the Lord hath made the truth moſt ſweet and refreſhful to themſelves, and moſt powerful and efficacious to others. Even a time of bonds hath been a time of begetting children to God; *Mind Oneſimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds*, ſays Paul, in the 10th verſe of his epiſtle to Philemon. Indeed, the Lord's gathering time is not confined to ſuffering periods of the church; for, *Glorious things are ſpoken of Zion the city of God*, even at other times, *that this man and that man was born there*; and I know that it can be ſaid of our Zion, without looking many years back, that this man and that man, this woman and that woman was born there. But I ſpeak of remarkable gatherings, where it can be ſaid, not only *this man* and *that man*, but *this multitude* and *that multitude* was born there: and, O for a time of the gathering of multitudes to Chriſt! Perhaps ſad and ſuffering days muſt come again before we have ſuch gathering days; and there may be terrible ſufferings before there be remarkable gatherings; for, he *whoſe fan is in his hand*, does uſually *purge his floor*, before he *gather in his wheat*, Mat. iii. 12.

But as the day of calamity in itſelf is not to be deſired; ſo, that we may not be hopeleſs in the mean time, I would further tell you, that the church's backſliding times have been God's gathering times, according to Jer. iii. 14. *Turn, O backſliding children, ſays the Lord; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and bring you to Zion.* There is a call in a backſliding time; but ſee ver. 22. where there is not only a gathering call, but a gathering power accompanying the call, even at

* LO-AMMI; i. e. *Not my people.* LO-RUHAMAH; i. e. *Not having obtained mercy.* — AMMI; i. e. *My people.* RUHAMAH; i. e. *Having obtained mercy.* — HEPHZI-BAH; i. e. *My delight is in her.* BEULAH; i. e. *Married.* — BAALI; i. e. *My Lord.* ISHI; i. e. *My huſband.*

at a time wherein they had *perverted their ways, and forgotten the Lord their God: Return, ye backſliding children, and I will heal your backſlidings*; and then it follows, *Behold we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God.* Behold a gathering of the people unto Shiloh in a backſliding time! O then, let backſliding Scotland ſay, *Behold we come!* O that the hearts of hearers were ſaying, *Behold we come!* Oh! there is no national reformation can take place, till there be a perſonal reformation: if perſonal returning to the Lord were general and univerſal, then there would be a national returning. Therefore, if you would wiſh to ſee a national reviving, let every perſon put in for a ſhare of gathering power and grace, ſaying, *Turn me, and I ſhall be turned; draw me, and I ſhall run:* and, under the conduct of drawing power, let us ſay, *Behold we come to thee, for thou art the Lord our God.* Hath your perſonal backſliding, man, woman, been great and grievous? Hath this been your diſeaſe all your days, a backſliding heart, a backſliding nature, a backſliding practice, a bentneſs to backſliding in thought, word, and action? Is that your diſeaſe, that you are a backſliding heifer, a backſliding devil, that, it may be, thinks the diſeaſe is deſperate and incurable? O let me aſſure you, that there is a Healer come here to day, that ſays, *I will heal your backſlidings*; and he will not ſay the thing that he cannot do. And while his mercy is ſaying, *I will heal your backſlidings*, let your heart be ſaying, *Lord, I will come to thee* for that healing, for that is my diſeaſe, and there is none in the world needs it ſo much as I: the church and nation need to have their backſlidings healed; but I am the particular perſon that needs it moſt of all: heal me, and I ſhall be healed; behold, I come to thee for that end. Is your heart ſaying ſo? Then welcome be all comers; welcome, welcome, welcome! *Him that comes, I will in no wiſe caſt out*: nay, he will in no wiſe caſt up your former backſlidings, but heal you, without upbraiding you; for *he gives liberally, and upbraids not. I will heal your backſlidings*: it is ſpoken without limitation, either of former or future backſlidings; and therefore the fear of backſliding again, needs not diſcourage you from coming to him; your former backſlidings will not caſt you out: and though you backſlide again, he will not caſt you off; *He may viſit your iniquity with the rod, but his loving-kindneſs will he not take away*: No; he will in no wiſe caſt you out. Backſlidings ſhall never part him and you, for he will heal your backſlidings; *I will heal your backſlidings*. It hath a reſpect to the future, as well as the preſent time; not to encourage your ſinning for the future, no, no; but to encourage ſinners to come, notwithſtanding of their fears of future failings: this ſhall be my office and employment, ſo long as you labour under that diſeaſe of backſliding, which will be till you come to *that land, where the inhabitants ſhall not ſay, I am ſick*: now, till you come there, I will conſtantly and perpetually be a phyſician and healer to you, to give you my healing word, my healing blood, my healing viſits, from time to time, and to ariſe like the Sun of righteouſneſs with healing under my wings from day to day: therefore come, backſliding ſoul, and let me have all your employment from day to day. O! is your heart ſaying, *Behold we come!* then, bleſſed be the comers, though they have been backſliders. The people that muſt be gathered to Shiloh, are a backſliding people; and if it were not ſuch, it would be none of Adam's race, for they are all ſmitten with the ſame diſeaſe; therefore all the backſliders here are invited to be comers. Come and welcome in the name of Shiloh, to whom the gathering muſt be; and in his bleſſed Father's name, come and welcome. And if there be any comers here, then glory, glory to God, that, notwithſtanding all that is amiſs in the church of Scotland, yet it is a gathering time; notwithſtanding all your backſlidings, yet it is a gathering ſeaſon.——Thus I have conſidered the gathering ſeaſons with relation to the remarkable gathering of the church in general.

2dly, The gathering ſeaſons may be conſidered, with relation to the *initial* gathering of *ſinners* in particular; when he begins to gather in ſinners to himſelf, O the freedom and ſovereignty of his grace, that ſhines in the ſeaſons and times of gathering! for ſome he gathers at the *third hour*, Mat. xx. 3.; ſome at the *ſixth hour*, and ſome at the *ninth hour*, ver. 5.; yea, ſome at the *eleventh hour*, ver. 6. Theſe are four periods and ſeaſons mentioned; for he gathers ſome in the morning, ſome in the evening, ſome at mid-day, and ſome at midnight; whatever be the hour, it is an happy hour; *The hour comes when the dead ſhall hear*: and, O may this be the happy hour, with reſpect to ſome here! More particularly,

1. The *morning* is the gathering ſeaſon, with reſpect to ſome; I mean, the morning of their youth: the Lord hath gathered ſome very early in the morning, before break of day, before ever they ſaw the light of day; for ſome are gathered before they be born, ſealed and ſanctified from the womb, as well as foreknown from eternity; Jer. i. 5. *Before I formed thee in the belly, I knew thee; and before thou cameſt forth out of the womb, I ſanctified thee:* which ſome have applied to regeneration, that ſome are ſpiritually born, before ever they are naturally ſo. We are ſure that infants are as capable of all the eſſentials of regeneration, as adult perſons are. The eſſential part thereof, is, *God's putting his Spirit within them*; and infants are as capable of this as aged perſons, if not more, while natural enmity is not ſtrengthened by actual rebellions. But this I paſs, as more rare, and what cannot be known, but by ſome remarkable effects thereof. It is not ſo rarely that ſome are gathered in the morning of their younger years; ſo was it with Joſias, who was called at *eight years old*, 2 Kings xxii. 1, 2.: ſo was it with young Timothy, who *knew the holy ſcriptures from a child*, 2 Tim. iii. 15. And, if the morning of youth be a gathering ſeaſon unto Shiloh, let this encourage young children, that are here, to *remember their Creator and Redeemer, in the days of their youth*: O remember to ſeek him early; *I love them that love me*, ſays God; *and they that ſeek me early ſhall find me.* See alſo, Pſal. cx. 3. *Thy people ſhall be willing in the day of thy power: in the beauties of holineſs from the womb of the morning, thou haſt the dew of thy youth.*

2. The *evening* is the gathering ſeaſon, with reſpect to ſome: God gathers ſome in the evening of their old age. Thus we find Abraham was gathered in his old age; he was *ſeventy-five years old*, when God firſt called him, Gen. xii. 4.: and it is probable, that Nicodemus was an old man, before he was *born again*, as appears

pears from John iii. 4. Is there any old ſinner here, that hath been a tranſgreſſor from the womb, and been living without Chriſt all your days? Oh! it is more than time you were gathered in to Shiloh. Oh! hath the devil got the morning, and the noontide of your day, and will you give him the evening too? Alas! Sirs, he hath got too much of your time already; let Chriſt have the reſt, if he can have no more. I dare not ſay, that he will not take what the devil hath left; for I have no warrant from the word, to ſay, that old age cannot be God's gathering time: I am ſure my text excludes neither old nor young, *To him ſhall the gathering of the people be;* therefore let even old and dying people gather in to the new and living way, which is conſecrated for us, through the vail of the Mediator's fleſh: ſure it is the beſt way, that you can take, before you be gathered into a grave.

3. The *mid-day* is God's gathering ſeaſon, with reſpect to ſome; I mean, the middle time of their age: and, whom God gathers, he moſt ordinarily gathers about the midſt of their days. Some have judged, that God's remnant are moſt ordinarily gathered in, betwixt the years of fifteen and twenty-five, others, between fourteen and forty. But I dare not *limit the holy One of Iſrael;* only, ſeeing the moſt part here are, perhaps, ſuch as are about the midſt of their day, O look to God, to hallow the middle of your days, as Solomon hallowed the middle of the court, 2 Chron. vii. 7. And when God ſays of the Meſſias, *To him ſhall the gathering of the people be;* let all the people ſay, AMEN. Ye that are young, ye that are old, and ye that are betwixt the two, O ſay, AMEN; let gathering power come.

4. The *midnight* is a gathering ſeaſon, with reſpect to ſome; I mean, not only a *midnight* time of *death* and approaching *eternity*, at which ſeaſon God hath gathered ſome, as he did the thief on the croſs, though it is not his ordinary time; but alſo a midnight-ſtate of *ſecurity*, when the ſoul is in a dead ſleep; even ſuch a time hath been a gathering time. I need not inſiſt here on Manaſſeh, Mary Magdalene, and others: when did the day of grace dawn upon Saul, afterwards called Paul? even when it was the darkeſt hour in the night; when he was ſleeping moſt ſound in the bed of ſecurity. It is true, his body was not ſleeping, for he was riding furiouſly to Damaſcus; but his ſoul was ſo far aſleep, that he was ſnorting and breathing very high in his ſleep, Acts ix. 1. He was *breathing out threatenings and ſlaughter againſt the diſciples of the Lord:* behold, even at midnight there came a cry from heaven, that awakened him, and rouzed him to ſeek Jeſus. Now it is, perhaps, a midnight-time with ſome here; they are ſleeping and breathing in their ſleep; breathing out enmity againſt God, and the people of God, and the way of God; but a midnight time may be a gathering time, as it is ſaid, Mat. xxv. 6. when all the virgins, wiſe and fooliſh, were ſlumbering and ſleeping, that at midnight there came a cry, *Behold, the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him:* ſo, though it be midnight, with the church, and midnight with poor miſerable ſecure ſouls; yet at midnight there is a cry in this goſpel, behold Shiloh is come, and let the gathering of the people be to him; go forth and meet him; for, behold he comes with ſalvation.——There is the initial gathering.

3*dly*, The gathering ſeaſons may be conſidered, with relation to the *progreſſive* gathering of *believers*, in whom the good work is begun, and who have either now, or at ſome former time, been engaged to come to Shiloh; yet they need to be ſtill coming to him, and ſtill gathering under his wings. Now, many are the gathering ſeaſons, that relate to the believer's *progreſſive* gathering, and advances in nearneſs to, and communion with the Lord. I ſhall conſider them, for diſtinction and memory's ſake, in theſe four periods; namely, of ſummer, winter, ſpring, and harveſt. And,

1. There are *ſummer times* of *refreſhment*, that believers ſometimes have immediately after the gathering harveſt of converſion; and theſe ſummer-times are further gathering times, and contribute to their progreſſive gathering. When the ſoul hath been long under guilt and wrath, and under the frowns and diſpleaſure of God, and had long ſeen the gates of heaven barred againſt him, and the mouth of hell open to receive him; then readily the Lord comes in, and ſpeaks peace to the ſoul, ſaying, *I, even I, am he that blotteth out thine iniquity, for mine own name's ſake.* Hearken, ſoul, my thoughts towards you are thoughts of peace; here is mercy, to pardon thee; merit, to juſtify thee; blood, to waſh thee; balm, to heal thee; bread, to nouriſh thee; wine, to cheriſh thee; raiment, to cloath thee.—Thus after Paul was awakened, and converted, and gathered, then God takes him up to the third heaven, and makes ſuch manifeſtations of his love and favour, beauty and glory, as he is not able to utter.—Thus, after the prodigal's return, the fatted calf is killed, the beſt robe is put upon his back, and the ring is put upon his hand, and ſhoes on his feet; ſhewing us, that upon the ſinner's converſion, and gathering in to Shiloh, God is graciouſly pleaſed to give him ſome choice and ſignal manifeſtation of his love and favour, grace and glory; and theſe contribute to his progreſſive gathering; *He manifeſted forth his glory, and his diſciples believed on him*, John ii. 11. Hence, Pſal. cii. 16. when he *builds up Zion*, he *appears in his glory;* when the ſtones that are already gathered, and laid upon the foundation, are to be built up a ſpiritual houſe, in a progreſſive work, he diſcovers his glory; that, *beholding his glory*, they *may be changed from glory to glory.* But the ſummer-time of ſpiritual proſperity may be but a ſhort time, as David's, Pſal. xxx. 6, 7. though it ordinarily recurs to them in ſome meaſure, even as ſummer does year by year; yet it is frequently followed with a winter. Therefore,

2. There are *winter-times* of *adverſity*, which believers have, which yet may be God's gathering times, for making way for their progreſſive gathering to Shiloh. And thus,

(1.) A winter-time of *perſonal affliction* does ſometimes make way, for their further gathering; *It was good for me that I was afflicted, for before I was afflicted, I went aſtray; but now have I learned thy law:* he had been ſtraying, but now a gathering again was the fruit of his affliction, according to Hoſ. v. 15. *In their affliction they ſhall ſeek me early:* their afflicting times ſhall be a gathering time, for bringing them nearer to the Lord; hence they have been made to *rejoice in the Lord, though the fig-tree ſhould not bloſſom*, and to *glory in tribulation.* As the ark was lifted up nearer and nearer heaven, by the riſ-

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ing of the waves; ſo, by affliction, believers are raiſed nearer and nearer to God in Chriſt.

(2.) The winter-time of *ſore trial* hath ſometimes been a gathering time to them: gathering mercy *prevents* them ſometimes before an eminent trial, to prepare them for it. Thus it was with Elijah; *Ariſe and eat, for thou haſt a journey before thee, and the journey is too great:—And he went in the ſtrength of that meal forty days and forty nights, till he came to Horeb the mount of God.* 1 Kings xix. 7, 8. Sometimes gathering mercy *ſupports* them in the trial, and under it, ſaying, *Fear not, for I am with thee; I will ſtrengthen thee; when thou goeſt through the fire, I will be with thee that the flames kindle not upon thee.* Thus many times the Son of man is with them in the furnace, gathering them in his arms, as he was with John, in the iſle of Patmos; with Ezekiel, by the river Chebar; with David, in the wilderneſs of Judea; and with the three children, in the furnace of fire. Again,

(3.) The winter-time of *temptation* is ſometimes a gathering time unto them; as, after Paul was buffeted by Satan, he heard that ſweet word, *My grace ſhall be ſufficient for thee; for my ſtrength is made perfect in weakneſs.* Yea, after the ſharpeſt conflict, he uſually gives the ſtrongeſt cordial, for gathering their ſpirits again; *In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my ſoul,* Pſal. xciv. 19.

(4.) The winter-time of *deſertion* and hiding, hath been ſometimes a gathering ſeaſon: let not the deſerted ſoul be too much diſquieted, the valley of Achor may be a door of hope; you may have occaſion to ſay, as Pſal. cxiv. 6. *I was brought low, and he helped me;* you may be brought to the brink of deſpair, that you may have occaſion to ſay, as Pſal. xl. 2, 3. *He brought me out of the horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and ſet my feet upon a rock, and eſtabliſhed my goings: and he hath put a new ſong in my mouth, even praiſe unto our God.* When Jacob was in great diſtreſs, God met with him at Bethel, Gen. xxviii.; and when he was in great fear that God would not accompliſh his promiſe, he was prevented by another viſit, Gen. xxxii.; and it was the moſt remarkable night that ever he had: he calls the place PENIEL; for he ſaw God *face to face*; and he had told him before what he had been, and would be to him, ſaying, *I am the God of Bethel.*

(5.) The winter of *downcaſting* hath been a time of reviving; *O my God, my ſoul is caſt down within me; therefore I will remember thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar.* And, *Deep calleth unto deep, at the noiſe of thy water-ſpouts; all thy waves and billows have gone over me: yet the Lord will command his loving-kindneſs in the day-time, and in the night his ſongs ſhall be with me, and my prayer to the God of my life,* Pſal. xlii. 6, 7, 8. Thus he gives *ſongs in the night,* inſomuch that the darkeſt night hath uſhered in the cleareſt light, according to that promiſe, Zech. xiv. 7. *It ſhall come to paſs, that at evening-time it ſhall be light.* Again,

(6.) The winter-time of *outcaſting* hath been a gathering time; for *He gathers the outcaſts of Iſrael,* Iſa. lvi. 8. *I ſaid, I am caſt out of thy ſight; yet will I look again to thy holy temple,* Jonah. ii. 4. There, you ſee, was a gathering time by faith unto Chriſt, when he was caſt out into the very *belly of hell,* as it is called, ver 2. You, whoſe name is a CAST-OUT, may then expect that your name may be turned to a SOUGHT-OUT, Iſa. lxii 12.

(7.) The winter-time of *fears; What time I am afraid, I will truſt in thee: fear not, for I am with thee; be not diſmayed, for I am thy God; I will ſtrengthen thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right-hand of my righteouſneſs.* The time of hopleſneſs and helpleſneſs hath been a time of ſpiritual gathering to the people of God; *I looked on my right-hand, and beheld; but there was no man that would know me; all refuge failed me: then I cried to thee, O Lord, and ſaid, Thou art my refuge, and my portion in the land of the living,* Pſal. cxliv. 4, 5. When their hope is periſhed, and nothing but the ſentence of death paſſing, then the Lord hath been gathering; *We had the ſentence of death in ourſelves, that we ſhould not truſt in ourſelves, but in God which raiſeth the dead,* 2 Cor. i. 9. Yea, when the ſoul hath not only been ſentenced, but ſlain in a manner, and laid in the grave, then hath it been a time of gathering; *Our bones are dried,* ſays the church; *our hope is loſt; we are cut off for our parts:* but, *Behold, ſaith the Lord, I will open your graves, and cauſe you to come up; and I will put my Spirit in you, and you ſhall live,* Ezek. xxxvii. 11, 12.

(8.) Yea, a winter-time of *ſinning*, and declining, and departing from the Lord, hath been a time of gathering of his people; and this is moſt wonderful of all, as I ſaid before of a backſliding time: O! that is a ſtrange word, Iſa. xliii. 23, 24, 25. *Thou haſt made me to ſerve with thy ſins, and wearied me with thine iniquity: yet I, even I am he, that blotteth out thine iniquities for my name's ſake.* There is one of the bittereſt challenges for ſin, and that backed with one of the ſwetteſt promiſes of pardon and pity, and of gathering and reſtoring mercy: will this encourage a believer to ſin, becauſe the time of your falling down may be a time of God's gathering-up? Oh! no; nothing will humble and melt the believer's heart for ſin more, than to think of the riches of divine mercy, and ſovereign grace: when he ſtoops down to gather you out of the mire that you fall into, and recovers your ſoul and your graces. Some tell us that muſk, when it hath loſt its ſmell and ſweetneſs, if it be put into a ſink among filth, it recovers it; ſo when the believer's graces have loſt their flavour and ſavory exerciſe, the Lord, in a manner, lets them fall into the mire, that their decaying graces may be recovered and revived. Thus Peter was ſuffered to fall into the mire of dreadful ſinning, and then his graces were revived; his humility revived, he was humbled to the duſt; his repentance was revived, *He went out and wept bitterly;* his ſpiritual rememberance was revived, for he remembered the words of Chriſt to him; and all flowed from this, that it was even Chriſt's gathering time; for while he was yet among the dung, into which he fell, Chriſt looks upon Peter, with a gracious gathering eye, Luke xxii. 61, 62. Let the believer then, for the upſtirring and encouragement of his faith, know, that his ſaddeſt winter-time may be God's gathering time to Shiloh.—Your halting time may be his gathering time: when your decripped feet make you go halting in the way of the Lord; *I will aſſemble her that halteth, and gather her that was driven out,* Micah iv. 6.—Your falling time may be his raiſing and up-gathering time; your periſhing time may be his ſaving time; for, his *thoughts are not as your thoughts, nor his ways as your ways.* And his taking ſuch a time, makes his interpoſal at ſuch a juncture

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the more wonderful, and the more welcome. But now, as, in these instances, God is pleased to glorify his sovereignty, and shew that he does not confine himself to means, in these progressive gatherings of believers, any more than he did in the initial gatherings of unbelievers to himself; so to glorify his holiness, and to put honour upon the means of his own appointment, you would know also, that,

3. There are *spring-times* of *spiritual duty* and *gospel-diligence*, which believers have, which are also God's gathering times, with respect to their progressive gathering to Shiloh. (By the bye, neglect not means, on pretence that grace must do all; it were an ill argument, water only refreshes, therefore cut off all cocks and pipes.) But to return; such a spring-time as this you read of, Song ii. 10,—13. *My beloved spake, and said unto me, Arise my love, my fair one, and come away: for, lo! the winter is past, the rain is over and gone: the flowers appear.—Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.* Why, it is a gathering time, therefore come away. Now, what are these fruits and flowers that appear in the spiritual spring-time, which prognosticates a gathering time to be at hand; yea, that it is a gathering time at present? There are several fruits of the Spirit, that appear in the gospel spring-time, which betoken a gathering time: As,

(1.) A *believing* time is a gathering time: faith is one of the fruits and flowers that appear in this spring. A believing time is so much a gathering time, that God's gathering, is his giving faith; and our gathering, is our exercising faith. But a believing time is also a prognosticating time, betokening a further progressive gathering, so as to be brought to more and more nearness to the Lord Jesus: hence believing times are glorious times; *Said I not unto thee, If thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?* John xi. 40. When God's children are in the exercise of faith, then the Lord is pleased to make known his goodness. Believing times are sealing times; *In whom after ye believed, ye were sealed with the holy Spirit of promise*, Eph. ii. 13. Believing times are rejoicing times; *In whom, though now we see him not, yet believing, we rejoice, with joy unspeakable, and full of glory*, 1 Pet. i. 8. There is *joy and peace in believing*. Faith ordinarily brings in sense; spiritual sense and feeling is the fruit of faith: though, by the bye, I must tell you, what is the fault and folly of the most part even of believers themselves, from whence it flows that they feel so little of the sweet fruits and advantages of faith, they make sense and feeling the root and ground of faith; whereas it is only the fruit and effect of faith. But know, that when sense is made the support of faith, it frequently leaves faith in the mire; for when sense, which they made the ground of their faith, fails, then their faith fails with it. The only sure ground of faith is God's word, his truth, his faithfulness, which is an unchangeable ground. Now, if you make God's work upon you, such as spiritual sense, graces, experience, or the like, the ground of your faith, you will find these to be such changeable grounds, so much up and down, that your faith must be up and down with them, and you will totter sooner than you are aware: or, if you build your faith partly upon sense, feelings, *etc.* and partly upon God's truth, you are then like a man that sets one foot upon a firm ground, and the other upon a floating board; when the loose floating board fails or slips, you will hardly stand fast, however firm the other foot stands. Who among all ordinary believers knows not the ebbings and flowing, the ups and downs of frames and spiritual feelings? They may rise and fall ten times in an hour, as the wind blows. Now, if your faith be built upon these love-tokens, and depend upon them; then, as your faith must be very wavering, so God, seeing himself robbed of the dependence due to him, may purposely withhold these things from you, that you may learn not to trust in uncertain experiences, but on the living God. Why, say you, when I get these love-tokens, it is not upon these that I trust, but on the God that sent them. Well done, if it be true: but I fear it is otherwise; for if Christ himself and his truths be the ground of your faith, when you get these love-tokens, then how comes it, that when these love-tokens are gone, and when sense and feeling is gone, your faith is to seek? I suppose, when feeling is up, then your faith is up; and when feeling is down, your faith is down. Now, if the whole building of your faith were upon the unchangeable Rock, you would see no more cause of doubting, when the changeable feeling is gone, than when it is present; and therefore, I fear it be your fault, believer, as well as mine, that many times we lay too much weight upon that thawing ice, and make sense and feeling the ground of our faith. But if God make you a believer at all, man, he will bring you off gradually from this evil: and if you never believe till you get spiritual sense, you will never be a believer; for feeling follows believing, and therefore believing must be before feeling. To build faith upon sense then, is like a man setting up the couples of a house, and then beginning at the rigging or roof of the house, and building it downward; such a house can never be built.—This is one lesson by the bye, which though we should tell you it twenty times, we will need to tell it over again; however, I say, it is a believing time that is a gathering time, for faith hath influence upon all other graces: it is like a silver threed, that runs through a chain of pearls: it puts strength and vivacity into all other virtues: it applies and appropriates all to itself, even God, and Christ, and the promises, and all: it is like the spring of the watch, that sets all the golden wheels of love, joy, comfort, and peace a-going; for it sees in Christ's righteousness a fulness, a glory that fills the heart with glorious joy. Christ is the centre of faith, and therefore a beliving time is a time of gathering to Shiloh.—But lest any say, Oh! I do not find it a believing time with me; therefore,

(2.) A *repenting* time is a gathering time; and repentance is one of the fruits that appears in this spring-time that I speak of: and gospel-repentance natively springs from faith; for, in short, "It is a turning from sin to God, "through Christ by faith;" and surely, where there is no such turning from sin, there is no gathering to Shiloh; Isa. lv. 7. There you see this gospel repentence described, in the several parts that I have mentioned. 1. It is a *turning from sin;* therefore it is said, *Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts:* all

all ſins of heart and way, thought, word, or action. 2. It is a turning from ſin *to God*; therefore it is ſaid, *Let him return to the Lord:* there is the end. 3. It is a returning from ſin to *God through Chriſt*; therefore it is ſaid, *Let him return to the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon:* and ſo it is a merciful ſin-pardoning God, that is, a God in Chriſt, in whom alone God is reconciled, and well-pleaſed: and without this apprehenſion of the mercy of God in Chriſt, there can be no kindly repentance. Therefore, 4. It is a returning from ſin to God through Chriſt, by *faith*: hence it is ſaid, *Let him return,*—FOR *he will abundantly pardon.* Faith looks to this FOR, this motive of returning: faith views the motive, and ſo influences the return. As it is a good FOR, ſo it is a good TURN that is influenced thereby; and as the motive to an action is viewed, before the act be elicite; ſo here, the motive, though the laſt thing in the expreſſion, yet is the firſt thing viewed by faith. O! is there mercy with him for the like of me, and pardon, yea, abundant pardon, great pardon for my great ſins, multiplied pardon for my multiplied ſins! O this kindneſs of God melts the heart! this goodneſs of God leads to repentance! and ſo the faith of God's favour and mercy in Chriſt influences this goſpel-repentance. And indeed the whole progreſs of the believer, in this continued progreſſive gathering to Shiloh, is intermixed with this penitent diſpoſition: he cannot ceaſe repenting, till he hath ceaſed ſinning, and conſequently till he hath ceaſed living: and his moſt joyful days of communion with God, on earth, are ſtill attended with the joyful tears of repentance; and he *ſows in tears*, till he *reap in joy*. He never comes to Chriſt, by any lively act of faith, but, at the ſame time, with Mary, he waſhes his feet with his tears, in a manner, and wipes them with the hair of his head.—But in caſe any ſhould think their faith and repentance is to ſeek, therefore it is no gathering time with them: Why then,

(3.) A *praying* time is and indicates a gathering time; I ſpeak of the prayer of faith: while Daniel was praying, and *confeſſing his own ſins*, and the *ſins of his people*, the Lord appeared to him, and gives him a divine touch, and tells him, that he is a *man greatly beloved*, Dan. ix. 20, 23. Of this we have the inſtance of Cornelius alſo, Acts x. 1,—4. God loves to load the wings of prayer with the choiceſt and chiefeſt bleſſings, the beſt and ſweeteſt flowers of paradiſe. God gives liberally many times to his people, when they are upon their knees. Thus many have found praying times to be ſealing times, wherein the Lord hath been pleaſed graciouſly to lift up the light of his countenance upon them. After much praying, weeping, and wreſtling, God uſually comes, with his hand and his heart full of mercy to his people; he loves not to come empty handed to theſe that have tarried long begging at mercy's door.—But becauſe ſome poor ſoul may think, either they cannot pray, or they have been long praying, and yet have not come ſpeed; therefore,

(4.) A *waiting* time ſpeaks forth a gathering time; *The viſion is for an appointed time, at the end it will ſpeak, and not lie; though it tarry, wait for it, becauſe it will ſurely come, it will not tarry*, Hab. iii. 3. God never did nor will fail the praying and waiting ſoul; for, they that wait on him ſhall not be aſhamed, Iſa. xlix. 23. *They ſhall not be aſhamed that wait for me:* yea, Iſa. xl. 31. *They that wait on the Lord ſhall renew their ſtrength; they ſhall mount up with wings as eagles, they ſhall run and not be weary, and they ſhall walk and not faint.* Therefore we are to wait for him, *as the huſbandman waits for the precious fruits of the earth, and hath long patience for it, till he receive the early and latter rain*, James v. 7. Though you do not reap the very day you ſow, yet, *in due time you ſhall reap, if you faint not*, Gal. vi. 9. David found his waiting time to uſher in a gathering time, Pſal. xl. 1, 2, 3. *I waited patiently on the Lord, and he inclined to me, and heard my cry, he brought me up alſo out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay; and ſet my feet upon a rock, and eſtabliſhed my goings: and he hath put a new ſong into my mouth, even praiſe unto our God.* Old Simeon had *waited for the conſolation of Iſrael*, and behold the Holy Ghoſt led him to a ſight of Chriſt in the temple, Luke ii. 25,—30. And this made the old man ſing, and ſay, *Now, letteſt thou thy ſervant depart in peace;—for mine eyes have ſeen thy ſalvation.* O I have lived long enough, for now I have got Chriſt in my heart, and Chriſt in my hands, who is my light, my life, my love, my joy, my crown, my glory, my all. O believer, have you not found, when you have been weeping and waiting at the door of mercy, how the Lord hath ſometimes cauſed his love and goodneſs to beam forth upon you, ſo as to make your heart rejoice, and your tongue to ſing; yea, ſo as to gather your ſoul to Shiloh, and to gather all the lines of your affections to meet in him, as the centre of your reſt, and ſo as you could have wiſhed the valley of viſion had been your burial-place, and that your eyes might never ſee another ſight than the glorious Jeſus, that was diſcovered to you, when you was waiting on him in public ordinances, or in a certain ſecret corner?—But in caſe any poor ſoul may be ſaying, Oh! I have been waiting, and yet find ſo little ſucceſs, that I fear, I am a ſtranger to the right way of waiting. Therefore,

(5.) A *longing* time may be a gathering time, and hath been ſo; for, Pſal. cvii. 9. *He ſatisfies the longing ſoul, and fills the hungry with good things.* Are you at David's four *how-longs?* Pſal. xiii. 1, 2. HOW LONG, *Lord, wilt thou forget me for ever?* HOW LONG *wilt thou hide thy face from me?* HOW LONG *ſhall I take counſel in my ſoul, having ſorrow in my heart daily?* HOW LONG *ſhall mine enemies be exalted over me?* It ſeems his longing was ſoon backed with gathering influences, drawing out his whole ſoul towards the Lord, and filling his heart with joy, and his tongue with ſinging, ver. 5, 6. *I have truſted in thy mercy; my heart ſhall rejoice in thy ſalvation; yea, I will ſing unto the Lord, becauſe he hath dealt bountifully with me.* O believer, when you are longing, he is waiting, and *waiting to be gracious*, Iſa. xxx. 18. Surely you have found it in your experience, that your longing time hath been his gathering time: but leſt you miſtake, know that I ſpeak of gathering, in the whole of my progreſs here, both in an active and paſſive ſenſe; both *paſſively*, that is, God's gathering his people to Shiloh, and to more and more nearneſs to him; and *actively*, that is, their active gathering to him through his grace. Now, I ſay, a longing time is, and preſages a further gathering time; for, *He fills the hungry with good things.* Some have found that promiſe of *ſatisfying the longing ſoul*, as clearly made out, as it is evident, that

that the light of the day ſhines at preſent.—But ſome poor ſoul may ſay, I fear it is no gathering time with reſpect to me; for I find no ſuch diſpoſition as you have been ſpeaking of; it is neither a believing nor a repenting time with me, neither a praying, waiting, nor longing time with me. Therefore,

(6.) An *attending* time, O believer, may be a gathering time; your attending time, I ſay, O ſoul, may be God's gathering time. It is true, bodily attendance, like *bodily exerciſe in religion*, profits little; when people come to duties and ordinances with their bodies only, to ſee and hear, and hardly that, while their eyes and ears are ſometimes ſhut with ſleep and heavineſs: but becauſe preventing grace hath laid hold upon ſinners many times, and taken them napping, and gathered them to Shiloh; therefore I ſhall not diſcourage peoples giving their bodily attendance on goſpel-means and ordinance, even though they have neither an outward ear, or inward diſpoſition towards a regular attendance: becauſe, though, in ſuch a caſe, juſtice might take advantage againſt them righteouſly; yet none knows, but mercy may catch them at a diſadvantage graciouſly; as it did the man, who coming to church, yet hating to hear, ſet his elbows on the deſk, and put his fingers into his ears; but while he was napping, one of his elbows falls down, and as his finger went out of his ear, a word of the ſermon came in to it, by which the Lord catched him, converted him, and gathered him to Shiloh. But the ſubject I am upon, at preſent, relates to believers, and their progreſſive gathering; and it may be their caſe ſometimes, that an outward attendance is all that they can attain unto: they can find neither any believing, repenting, praying, waiting, or longing diſpoſition; but on the contrary, much darkneſs, deadneſs, dulneſs, deſpondency, hardneſs, heavineſs, and all ſpiritual indiſpoſition: only this is all they can ſay, Some ſecret hair of hope hath brought them to attend, and give their bodily preſence, that they may hear what God will ſay to them, and ſee what God will do to them. Well, poor ſoul, even ſuch an attending time as this may be a gathering time, as you may ſee it was with theſe ſpoken of, Acts x. 33. *We are all here preſent*, ſay they, *before God, to hear all things commanded thee of God:* what they were to get, or receive from God, they knew not as yet; but all they could ſay, at preſent, was, that they had brought their ſouls and bodies before God, to attend upon him in his ordinances. It ſeems they had ſome ſecret hope, that they might get ſome good by Peter's preaching; and behold it was a remarkable gathering time, as you ſee, ver. 44. For *while he ſpake, the Holy Ghoſt fell on all that heard the word.* Therefore, if any poor creature be here, ſaying, It does not look like a gathering time with reſpect to me; for it is not a believing time, but a doubting time; it is not a repenting time, but rather a rebelling time; it is not a praying time, but rather a perplexing time; not a waiting, but a wearying time: not a longing, but a languiſhing time; I cannot ſo much as pray, nor pant, nor long, nor look up; I can hardly give an hearty ſigh, or a groan upwards. Well, but poor creature, can you ſay, *Lord, I am here preſent before thee*, thou knoweſt this is all I can do; I have no more, under heaven, about me, of diſpoſition to any duty or ordinance, but a ſecret *may-be the Lord will pity*, and may-be not; I am juſt at the footſtool of ſovereignty. Well, ſuch a time may be a gathering time; when they were all preſent before the Lord hearing, a gathering wind came, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghoſt. This is one of the loweſt flowers, that appear in the believer's ſpring-time, when no grace is appearing in his view at all, but only he is preſenting himſelf before the God of all grace; and does not the believer find this to be even a gathering time, now and then in ſecret, as well as public, when all he can do is juſt to caſt himſelf *down on his knees, before the Lord his Maker*, as it is, Pſal. xcv. 6. with a *who knows but the Lord may pity?* This attendance on the Lord, even in this manner, hath been bleſſed with a mighty gathering wind about their ſouls, that hath blown them nearer to the Lord, their harbour of reſt, than ever they were before. Therefore, believer, however low your circumſtances may be, when you can do no more but attend, as it were, at a ſecret duty or public ordinance, never draw back your attendance on the Lord, and preſenting yourſelves before him; ſeeing your attending time may be his gathering time.—Thus I have mentioned to you ſome of the believer's ſpring-times of duty, and ſome of the fruits and flowers that appear therein, which ſpeak forth a gathering time, and preſage an harveſt. And this leads me to ſpeak of another gathering ſeaſon, with reſpect to the believer's progreſſive approach to Chriſt, or gathering to Shiloh.

4. There are *harveſt-times* of *ſolemn ordinances*, or *goſpel-ſolemnities*, not only teaching but ſealing ordinances, which his people ſometimes have, and which are God's gathering times, and the believer's gathering times, with reſpect to their progreſſive gathering unto Shiloh. And though the Lord of the harveſt, who ſends forth labourers thereunto, and takes them away when he pleaſes; as he hath lately removed one,* that uſed to be an eminent labourer at ſolemnities, in Airth; on which occaſion, if we cannot ſay in point of paucity, that though the harveſt be great, the labourers are few; yet ſure I am, we may with grief of heart ſay, in point of quality, that the harveſt is great, and the honeſt evangelical labourers are the fewer that he is gone: and the only thing that makes ſuch an heavy loſs to be ſupportable, is, that the Lord of the harveſt ſtill remains, who can ſend forth labourers, qualified for whatſoever work he hath ado: But what I was ſaying, is, that though the Lord of the harveſt makes theſe goſpel-ſolemnities, frequently to be the gathering times for ſinners, in reſpect of their initial gathering, of which I ſpoke before; yet the ſpecial deſign of theſe communion-ſolemnities, is, for advancing the progreſſive gathering of believers: and, though the moſt remarkable progreſs of the believer may be upon his knees in ſecret duties, and in ſecret prayer, and ſecret intercourſe betwixt God and him; yet public ordinances are the means of theſe private intercourſes; though the ſecret may be moſt comfortable and refreſhful, yet the public ordinances lay the foundation of

* It is ſuppoſed, and with a great degree of probability too, that our Author, both here, and p. 312. has his eye upon that ſhining light, and able ſervant of CHRIST, the Reverend Mr. BRISBAN, miniſter of the goſpel at Stirling.

that

that ſecret comfort and refreſhment. It is in this, as it is with the public well of a city, from whence people go and fetch water to their private houſes; for ordinary, there is not ſo much uſe made of the water at the public well itſelf, till once they bring it home in their veſſel to the private houſe or family, and there it is more freely made uſe of for ſeveral neceſſary purpoſes; ſuch as for drink, and refreſhing meals, the liquid part whereof is moſtly made up of the water, that was fetched home from the well. Public ordinances are the wells; but, for ordinary, the children of God are not ſo much refreſhed with the water thereof, till once they get home to ſome ſecret corner with it, and there they get a more hearty draught, and refreſhing drink of the water of life, than they got at the public well; but ſtill it is from thence it was fetched; and ſo the foundation of theſe private and ſecret refreſhing meals, is ordinarily laid in the public ordinances. It is true, ſome that go to fetch home water from the well, may, according to their need, get an hearty drink of water, even at the ſide of the well, before they bring any water home; and ſo the Lord's people may, and ſometimes do, get a very heartſom and refreſhing draught of living water, even at the well-ſide of public ordinances, while they are hearing the word, or receiving the ſacrament of the ſupper. Now, the harveſt-time of goſpel-ſolemnities, for the believer's progreſſive gathering unto Shiloh, is twofold, *teaching* and *ſealing*.

(1.) The harveſt-time of *teaching* ſolemnities is his hearing ſeaſon, which frequently is God's gathering ſeaſon; the gathering of the people to Shiloh is ordinarily made up in the time of hearing the word; for, *faith comes by hearing*: and the progreſſive gathering of believers is ordinarily made up alſo in the time of hearing the word; for, the *increaſe of faith* comes by hearing; *As new-born babes deſire the ſincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby*, 1 Pet. ii. 2. And hence, the doctrine of the goſpel is the ordinary means of working and increaſing faith; becauſe it is the *miniſtration of the Spirit*; Gal. iii. 2. *Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?* This goſpel is the power of God to ſalvation, both for working faith, and for advancing it; *For therein is the righteouſneſs of God revealed from faith to faith*, Rom. i. 17. By this means we advance, *if ſo be we have heard of him, and been taught by him, as the truth is in Jeſus*, Eph. iv. 21. The goſpel is like a ladder, by which we climb up to a God in Chriſt, when he is gathering us to him; and every truth of the goſpel is like ſo many ſteps, or rounds of the ladder, and every one of them ſhould be maintained and contended for: if any of the rounds of the ladder be broken off, you are in danger of falling down, and your climbling up is rendered more difficult or impoſſible. Every truth denied, or error maintained, is like a cutting out, or breaking off a round of the ladder; and whenever a breach is made in it, the climbing up by it is rendered impracticable, if it be a fundamental error; or greatly obſtructed, if it nearly concern the fundamentals of religion: we need therefore to be concerned, that every truth be maintained by us, and tranſmitted to our poſterity pure and intire. It is our mercy, that we have pure Standards; and if any latter acts * of this church ſeem to claſh therewith, we hope they have not the deliberate approbation, even of thoſe that framed them; however all goſpel-truths ought to be ſacred to us, as well as the purchaſt liberties and privileges in God's houſe; the loſs of the leaſt whereof, is the loſs of a jewel out of the Mediator's crown. Chriſt is the Head, and centre of all goſpel-truth, and we ought to hold by the Head; and ſo we ſhall hold by the truth, as it is in Jeſus the Head. The apoſtle complains of ſome, their *not holding the Head*, Col. ii. 19. Some inſtead of holding the Head, they hold by the feet: it is enough to them, that ſuch a good man, or ſuch a learned man ſays ſo and ſo, concerning this or that truth; and ſo let the Head go, and hold by the feet, not regarding the truth, as it is in Jeſus; but the truth, as it is delivered by ſuch a man, whom they eſteem, or ſuch another man that hath this or that good character: but we ought to hang and hold by the Head, and not to hang our faith at the belt of any man or angel; *For, if we, or an angel from heaven, preach another doctrine, let him be accurſed*, Gal. i. 8. Now, I ſay, that the goſpel-ſeaſon is the gathering ſeaſon; while goſpel-truths are publiſhed, they are the Standard of the Captain of ſalvation, to which the gathering of his ſoldiers ſhould be, and will be, when the *goſpel comes not in word only, but in power*. But again,

(2.) The harveſt-time of *ſealing* ſolemnities, that is the believer's receiving ſeaſon, which frequently is God's gathering ſeaſon, when he forwards their progreſſive gathering to Shiloh. This ordinance of the ſupper, being, in a ſpecial manner, appointed, not for begetting ſpiritual life, where there is none, but for increaſing it where begun: it is in this ordinance, that the Lord is pleaſed ſometimes to ſeal up the promiſe, to ſeal up the covenant, to ſeal up his love, and ſeal up their pardon ſenſibly to their ſouls; and to *make himſelf known to them in the breaking of bread*, Luke xxiv. 35. He brings them under the ſhadow of a ſacrament, and *his fruit is ſweet unto their taſte*, and his glory bright in their eye; whereas they came ſtark blind, they have got their eyes opened: yea, ſometimes they get here a breathing of glory, an holy perfume of the ſweet embalming love of Chriſt: ſometimes a young heaven, a green glory, a taſte of the grapes of the good land beyond Jordan, to keep the taſte in their mouth, till they come to drink of the new wine in their Father's kingdom. Many a fainting ſoul hath been refreſhed, and revived with the wine upon the lees in this ordinance; while he hath come, and pardoned all their ſins, healed all their ſores, ſupplied all their wants, cleared all their cloudy ſkies, and driven the bottom out of all their doubts and fears; and thus gathered them, and brought them to more nearneſs and conformity to him: for, as when a man makes a timber veſſel for holding food, or the like, the firſt caſt may be very rough, and therefore he ſmooths, and fits it more and more for uſe; ſo the ſouls of the ſaints are, at firſt converſion, but rough caſten, as it were; therefore the Lord, by viſiting of them, and manifeſting himſelf to them in his ordinances, does more and more fit the veſſel of mercy for a fill of the liquor of glory: hence theſe divine incomes now and then, that make them cry out, *O my ſoul thirſts for God, for the living God, when ſhall I come and appear before God?* Pſal. xlii. 2. As the toſſed mariner longs for the haven, the harbour;

* What theſe Acts are may be ſeen above, p. 70, 149, 150.

harbour; so does the soul, that hath met with God in ordinances, long to meet with him in heaven. As one tells us, "That when once "the Gauls of old had tasted of the sweet wine "that was made of the grapes of Italy, no-"thing would satisfy them but Italy, Italy:" so, the soul that hath once tasted of the goodness of God, and sweetness of Christ, and the grapes of Paradise, nothing satisfies that soul at such a time, but, O Paradise, Paradise! O to be in glory's land, in Immanuel's land! O to be for ever with the Lord! It is true, as the Lord is sovereign, and sometimes hides his face from his children in these ordinances, and sacramental solemnities, insomuch that *they go mourning without the sun:* so the measures of his communications are various; sometimes more bright and glorious, and sometimes more dark and cloudy: but as we enjoy the light and benefit of the sun, even when we cannot see it, because of the clouds; so believers do sometimes enjoy much of the light, and heat, and warmth of the sun of righteousness, even when, by reason of many clouds, they cannot see him so clearly as at other times; however, every glance of his glory, in these galleries of ordinances, hath such a soul-gathering influence, such an heart-drawing virtue, that this harvest-time may be called a gathering season; while all the faculties of the soul, all the affections of the heart are gathered to, and centered on Christ, and longing to be gathered about the throne, to see him face to face. And this leads me to the fourth and last period, with respect to the season of this gathering of the people to Shiloh.

4*thly*, The gathering seasons may be considered, with relation to the *consummate* gathering of the *saints:* and of this final gathering there are two seasons, namely, the *day of death*, and the *day of judgment*.

1. The day of *death* is a gathering day to the saints; for then Christ gathers his lilies to himself; *My beloved is gone down into his garden, to gather lilies*, Cant. vi. 2. When the lilies are ripe, he gathers them into his bosom; he picks up one here, and another there: and indeed some of the sweetest smelling lilies in all the garden of his church, particularly in this and some neighbouring presbyteries, hath the Lord been lately gathering; and among the rest, that lily that used to cast such a savoury gospel-smell, at former solemnities here; you cannot but know what I mean: but, O Sirs, if God shall gather up all the fairest and sweetest of his lilies from among us, our garden will become but unbeautiful and unsavory: the beauty and savour is gone, when the lilies are gathered; unless the Lord himself shall make other such lilies to grow up in their room. I remember that one of the last savoury smells that that lily cast among us, at the last year's solemnity, was in the pleasant opening of that word, *Now, we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face:* and, no doubt, it was in the prospect of being gathered to the place of *immediate vision*, and full enjoyment of God and the Lamb. And indeed a time of death is a time of gathering of the saints to glory, where their dark, and partial, and transient enjoyment of God here, is turned to a clear, full, perfect, permanent, and uninterrupted enjoyment: for then, they know him, as they are known; *And there is no temple there; for the Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb are the temple of it*, Rev. xxi. 12. And therefore, to him, as the temple in heaven, shall the gathering of the people be. Hence, death to the godly is called a gathering, Gen. xlix. 33. It is said of Jacob, when he died, *He was gathered unto his people:* why, one would think, he was rather taken away from his people; for he was dying, and all his children and grand-children about him; yea, but he had people elsewhere, and better company, that he was going to, even *the general assembly and church of the first-born, that are written in heaven, the spirits of just men made perfect*, and all the saints that had gone before him. O Sirs, see what company ye choose now; if ye be of the wicked and ungodly, your death will be but a gathering to the devil and reprobates in hell; if you lose heaven at the first shot of death, you are gone for ever: when a man shoots at a mark in his life-time, if he miss at one shot, he may shoot another, and shoot again and again, till he hit; but if you miss heaven at the first shot of death, you are not to live again to shoot another shot for it: therefore, let your life now be a *pressing towards the mark;* a shooting at the right mark, a gathering to Shiloh: for these that are gathered to him graciously in life, will be gathered gloriously to him at death; for then, *the souls of believers do immediatly pass into glory;* when their bodies are laid in the dust, their souls are gathered to their people in heaven, where Christ is the centre of the assembly; *And so shall we be ever with the Lord*, 1 Thes. iv. 17. There are angels and arch-angels in heaven, there are saints and seraphims there; but all will not make a heaven without Christ; he is the light of the place, and the heart of the company for ever, and to him shall the gathering of the people be. But then;

2. The day of *judgment* will be a most remarkable season of the consummate gathering of his people to him: the text indeed speaks mainly of Christ's first coming in the flesh, *The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, till Shiloh come, and to him shall the gathering of the people be;* but it will be also true of his second coming in the clouds of heaven; for then will he *gather his saints together unto him, these that have made a covenant with him by sacrifice*, Psal. l. 5. Therefore the apostle joins his second coming, and his glorious gathering together; *We beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him*, 2 Thes. ii. 1. *Then will he send his angels, with the great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to another*, Matth. xxiv. 31.; wherever the wind of providence hath driven their dust. Though the dust of the believer's body may be scattered to all corners of the earth and sea, and resolved to the original elements, of which it was at first compounded; yet God will gather it all together again, when he makes the *earth to give up its dead*, and *the sea to give up its dead*, Rev. xx. 13. And therefore, *Though worms destroy this body, yet in their flesh shall they see God*, according to the words of Job, wherein he expresseth his faith of the happy resurrection, Job xix. 25. *I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth;* for then, as God will gather together their scattered bones and dust, so he will bring their glorified souls along with him; *Them which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him*, 1 Thess. iv. 14.

and

and he will reunite these two intimate friends, soul and body; they shall meet with one another, and *meet the Lord in the air.*

O my brethren, let none of us think it incredible, that God should raise the dead; for, in that day when Shiloh comes again, he will gather together and make up *all his jewels*, Mal. iii. 17. Though his jewels be lying amongst the dust, yet he will separate his jewel-dust from the rest of the dust: for, as Christ is the Load-stone, that draws the hearts of people to him, that are gathered to him by his grace now, according to his own word, *When I am lifted up, I will draw all men unto me*; so, at his second coming, he will be the glorious Load-stone, that will draw all the precious dust of his saints together to him. Any of you who know the virtue of the load-stone will know this, (which I have sometimes tried with a load-stone in my hand) let the filings of steel, never so small, be mixed with dust, so as it is impossible, you would think, to separate the dust of the steel from the dust of the other earth; yet, if you bring near the load-stone, all the filings of the steel will separate from the rest, and fly up to the load-stone, in the tenth part of the twinkling of an eye. Well, if the load-stone have such a virtue, what must be the virtue of him who gave virtue to it? Whenever Shiloh comes in the clouds of heaven, behold, in the twinkling of an eye, all the redeemed that sleep in the dust will be gathered; the glorious Load-stone will put forth its virtue, and they will be all drawn to him in a moment, 1 Cor. xv. 52. 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17. There is the consummate gathering of the people to Shiloh.

It is true, the day of judgment will be a separating day, the *sheep will be separate from the goats*, and the *wheat from the tares*, Mat. xiii. 20. But however terrible that day will be to the Christless world, that could never be gathered to Shiloh, when they shall be gathered together in bundels, and cast into the fire of God's everlasting wrath! yet glorious, glorious will the gathering be of all the redeemed! As they will be gathered to him, so they will be assessors with him in judgment; *Know ye not that saints shall judge the world?* yea, they *shall judge angels*, 1 Cor. 2, 3. They shall sit upon the bench of judgment with Christ, and applaud him in all his judicial procedure against wicked men and devils. These, who formerly trampled them like dirt under their feet, will then stand, like so many guilty pannels before them; and when the irreversible doom goes forth, *Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels*, the gathered saints will joyfully adore the equity of the Judge, and will not so much as give a sigh or a sob at the terror of the sentence against the wicked, but clap their hands, and send them to hell with a shout. Oh! that wicked and Christless souls would fear and tremble, and *flee from the wrath to come*, in the awful apprehension of this glorious day! Devils quake at the apprehension of this day; *they believe and tremble*: and yet sinful men are fearless. But when the great Judge will erect his fiery tribunal in the air, see if you shall be able to bear up, be as stout-hearted as you can.

O man, death is insensibly stealing away your breath; and after death, comes the judgment; and then comes the doleful gathering of the wicked to be the fewel of eternal flames: because *oft he would have gathered you, as a hen does her chickens under her wings, but ye would not* be gathered, therefore you will be separated from him for ever: you would not come for his blessing, therefore you must depart with his curse; *Depart from me, ye cursed: Then shall they be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power.* Oh! sinner; flee, flee to Shiloh: let the gathering of the people be to him now, that you may share of the glory of the consummate gathering of the saints. After judgment, the gathered saints *will return, and come to Zion with songs.* God having in that day gathered together, and made up all his jewels, what a bright constellation will these jewels make, when they shall be all gathered together in the firmament of glory! Yea, they will *shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever*, Dan. xii. 3. *Then*, says Christ, *shall the righteous shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father*, Matth. xiii. 23.; that is, even all these poor creatures that have been gathered to Shiloh, as the *Lord their righteousness and strength.*

O Sirs, this glorious gathering day will be upon you, before we be all gathered together on earth again. Some that were at the last year's gathering here, are now gone to eternity; and you will never see them again, till you and they be gathered together before the awful tribunal of God; and, without all peradventure, there are here that will never see another sacrament at Airth: it may be you, man; it may be you, woman; it may be such a minister, or such a private person; it may be such a gentleman or such a lady, such a youth or such a girl, as have little thoughts of death at present. O Sirs, I am looking to you, and you to me; but we will never all see one another, till we see the Son of man, the Son of God, coming in the clouds of heaven, and gathering all the world before him: and therefore, in the view of that gathering day, O let not this gathering of people here part from one another and dismiss, till once there be a gathering unto Shiloh. *Now, we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, at the great day of his appearance*, that you consent to be gathered, and that this present gathering be not dissolved, till your hearts and affections be gathered to Shiloh, and centered in him. Oh! choose rather to die upon the spot, than not be gathered unto him this day. Many a gathering word and call you have got these days bygone, and Christ is saying, *How oft would I have gathered you, yet ye would not!* O! is he saying, I would gather you, man, woman? then, what would you? Have you no will to be gathered? Have you no will to be gathered out of the stinking prison of your lusts and idols, your self and self-righteousness, your worldly-mindedness, and covetousness, your pride and vanity? What ever be the filthy stinking prison that you are like to perish in, he is saying, I would gather you out of it! And, O man, woman, would you rather be gathered unto the devil, than gathered unto Shiloh? Would you rather be gathered to a tavern of drunkenness, lewdness, and carnality, than gathered to the temple of grace and glory? Would you be gathered to Shiloh, or not? It is come just to this, man, *What would you that I should do unto you?* Would you that I should gather you? Behold, he

he is declaring his will in this gospel. Is he saying, *The gathering of the people shall be to him?* Does he say, *It shall be?* then, O say, AMEN, Lord; *So let it be.*

The strength of unbelief lies in your unwillingness to be gathered: and if the will were once broken, it would be a day of power; *Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power*, Psal. cx. 3. O! has there any power been here to make you willing? willing to be gathered to him as a Priest, and a Prince both? willing to be gathered out of the prison of sin, as well as out of the prison of hell and wrath? willing to be gathered to him for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and complete redemption; and to be indebted to him for all and every part of his salvation? willing to have all from him for nothing, so as the praise and glory of all may redound to himself? O Sirs, are you thus willing to be gathered under his wings of grace and glory? Then, glory to God for the power that hath made you willing: or, if you cannot say, that that power is what you have felt, yet is it that will-breaking power you would be at, saying, O let this gathering power be exerted? *There is hope in Israel concerning you.*

O may sinners be gathered to and close with him! This is God's design by the gospel; and, we hope, it is our design in preaching it, to get sinners gathered. And, O let me tell you, that there is such a glorious gathering of excellent things in him, as may engage the hearts of all the sinners here to gather unto him, and all the believers here to be still gathering to him more and more.

Well, what for a gathering is there in him? O! there is a gathering of all *glories* in him; the glory of saints, the glory of angels, the glory of God is in him: so that *he is altogether lovely.*— The gethering of all *perfection* is in him, and all divine attributes and fulness; for, *it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell:* so that he hath all fulness of ability and authority to save.—The gathering of all *righteousness* and *strength* is in him; therefore, *to him should men come*, Isa. xlv. 24.—The gathering of all the *promises* is in him; for, *all the promises are Yea and Amen in him:* there is no promise out of him.— The gathering of all *graces* is in him, that *out of his fulness we may come and receive grace for grace:* and to whom should the gathering of the people be, but to him that hath all grace for them? —The gathering of all *blessings* is in him; for, *all spiritual blessings in heavenly places* are only *in Christ Jesus*, Eph. i. 3. And to whom should the gathering of the people be, but to him, of whom it is said, that *men shall be blest in him, and all nations shall call him blessed?* Psal. lxxii. 17.: and no blessing is to be had out of him.—The gathering of all *mercy* is in him; and therefore all the mercies of the everlasting covenant are called, *the sure mercies of David.* All the mercy of God is in Christ; and there is no mercy in God, out of Christ, towards any sinner.—The gathering of all *gifts* is in him; *He hath received gifts for men, even for the rebellious, that God the Lord might dwell among them:* the gift of the Spirit especially; for, he hath *received the Spirit above measure;* and so hath all the influences of the Spirit to give. He *received gifts for men;* all is for *men*, and for *the people:* all the promised righteousness, graces, blessings, mercies, and gifts that he hath received, as Mediator, and that are gathered in him, is for *the people*, that the *gathering of the people may be to him.*—There is a gathering of all *things* in him; for he is *all in all:* and *all things are yours*, if once you be gathered to him; whereas you have nothing at all but sin, death, and misery out of him.— In a word, there is a gathering of all the *treasures of wisdom and knowledge*, and *all unsearchable riches* in him, for making you up, and making you happy for ever; and to whom should the gathering of poor ignorant people be, but to him? — What shall I say? There is a gathering of all *saving offices* in him; he is a Prophet, Priest, King, Mediator, Redeemer, Surety, and all offices in one: whatever be your want, he hath an office for supplying it; whatever be your debt, he hath an office for paying it: whatever be your disease, he hath an office for curing it: for diseases in the mind, he is a Prophet; for diseases of the conscience, he is a Priest; for diseases of the will, he is a King. And for all other maladies that can be named, he hath all other *healing offices* that can be named: yea, for wonderful maladies, he hath wonderful offices; for wonderful sins, he hath wonderful pardons; for wonderful plagues, he hath wonderful balsams and plaisters.

O Sirs, is there such a gathering of all good things in him for the people? and shall there be no gathering of the people to him? Christ hath no other use for these things that are thus gathered in him, but for the behoof of the people that are gathered to him; and they would all be useless, if there were no gathering of the people to him. Alas! shall he be an useless Shiloh for you? And have you no need of him, no use for him? Oh! dole and misery! Will you stand at a distance from him, as if he were an useless Christ? But if you have any use for him then, all that he wants is to have your employment; to believe, is to employ him to do all your work in you and for you. Doing and believing are very different things: if you be for doing all yourself, in order to your own salvation and justification, then you make Christ useless, and his death vain; *If righteousness come by the law, Christ is dead in vain*, Gal. ii. 21. But if you be for believing, then know what believing or faith is. Faith doth nothing, but gives Christ all to do, and lets him have the glory of doing all that belongs to his office, saying, Lord, work; work for me, and work in me. And hence, though believing be not doing, yet the best believer is the best doer; in regard the work that is put in Christ's hand is best done; and because, while faith does nothing, but only employs the strength of Christ to do all, then, *through Christ's strengthening, it can do all things.*

Now, O Sirs, shall Christ get no employment here? Will there be no gathering to him for righteousness and strength? I hope some have been gathered and drawn to him, and can say, *The Lord God of the Hebrews met with us*, and made a soul-gathering influence run through, yea, thoroughly through our hearts. O Sirs, let the whole of your life be a gathering to Shiloh, and a living upon him. And, now the great gathering of people here may be joyfully dismissed, though they shall never all meet together again in time, if this promise of Christ hath taken effect, *To him shall the gathering of the people be.* *

* What follows, to the end, was delivered in two discourses, at a sacramental occasion at Carnock, July 4th and 5th, 1725.

VI. The

VI. The *sixth* general head was, To give you the *reasons* of the doctrine. And here I am to show you, 1. Why there must be a *gathering* of the *people*, the Gentiles? 2. Why to SHILOH must the gathering be? Why to him?

1st, Why are the *people*, the *Gentiles*, to be *gathered?* For this part of the text concerns the Gentiles, in contradistinction from the Jews; *To him shall the gathering of the people be*, the Gentile people. It was in pursuance of this design that the apostle Paul was called *the apostle of the Gentiles*; and he magnifies his office, and boasts of it, saying, *To me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ*, Eph. iii. 8. This is a question of the greatest concern to us Gentiles: Why, is our name put in Christ's commission? O Sirs, it should be good news to us: and for confirming our faith herein, take these six grounds and reasons for it.

1. There must be a gathering of Gentile people to him, for *filling up the room which the Jews left:* Christ *came to his own, and his own received him not.* And since the Jews rejected him, and cast out themselves by unbelief, the Gentiles are taken in, to succeed to them in their church privileges; *Through their fall, salvation is come to the Gentiles*, Rom. xi. 11. And ver. 19. *These branches were taken off, that the Gentiles might be grafted in.* The room which the Jews left vacant must be filled up with Gentiles, Luke xiv. 15,—24.; where the gospel-entertainment is compared to a *great man's supper*, to which many are invited; some reject the invitation, particularly the Jews, that had the first honour of being invited to the banqueting-house; that is, to partake of Christ and his gospel-blessings: others embraced the gracious offer, particularly the poor, despised, out-cast Gentiles, even these who *were without the law.* Hence see and read ver. 21, 22, 23.: there you see the Gentiles called, to fill up the room that the Jews left vacant.

2. There must be a gathering of the people, the Gentiles, to *reprove and punish the unbelief of the Jews*, from whom the sceptre is departed, and to *provoke them to jealousy*, Rom. xi. 11.; for, as *because of unbelief they were broken off*, ver. 20.; so for the punishment of their unbelief. See what God says to them, Deut. xxxii. 21. compared with Rom. x. 19. *I will provoke them to jealousy, by them that are no people.* The Jews had the first offer, Acts iii. 26.; and the Gentiles had but their leavings. But what a provocation it was to the Jews, to see the Gentiles taken into favour, is represented in the parable, Luke xv. 11,—32. where the elder brother envied the reception and entertainment of the prodigal Gentiles; and more plainly, Acts xiii. 45. where you see how the Gentiles were received, ver. 46, 47, 48. Thus, whenever the Jews heard that the apostle Paul had a commission to go to the Gentiles, see how they were provoked, Acts xxii. 21, 22. It was their sin that they were thus inraged; and God makes oftentimes peoples sin their punishment: a man needs no greater plague, than to be left to the impetuous rage of his own lusts. However, in gathering of the Gentiles, God shews his anger and displeasure at the unbelief of the Jews; and, to this day, their posterity, scattered up and down the earth, are under the dismal effects of this anger; for, ever since Shiloh came, the Jews have been set to the door, and the Gentiles gathered in. Yea,

3. There must be a gathering of the people, the Gentiles, to *pave a way for the glorious gathering of the Jews again*, Rom. xi. 23,—26. Here is a twofold mystery, namely, that the gathering of the Gentiles will make way for the renewed gathering and conversion of the Jews. I shall read you some promises you have thereof, Isa. xi. 10,—12. Jer. xxii. 3,—6. These, you may see, have evidently a further look than their deliverance from Babylon, Zech. xii. 10. and xiii. 1. As we have encouragement to pray for the conversion of the Jews; so if there were a Spirit of prayer to a God in Christ among us, in their behalf, who were his antient people, we might then think, the happy day were hastening, wherein it is promised, that the Gentiles shall further the gathering of the Jews, Isa. xlix. 22. and lx. 9, 10. lxvi. 18,—23. See Zech. ii. 10,—12. and viii. 21,—23. Again,

4. There must be a gathering of the people, the Gentiles, to shew the *sovereignty* of his grace, and *freedom* of his mercy, Rom. ix. 15. *That he will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and compassion on whom he will have compassion.* The Jews expected to monopolize this privilege, of being God's people and church, continually to themselves; and few thought, that the Gentiles should become *fellow-citizens of the saints, and of the household of God:* but *God's thoughts are not our thoughts;* he shews his sovereignty, in pitching upon what nation of the earth it pleases him: *The potter hath power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel to honour, and another to dishonour.* The great Creator of the ends of the earth does thus shew his power and authority, in making *these a people that were no people, and these his people that were not his people*, Rom. ix. 25, 26. This therefore was one of the *great mysteries of godliness, Christ preached unto the Gentiles, and believed on in the world*, 1 Tim. iii. 16. This was a great mystery, that with great difficulty could be received, and believed by the apostles; for when Peter was persuaded, by the vision of a sheet knit at the four corners, wherein was all manner of four-footed beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air, not to despise the Gentiles as common and unclean, and accordingly had preached the gospel with success to them, he was accused by the rest of the apostles, Acts xi. 2, 3. till Peter making his defence, *They held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God granted to the Gentiles repentance unto life*, ver. 18. And in all this the Lord acted in a suitableness to his antient promise, concerning the calling and inbringing of the Gentiles. It is long since God promised by Noah, saying, *God shall enlarge Japhet, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem*, Gen. ix. 27. Now, of Japhet came the Gentiles, Gen. x. 5. and of Shem came the Jews; so that by this prophecy, there is a clear prediction of the conversion of the Gentiles, and their inheriting the privileges of the Jews, to the praise of sovereign grace.

5. There must be a gathering of the people, the Gentiles, to shew the *extent* and *sufficiency* of his grace, as well as the sovereignty and freedom of it: how extensive is his grace and goodness, in gathering in the Gentiles, as well as the Jews, under the wings of his favour and mercy? While he sets open his entertaining-room doors to sinners, out of *every tongue, and nation,*

nation, and kindred, where *neither Jew nor Greek, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free,* are excluded; but all are one and alike in Jesus Christ, Gal. iii. 28. Col. iii. 18. Herein he appears to act with a greatness like himself, becoming his boundless infinity, and not after the manner of men, but like a God; and so to signalize his goodness beyond the compass of man; *For he is God, and not man,* Hos. xi. 9. It were a diminution of the glory of his grace, if it were said, This is nothing, but what a man might do. It is his glory, to act in such a manner, as is proper to none but a God, a God of boundless grace and unparalleled goodness; that when poor dogs, Pagans, Gentiles find his goodness, even extending to them cast-aways, that were rejected of men, they may have it to say, *Is this the manner of men, O Lord?*

6. There must be a gathering of the people, the Gentiles, to show the *glory* and *greatness of Christ's kingdom; That his dominion reacheth from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth:* see Psal. lxxii. 8, 10. As it is the glory of a king, to have many subjects, a numerous train, and a great retinue; so it is the glory of our Shiloh, that the gathering of the people is unto him, even Gentiles as well as Jews; and so many the more to celebrate the praises of free grace, and to adorn the triumph of his glorious throne above, with loud acclamations of *Grace, grace.* Solomon tells us, Prov. xiv. 28. That *the glory of a king is in the multitude of his subjects;* so it is the glory of King Jesus, to have a multitude of people gathered to him: and, O that he may get honour here this day, by gathering a multitude of souls, that they may come and set the crown upon the head of an exalted Jesus!

2dly, Why to SHILOH must the gathering of the people be? Why,

1. To him must the gathering of the people be, because to him the *headship* and *government* of the people does belong. All the people, that come of Adam, have lost their head since Adam's fall: or, if they have no other head than the first Adam, they are no better than an headless company, yea, and worse; for, from Adam their first head, there is nothing but sin and death conveyed, Rom. v. 12. But now, the second Adam, the promised Shiloh, is constitute the Head of the people, the Head of the body the church, *That in all things he might have the pre-eminence,* Col. i. 18. And to whom should the gathering of the people be, but to him, who is the Head of the people, and *the Head over all things to the church?* Eph. i. 22. He is the Head influential and political: the Head of influences; for all the influences of light, and life, and strength, and comfort, come from him: the Head of government; for, Isa. ix. 6. *The government is laid upon his shoulders,—and of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end; upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom to order it, and to establish it with judgment and justice for ever,* ver. 7. The sceptre is departed from Judah; but it shall never depart from Jesus, the Lion of the tribe of Judah: the sceptre is fallen into his hand; and to whom should the gathering of the people be, but under the sceptre of this glorious King? O that there were a flocking to touch the sceptre of King Jesus! For, *God hath made this Jesus, who was crucified, to be both Lord and Christ,* Acts ii. 36. *He hath set his King upon his holy hill of Zion,* Psal. ii. 6. *He hath exalted him, by his right-hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour,* Acts v. 31. The sceptre, and the law-giver is departed from Judah, from the Jews, since Shiloh came; but the sceptre and the Law-giver is come to the Gentiles; for, *The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Law-giver, the Lord is our King, he will save us,* Isa. xxx. 22. There needs no other reason, why the gathering of the people must be to him; for he being the Head and King of the people, by God the Father's appointment, all divine honours are owing to him: he must be the object of our faith, love, trust, obedience, and worship, as he is God-man, Mediator: and *it is the will of the Father, that all men honour the Son, even as they honour the Father;* and to him must the glory of the gathering be: *Upon him must be hung all the glory of his Father's house,—even all the vessels of small quantity, as well as great, from the vessels of cups to the vessels of flagons,* Isa. xxii. 24. All the vessels of mercy, that are gathered together to God's house, they must be gathered to him, and *fastened on him, as the glorious Nail in a sure place,* ver. 23.; *For it is he that builds the temple of the Lord, and shall bear the glory: for he shall sit and rule upon his throne,* Zech. vi. 13. People may gather about the throne of a king; and, O! should not the gathering of the people be about the throne of grace, to see the glory, and touch the sceptre of him that sits upon the throne? To him the *headship* and *government* of the people does belong; therefore to him must the gathering of the people be.

2. To him must the gathering of the people be; because to him does the WORK *of the people belong:* as he is appointed to be an Head to them, so a worker for them. Ever since the covenant of works was broken, and so our working arm broken, *we being by nature without strength,* it is he that *works all our work in us, and for us,* Isa. xxvi. 12. Hence says the psalmist David, Psal. lvii. 2. *I will cry unto God most High, unto God that performs all things for me.* There is a twofold work that we need to have performed, namely, work *satisfying* to the law, as a *covenant;* and work *suitable* to the law, as a *rule.* Now, the performing of both these works belongs to Christ, as *he is made of God to us, both righteousness and sanctification.* The work *satisfying* to the law, as a *covenant,* is performed by him as our *righteousness,* while he *fulfils the righteousness of the law for,* and in his people, Rom. viii. 4. The work *suitable* to the law as a *rule,* is performed in and through him, as our *sanctification;* while he *puts his Spirit within us, and causes us to walk in his statutes,* Ezek. xxxvi. 22. And hence, says Christ, John xv. 5. *Without me ye can do nothing:* the word is, χωρὶς ἐμοῦ, SEVERED *from me,* or SEPARATE *from me, ye can do nothing.* Why then, we must not remain separate from him; but gather to him, as he is the Mediator, and the All of the covenant. The whole weight and work of the covenant belongs to him, and this makes it a covenant of grace to us, and not of works; because all the work falls to his share. There is his *doing* work, for the people; for he came to *fulfil all righteousness,* that so the people might say, *In the Lord have I righteousness,* Isa. xlv. 24. Therefore it follows, *To him shall men come.*—Again, there is his *suffering* work for the people, on which account, the gathering of the people should be to him; Heb. xiii. 13. *That he might sanctify the people with his*

his own blood, he ſuffered without the gate; therefore let us go forth to him.—There is his *dying* work; for he ſuffered unto death: and his death was an act of obedience; he *being obedient unto death, even the death of the croſs.* This is the goſpel delivered unto us, to be preached unto the people, *How that Chriſt died for our ſins according to the ſcriptures* 1 Cor. xv. 3. And ſhall he die for the people, and yet there be no gathering of the people to him?—There is his *repairing* work, for the behoof of the people; and in the works juſt now mentioned, this repairing work is accompliſhed; for he repairs the breaches of the law, that our ſin made: and not only is the law *magnified and made honourable*, by his doing and dying; while his doing anſwers the precept, and his dying the threatening thereof, and that to infinite advantage; but the glory of the Law-giver is repaired. The people had come ſhort of the glory of God; but he, to whom the gathering of the people muſt be, did repair the honour and glory of his holineſs, by a perfect obedience; and the glory and honour of his juſtice, by a condign ſatisfaction: and thus brought in *glory to God in the higheſt*; yea, and made all the other glorious attributes of God ſhine forth gloriouſly and harmoniouſly, in the work of our redemption. And hence, when Chriſt was about this work, he ſays, *Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him*, John xiii. 31.—There is his *purchaſing* work, for the behoof of the people; *He hath bought the people with a price*, 1 Cor. vi. 20. And ſhall not the gathering of the people be to him, whoſe blood was the price of the peoples ſouls, and the purchaſe-money for buying grace and glory to them?—There is his *pleading* work for the people; for, *he is able to ſave to the uttermoſt, all that come to God by him, becauſe he ever lives to make interceſſion for them*, Heb. vii. 25. And this is the reaſon for their coming and gathering to him; for, in ſo doing, they ſhall have an evidence, that his pleading for them hath been, and will be for ever effectual.—There is alſo a *conquering* work, that belongs to him, according to Pſal. cx. 3. *Thy people ſhall be willing in the day of thy power:* therefore the gathering of the people ſhall be to him, becauſe the conquering of the people belongs to him; and how he conquers them, by the ſword of his powerful grace, you ſee, Pſal. xlv. 3, 4, 5. Indeed there will be no gathering to him, till this conquering power come: and therefore, if you would be gathered, cry to him to *gird this ſword upon his thigh*, and to *ſend the rod of his ſtrength out of Zion*, that it may be *mighty through God to the pulling down of the ſtrong holds of ſin.* O that his voice in the goſpel were powerful! Some tell us that the lion's whelps are born dead at firſt, till by the roaring of the old lion over them, they are quickened: whatever be in this, it is true enough in the caſe of the people that are gathered to Shiloh; they are born dead, and remain ſo, till the Lion of the tribe of Judah roar ſo loudly, as to quicken them with his powerful voice, according to John v. 25. *The hour cometh, when the dead ſhall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear ſhall live:* his voice quickens, conquers, and captivates them. And as it is his work to conquer them; ſo to conquer all their enemies for them; whether it be ſin, Satan, death, hell, or the world, that they may be *more than conquerors through him*; and all this conquering work belongs to him, that the gathering of the people may be to him.—And, in a word, there is a *ſtrengthening* work, that belongs to him, as well as a *leading, guiding, comforting, and counſelling* work, that I might mention, together with all the other parts of his ſaving work; *I can do all things through Chriſt ſtrengthening me*, ſays Paul. And it is upon this footing, that all the fruits of faith come in, even all the works of ſpiritual goſpel obedience. When we go forth to any work, we are to *go in the ſtrength of the Lord, making mention of his righteouſneſs, and of his only*; being *ſtrong in the Lord, and in the power of his might; ſtrong in the grace that is in Chriſt Jeſus; and ſtrengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man*; his *ſtrength being made perfect in our weakneſs*; and he *working in us both to will and to do of his good pleaſure.* Thus he is the *ſtrength of Iſrael*, the *ſtrength of his people:* for which cauſe, the gathering of the people muſt be to him; and becauſe, in this manner, the *work* of the people belongs to him, to work all their works in them, and for them. But then again,

3. To him muſt the gathering of the people be, becauſe to him does the INSTRUCTION *of the people belong*; for as the *purchaſe* of the people belongs to him, as a *Prieſt*, and the *conqueſt* of the people belongs to him, as a *King*; ſo the *inſtruction* of the people belongs to him, as a *Prophet.* And indeed, though I mention it here in the third place, yet this is the firſt part of his gathering work, to inſtruct, and teach, and enlighten; and may we not ſay, with Elihu, Job xxxvi. 22. *Who teacheth like him?* He is the none-ſuch Teacher of the people; and therefore, muſt the gathering of the people be to him. In vain is the gathering of people about tents and pulpits, if their eyes look no higher than towards poor miniſters, mortal worms like themſelves, that can only ſpeak to their ears, but cannot make one beam of divine light to break in upon their underſtandings. This is the peculiar work of him who is the *Sun of righteouſneſs*, the *Light of the world*, the *Light to lighten the Gentiles:* it is he only, by his Spirit, that can make us to know God, and the things of God; *No man hath ſeen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the boſom of the Father, he hath declared him*, John i. 18. He is the bleſſed and only Teacher and Inſtructer; and therefore the gathering of the people ſhould be to his ſchool, that they may be all taught of God; John vi. 45. *And every man therefore that hath heard, and learned of the Father, comes to me*, ſays Chriſt; where it is pleaſant to obſerve, comparing this and the former ſcripture together, that as God and Chriſt both are teachers here, ſo the Father and the Son both are the leſſon taught, in the light of the eternal Spirit: and, that as there is no coming to Chriſt, nor gathering to him, but under the influence of the Father's teaching; nor is there any coming to the Father, but by the Son, who is the way: ſo the great leſſon that the Father teaches is the Son, and the great leſſon that the Son teaches is the Father; and ſo the whole teaching comes to this, a knowing the Father, in the Son, by the Holy Ghoſt. Now, our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, in a peculiar manner, is the great Prophet and teacher, being anointed with a ſupereminent unction of the Spirit of wiſdom for this end; Iſa. lxi. 1. *The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, for he hath anointed me to preach*; O glorious preacher and teacher! *I have put my Spirit upon*

upon him, says the Father, *that he might bring forth judgment to the Gentiles*; that is, *light* and *instruction* to the people: and therefore should the gathering of the people be to him. O then, let all the people say, *To whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.*

4. To him must the gathering of the people be, because to him does the SALVATION *of the people belong*. Salvation from sin belongs to him; therefore *his name is called* JESUS, *because he saves his people from their sins*, Mat. i. 21. Salvation from wrath belongs to him, therefore his name is also called, *even* JESUS, *which delivered us from the wrath to come*, 1 Thess. i. 10. And not only the privative, but the positive salvation of the people belongs to him: hence, whom he saves, he adopts; whom he saves, he adorns; whom he saves, he anoints; whom he saves, he justifies, and glorifies. O then, to whom should the gathering of sinners be, but to him who is the Saviour of sinners? 1 Tim. i. 5. *This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came to save sinners, of whom*, [*viz.* of saved sinners] *I am the chief.* O let every man and woman here say it with application! say it, man, woman; say it, old and young, high and low, rich and poor; and I will say it with you, through grace, *of whom I am the chief*; even the chief of sinners, whom he came to save. Let not unbelief say, It may be he came not to save me: for this gospel declares that your name is in his sealed commission, if you be a sinner; there is the gospel-charter let down from heaven, and it is a letter directed on the back, *For you sinners; Jesus Christ came to save* SINNERS: and if you open the charter, and read it with application to yourself, you will find that it is all for you, both within and without. O! hath Christ a commission to save the people! and shall not the people gather to him for salvation? Hath he a commission to save sinners, and shall he return with his commission in his hand, saying, Father, thou gavest me a commission to *seek and to save that which was lost*, and yet wretched lost sinners will not have me, nor my salvation either? They love their lusts better than me; they love their own proud fancy better than my righteousness; and they will not believe that I have so much good-will to them as to save them: they will not be persuaded but I am cheating them with some goodly words: I would gather them, but they will not be gathered; and save them, but *they will not come to me that they might have life*, though I have a commission from the Father to give life to dead sinners. Why, may one think or say, if Christ hath such a commission to save sinners, then let him execute his commission, I shall not hinder him. What is that you are saying, man? Let me hear that again: if he hath a commission to save sinners, let him come and save me, I shall not hinder him. Is it jest or earnest that you are saying? If your heart be jesting, while you are speaking thus in your heart, and despising a Saviour notwithstanding; then it is a dreadful jest: *Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish; How shall ye escape, if ye neglect so great salvation?* But are you in earnest, O sinner, saying, Since it is his office to save sinners, O let him do it for God's sake! let him execute his saving office on me the chief of sinners; for, the Lord knows, I would not desire to hinder him? Why, poor soul, I will tell you good news, he seeks no more at your hand than what you are saying, namely, that you do not resist nor refuse his grace by unbelief; but that your heart say, Content, Lord; content to have salvation from all my sins and lusts, content to have all the salvation that Christ came to give: why, *he came to give life, and to give it more abundantly*; and when he is content to give, and you content to receive, there is little more ado, than to bless him that it is a bargain; for he is profering himself, and all his salvation upon you this day. To him does the *salvation* of the people belong; therefore let the gathering of the people be to him.

5. To him must the gathering of the people be, because to him is the GIFT *of the people made*. God the Father hath made a gift of the people to him; therefore the people must be gathered to him. The Father desires him to ask the people, and he should have them; *Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost ends of the earth for thy possession*, Psal. ii. 8. There is indeed a select number that were given to him from eternity, John vi. 37. *All that the Father hath given me, shall come to me*; that is, all that were given to him shall be gathered to him: and, that none of all the people that hear the gospel may exclude themselves, as if they were not given; therefore it follows, *Him that comes I will in no wise cast out*; all comers are welcome. It is as if Christ had said to these final rejecters of him, *I would have gathered you, but you would not*; you never had so much as a will to be gathered; you would not: but be it known, to your confusion, that though you reject and despise me, yet I will have a gathering of the people to me; *All that the Father hath given me shall be gathered to me*: and though none will be gathered, but these that were given, yet this giving is not put in as a bar to your coming, but rather as an encouragement thereto; therefore it is remarkable, he does not add, *Him that* WAS GIVEN *I will in no wise cast out*; but *him* THAT COMES *I will in no wise cast out*; intimating, That as this giving is not the primary object of faith, so it cannot be seen or known, but in the way of coming: and they may have this encouragement to come, that in coming they may know they were given to me. They that have no will to be gathered, cannot know they were given; but all that would be gathered, may be sure they were given: therefore let this be a ground for the gathering of people to him, that as the people to be gathered were given to him from eternity, so they that would be gathered may know and be assured, that they were given to him; *Thine they were, and thou gavest them me*, John xvii. 6. They were thine by election, and thou gavest them me, to be redeemed by me. O happy people, whom a day of power hath made so willing, that indeed they would be gathered to Shiloh! They may know that they were in God's hand from eternity, and out of God's hand they were put as a compliment into Christ's hand, if I may so express it; and indeed he is infinitely well-pleased with the compliment; he takes an armsful of them, as it were, out of God's everlasting arms; and he hugs them in his bosom; for, *his delights were with the sons of men*; and whenever he *sees the travel of his soul, he is satisfied*: and when he hath hugged them in his redeeming arms, till he hath justified, sanctified, and

and completely ſaved them, then he will give them back to the Father's hand again, preſenting them blameleſs to him, ſaying, *Behold I, and the children which thou haſt given me.* There muſt then be a gathering of the people to him, becauſe there was a giving of the people to him. A poor compliment, you may think with wonder, of the like of me, to paſs betwixt the hands of the eternal Father, and his eternal Son, in concurrence with the eternal Spirit, one God in three Perſons: but little matter how poor and mean the compliment ſeem to be, and really is in itſelf, if God be glorified, and Shiloh magnified, and you ſaved. O! let the conſideration of what a large dominion, *from ſea to ſea*, and *from the river to the ends of the earth*, is given to Chriſt; yea, a numberleſs number, that *no man can number, of all nations, and kindreds, and tongues, and people, that ſhall ſtand before the throne of the Lamb, with white robes, and palms in their hands*, Rev. vii. 9. ſaying, *Salvation to our God, that ſits upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever*: Let the view of that innumerable multitude of people that are given to him, ſtir up and provoke the gathering of the people to him; he is come to demand what was given him. But then again,

6. To him muſt the gathering of the people be, becauſe as the people are given to him, ſo he is GIVEN *to the people for this end*, that the gathering of the people may be to him: and hence, to all the people of the viſible church, it is ſaid, *To us a child is born, to us a ſon is given, whoſe name is called Wonderful, Counſeller, the mighty God, the everlaſting Father, the Prince of peace*, Iſa. vi. 9. I ſpeak not here of his being given in actual poſſeſſion to believers; they that take the gift of God are poſſeſſed of it: but I ſpeak even of a giving in the goſpel-diſpenſation and offer; for, no man can receive what is not given: receiving is not giving; and Chriſt is ſo far given to all the hearers of the goſpel, that they are obliged to receive him, and believe in him, upon peril of damnation; *He that believes not ſhall be damned.* Thus he is given to many that reject him; hence, ſays Chriſt, to theſe that were rejecting him, John vi. 32. *My Father gives you the true bread from heaven*; that is, in order to be received by you; for, in rejecting of this bread that my Father gives you, your ſouls will ſtarve. This will aggravate the damnation of the damned, that Chriſt was given to them in the goſpel-offer, and they rejected the gift of God. However, the good news of the goſpel is, John iii. 16. *God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believes on him*, or gathers in to him, *may not periſh, but have everlaſting life.* This reaſon, for the giving of the people to Shiloh, is imported in the very boſom of the text; Shiloh is come to you, that you may come to him; he is come in the fleſh, he is come in the goſpel, and may we hope he is come in the Spirit? He is come to the people, that the people may be gathered to him; and he is come as a Shiloh; that is, the Meſſias, the Sent of God, that the people may welcome God's Send, ſaying, *Bleſſed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. To you is born a Saviour, which is Chriſt the Lord*; this is indeed *good tidings to all people*, Luke ii. 10. *To you is the word of this ſalvation ſent*, Acts xiii. 26. Chriſt the Shiloh is the promiſed Seed, the leading promiſe; *and the promiſe is to you, and to your children*, Acts ii. 39. that you may receive him in the promiſe. He is the Sent of God to you, that you may gather to him; he is ſent to be the Saviour of the people, the Helper of the people; and ſent by way of free gift and donation, Iſa. xli. 27. *I will give to Jeruſalem One that brings good tidings*; and for what is he given to the people? See Iſa. lv. 4. *He is given to be a Witneſs to the people, and a Leader and Commander to the people*: yea, Iſa. xlii. 6. *He is given for a Covenant of the people.* And why is he thus given to the people, but that the gathering of the people may be to him? The people then are promiſed to him, and he is promiſed to the people; and there muſt be a gathering of the people to him. Shiloh is come to ſeek the people that were promiſed and given to him: let the people ſeek that Shiloh, that is promiſed and given to them. In a word, he is the true temple, to which the gathering muſt be; he is the mercy-ſeat, at which God and the people may meet together; and you cannot meet with God but in him, for in him alone God is well-pleaſed: and when you gather in to him, you get in to the heart of God; for he lies in the Father's boſom, being *his Elect, in whom his ſoul delights.*——So much for the reaſons.

VII. The *laſt* thing propoſed in the general method, was the *application* of the ſubject.

I have endeavoured, in the doctrinal part, all along to deliver the matter in a practical and applicatory ſtrain, and alſo enlarged it ſo much, that I need the leſs to inſiſt upon many inferences, wherein I have already anticipated myſelf. The main uſes I deſign are for *information* of ſome truths, and *exhortation* to ſome duties.

Firſt, For *information*. Is it ſo, that the Counſel of Heaven hath determined concerning Chriſt the Meſſias, that *to him ſhall the gathering of the people be?* Hence ſee,

1. The *doleful ſtate of the Jews at preſent*, and the lamentable circumſtances they have been in ever ſince the coming of Shiloh their promiſed Meſſias. While a multitude of Gentiles, that were but dogs, are gathered to God's houſe, and they, in the mean time, unchurched and caſt out, though to them *pertained the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the ſervice of God, and the promiſes*; and though of them, as *concerning the fleſh*, SHILOH *came, even* CHRIST, *who is over all, God bleſſed for ever*, Rom ix. 4, 5. Though they were the people of his firſt love, the ſeed of Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob, to whom ſo many precious promiſes were made in behalf of their ſeed: behold, their Shiloh comes to them, and they will not have him; *He came to his own, and his own received him not.* They owned the ſceptre was departed from Judah, when they ſaid, *We have no king but Cæſar*; and ſo by their own confeſſion, Shiloh is come, ſince the ſceptre was departed from Judah. And, becauſe they would not ſubmit to the ſpiritual ſceptre of the promiſed Meſſias, they have been without a king, without a prince, without a ſceptre, or law-giver, without a governor and government, for 1700 years and more, even ſince Shiloh came, to whom there is a gathering of other people in their room. Oh! ſhall we not lament their long continued rejection? Their ſeventy years captivity in Babylon was nothing to this; yea, their four hundred and thirty years bondage in Egypt was nothing to this! Alas! how long, how long ſhall his anger laſt againſt

againſt that people! how long ſhall they be under the guilt of the blood of Chriſt, which they imprecated upon themſelves and their poſterity, ſaying, *His blood be upon us, and our children!* Oh! pray, pray for that antient people of God, and that the blood of Shiloh may cleanſe them from that blood-guiltineſs! When they were in favour with God, the believers among them had mind of us poor Gentiles, when we were the *little ſiſter that had not breaſts*, Song viii. 8.; and now, when we are ſucking at the breaſts of goſpel ordinances and ſacramental ſolemnities, Oh! ſhall we not mind them, when their *breaſts are cut off*, when they that were the *natural branches are broken off*, and we that were the *wild olive-tree, are grafted in to partake of the root and fatneſs of the good olive-tree?* Rom. xi. 17, 24. Oh! let us not boaſt againſt the branches; *For if thou boaſteſt, thou beareſt not the root, but the root thee.* See ver. 18, 19, 20, 21. Let us not boaſt, but let us beg, that they may be again grafted in; *For if the caſting away of them be the reconciliation of the world, what ſhall the receiving of them be but life from the dead?* ver. 15. The day of the return and converſion of the Jews will be a day of greater gathering to Shiloh, even among the Gentiles, than we have yet ſeen; and it would fare better with us, if we were more employed in praying for them. Mean time, this dark and doleful diſpenſation, that as yet they are under, was not darkly foretold in the words of our text, that, upon the ſceptre's departing from Judah, Shiloh the Meſſias ſhould come, *And to him ſhould the gathering of the people be*, that is, the Gentiles; plainly intimating, a wonderful myſtery of providence, that the *King of the Jews* ſhould come to the Gentiles, and be crowned king among them, that ſo the Jews might have it to ſay at length, That the King of the Gentiles is become the King of the Jews; as well as the Gentiles have it to ſay, That the King of the Jews is become the King of the Gentiles.

2. Hence ſee the *ſovereign mercy* of God in Chriſt towards the *poor Gentile nations*, and the iſles of the Gentiles not forgotten; for he particularly promiſes, that *the iſles ſhall wait for his law*, Iſa. xlii. 4. And, O wonder, that we, in this remote iſland, were in his view, when he promiſed, that *to him ſhould the gathering of the people be.* Jacob, by inſpiration of the Spirit of God, ſaid it on his death-bed, and it is now more than three thouſand years ago; that is indeed to him not ſo much as three days; for, *to him a thouſand years are as one day.* Thouſands of years interveening cannot make him forget his promiſe; and, ſo far as there is, or ſhall be a gathering of the people to Shiloh, ſo far does this promiſe take effect. There was a promiſe of this, more antient yet, Gen. ix. 27. *God ſhall inlarge*, [or PERSUADE] *Japhet, and he ſhall dwell in the tents of Shem:* there, is a promiſe that the Gentiles ſhould be gathered in to partake of the privileges of the Jews; for of Japhet came the Gentiles, and among his poſterity were the iſles of the Gentiles divided; ſee Gen. x. 1, 2, 5.; and probably this iſland among the reſt. For confirming whereof, I ſhall not be poſitive in averring what ſome alledge, that as Gomer was the eldeſt ſon of Japhet, and of him came the people called *Gomeri* or *Cymbri*; ſo the firſt inhabitants of this iſland of Britain came of the poſterity of Japhet, one of the ſons of Noah, namely, of the ſaid Japhet's eldeſt ſon Gomer; and hence, from GOMERI came CAMBRIA, which is the Latin name of Wales in this iſland to this day, to which place the antient Britons retired at the coming in of the Saxons: hence they ſuppoſe, that the iſle of Britain is particularly intended here. But I ſhall not found any certain concluſion upon a doubtful ſuppoſition, though it be generally agreed to by ſome good hiſtorians. We may ſee it plain from the event, that God had a particular deſign that there ſhould be a gathering of people to Shiloh in theſe lands, and even in Scotland. I have ſhewed formerly, how early the Lord viſited us with the goſpel; and that we were among the firſt of the Gentile nations that ever were enlightened therewith, after Chriſt's aſcenſion, by which we were delivered from groſs paganiſm. And when I ſpoke of the remarkable gathering ſeaſons, I took notice of our reformation-days from Popery, and afterwards from Prelacy, our covevanting-days, and the like; and therefore I am not here to inſiſt thereupon: only, as there have been remarkable gathering times in Scotland, and as the Lord countenances yet the gathering means and ordinances among us; ſo we ought to bleſs him that ever goſpel-light ſhined upon us, and wait on him for more of that gathering power of his Spirit, that Scotland's barrenneſs now, and unfruitfulneſs under the means of grace, may not provoke him wholly to leave us, and make our name LO-AMMI; i. e. *Not my people.*

3. Hence ſee the *excellency* of the *goſpel*, and the *reaſon* of the *efficacy* thereof. Behold the excellency of the goſpel, which brings the glad tidings of a Saviour to the people, and of a gathering place for the poor Gentiles, as well as the Jews; a God-man, in whom God and man might meet together, that ſcattered ſinners ſeparated from God might be gathered to him. Behold the condeſcenſion of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt proclaimed in this goſpel, that he ſtoops ſo low as to be the gathering-room for poor ſinful people, to which they reſort for ſhelter and ſalvation. Shiloh is come; he is come in our nature, and with human nature he puts on human bowels, that into his very boſom the gathering of the people may be, that all the good they have loſt may be found in Chriſt; yea, that the God, whom they have loſt, may be found in him; for, *God is in Chriſt reconciling the world to himſelf.*—But as herein we ſee the excellency, ſo alſo behold the *efficacy* of the goſpel, and the power thereof. What was the reaſon of the wonderful ſpreading and influence of the goſpel of Chriſt, eſpecially in the firſt ages? It is a matter for which no human policy can account, that the goſpel, preached in ſimplicity, by men of the meaneſt character, ſhould make its way through forces of devils and men, ſhould gain ſo many proſelytes, ſubdue ſo many kingdoms. Had this doctrine been ſuited to fleſh and blood, and, like Mahomet's, indulged men in ſenſual enjoyments, and promiſed afterwards the higheſt degrees of ſenſual pleaſures; had the goſpel been deſigned for encreaſing the ſtock of earthly treaſure, it were no wonder that it ſhould have gained ſo much ground; for all carnal men would readily receive this doctrine, and tenaciouſly retain it. Nay, had it proceeded upon mere rational grounds and foundations, ſome philoſophers, at leaſt, would have embraced it.

it. But, that a doctrine, that teaches to *deny ungodlineſs, and worldly luſts*; a doctrine, that teaches to *crucify the old man, with his affections and luſts; the luſts of the eye, the luſts of the fleſh, and the pride of life*; a doctrine, that enjoins us to *look to things that are not ſeen*; a doctrine, that commands us to *leave all things, deny ourſelves*, and *count all but loſs and dung for the excellency of the knowledge of Chriſt*: that this doctrine, however highly rational, yet hath no foundation in reaſon, and admits conſequences of no rational demonſtration, many thereof being above the reach of reaſon; that this doctrine, that owes nothing to the character of its preachers, and owes as little to human force; that this doctrine ſhould have gained ſo great a ground, obtained ſo vaſt ſucceſs in a time, wherein the profeſſion thereof did make the profeſſors of it to run the riſque of poverty, death, and diſgrace; this, I ſay, is a myſtery, that none ſhall be able to unfold, but theſe who plow with this goſpel-hiefer, that the goſpel is the very inſtrument of divine power, whereby he gathers the people to Shiloh. The reaſon of this marvellous diſpenſation is, that the omnipotent God, who can give a being to his word, hath paſt his word, that to Chriſt ſhall the gathering of the people be: and divine power, for effectuating this deſign, is put forth in the goſpel; which, therefore, is called *the power of God to ſalvation*, while therein is *revealed the righteouſneſs of God, from faith to faith*. And this *treaſure is put in earthen veſſels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of man*: And, O that this power were put forth on this occaſion, for gathering the people to Shiloh!

4. Hence ſee what ought to be the *great deſign* of *peoples gathering* to *goſpel-ordinances*; the leading end is, what the prophet expreſſes, Jer. l. 5. *They ſhall aſk the way to Zion, with their faces thitherward, ſaying, Come and let us join ourſelves to the Lord*: that is, let us gather together unto Shiloh; let us lay ourſelves under the influence of his gathering power, and caſt ourſelves into his gathering arms, while he is ſtretching forth the arms of his free grace, in a preached goſpel. O Sirs! What is the deſign of theſe gatherings of people together, if there be no gathering to Shiloh? If we look to the views and deſigns of the moſt part, we will find, that the gathering to Shiloh, is leaſt of all in their view. As there were wiſe virgins and fooliſh; ſo there are wiſe hearers and fooliſh: ſome come to ordinances, only for a name, becauſe they would not be thought any worſe than their neighbours; ſome come for diverſion, to ſpend an hour or two in hearing, becauſe they have little elſe to do; ſome come for attendance' ſake, becauſe they are waiting on their maſter or miſtreſs; ſome come for company's ſake, their fellows ſaying, Let us go to ſermon; Content, ſays the other, and ſo they go for company; ſome come for curioſity's ſake, they have heard people ſpeak to the praiſe, or diſpraiſe of ſuch and ſuch a man, and they will ſee whether it be as they ſay; ſome come for carping and cavilling, not to be judged by the word, but to judge it, and cenſure it, being content to find ſome word, that they reckon may be to the miniſter's prejudice, or reproach; and though they ſhould forget all the reſt of the word, yet this they will mind, to report it to their confederates, either out of malice, becauſe they *receive not the truth in the love thereof*, or out of pride, becauſe they would have others, that hear their cenſorious remarks, to eſteem them to be judicious perſons, and competent judges, while, in the mean time, they are but bewraying their own ignorance, malice, and pride. Hence, ſome come to watch, if any thing can be wreſted, that is uttered, that they may act the devil, in accuſing the brethren; ſome gape for remarkable phraſes, that, when they come to their ordinary company, they may have ſomething to grace and adorn their tales; ſome never come to hear what ſhall be ſaid to themſelves, and therefore never prick up their ears, till they ſuppoſe they hear the miniſter expoſing the crimes of others; ſome come to gaze, and look about them, to ſee who are there, and what is their dreſs and behaviour; ſome come to muſe and dream, and rove, and if they notice any word that is ſaid, it will perhaps occaſion a hundred impertinent thoughts to keep out the reſt of the ſermon, and the mind will run a thouſand ways before it can get another word noticed, and, perhaps, the ſermon is done before they can gather their thoughts together again. Many ſuch accidental hearers there are, that gather to ordinances, but not to Shiloh. They come to meet with their friends, that, it may be, conveen at ſuch a ſermon, but not to meet with Chriſt. They are like children that gather to a market, and ſit in the market-place, but neither to buy nor ſell. But, as many foxes have been taken, when they came to take; ſo, ſome that have come only to ſpy novelties, yea, to ſcoff and ſcorn, have changed their minds before they went home. And, Oh that grace would come and catch ſome that are here, and yet are ſeeking nothing here, but, like babes, to catch butterflies! Oh that Chriſt, the greateſt treaſure in the world, ſhould be moſt deſpiſed, and that the goſpel-ſtar, which ſhould lead you to the place where he is, that you may be gathered to him, that this ſtar ſhould not be marked!

5. Hence ſee what is the *great Mark*, at which miniſters of the goſpel ſhould ſhoot, in diſperſing thereof; why, it is juſt the *gathering of ſouls to Chriſt: To him ſhall the gathering of the people be*. Wo! wo to the miniſter, whoſe great deſign is only to gather a multitude of people to himſelf, and enhanſe their applauſe! It hath been indeed the lot of ſome of the moſt faithful miniſters of Chriſt, to be thus reproached and calumniated, as if all their deſign were to recommend themſelves to the populace, and gather a multitude to their faction; they have been branded as ſelf-ſeekers, inſtead of being ſoul-fiſhers; and why? Becauſe providence hath commonly ordered that thoſe who have been moſt denied and mortified to ſelf, have been moſt followed; but the more they were followed, the more they were envied by thoſe that truly ſought themſelves: hence, as none was more followed than Chriſt, ſo none was more envied by the ſelf-ſeeking Phariſees; *Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? Behold the world is gone after him*, John 12. 19. And, as we read not that Chriſt reproved any for following him, though he reproved them for their falſe ends in doing ſo, John vi. 26. ſo, though no goſpel miniſter will be diſpleaſed, that he hath many fiſhes before the net, in hopes that ſome may be gathered; yet it is, and will be the character of all faithful miniſters, which the apoſtle relates, 2 Cor. iv. 5. *We preach not ourſelves*,

ſelves, but Chriſt Jeſus the Lord, and ourſelves your ſervants for Jeſus ſake. And, 1 Cor. ii. 2. *I determined to know,* [or, MAKE KNOWN,] *nothing among you, ſave Jeſus Chriſt, and him crucified.* The great goſpel-deſign then is, to gather ſouls to Chriſt, ſeeing they can never be happy or holy, but in him. And while you find that to be your miniſters great ſcope, you ought to regard and hear them, as you would do a voice from heaven; yea, and more, while they ſpeak the mind of God, from the word of God, which is the *more ſure word of prophecy;* for it is the ſame as if you heard Chriſt himſelf: therefore he ſays, *He that hears you, hears me; and he that deſpiſes you, deſpiſes me.* If you truly regarded that word of Chriſt, you would hear the voice of the preacher, as you would hear the voice of God. If Samuel had thought it was God that ſpoke to him, he would not have ſlept; but becauſe he thought it was not God, but Eli, therefore he ſlept on: ſo, while people do not think it is God that ſpeaks to them, but only a man, they will never regard it; and never will there be a gathering to Shiloh, till the word be received, *Not as the word of man, but as it is in truth the word of God, which effectually works in you that believe,* 1 Theſſ. ii. 13. Where alſo that queſtion is obviate, *How ſhall we know when the miniſter ſpeaks his own words, or God's word?* Why, let the word of God be received, and it will ſpeak for itſelf; for, it will *effectually work in you that believe.* And when the words of one preacher ſeem to claſh with the words of another, this effectual working of the word will teach you how to judge things that differ really, and how to *prove all things, and hold faſt that which is good.* The great mark then, I ſay, that the goſpel-miniſter aims at, is the gathering of the people to Shiloh; and the pointing out of Chriſt to them, for wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification, and redemption. Surely, my friends, we know no other way to ſave you, nor ourſelves; if we did, how wretched were we to keep it from you, ſince we have no other calling, but to ſhew you the way of ſalvation.

6. Hence we may alſo ſee what is the *centre of all goſpel-truth;* Chriſt is the centre, wherein all the lines of evangelical doctrine are gathered together, and do meet. It would not be the duty of people, to believe in him, or gather to him by faith, if he were not the *truth,* as well as the *way;* yea, the centre and ſubſtance of all truth: and that is not the truth, that does not lead to him. Here is the moſt ſure teſt of orthodoxy; whatever pretends to be the truth, and yet tends only to lead a man in to himſelf, and not out of himſelf to Chriſt; whatever doctrine tends to make you think, you muſt produce ſome holineſs or good qualifications from within yourſelf, without gathering firſt to Shiloh, to get it, you may know it is not orthodox doctrine: whatever doctrine tends to the diſparagement of Chriſt, or to the robbing him of any part of the glory of ſalvation-work, is to be rejected, as erroneous; for, *to him alone muſt the gathering of the people be:* and to him only ſhall the glory of our whole ſalvation, from firſt to laſt, belong. Chriſt is much robbed of his glory in Britain at this day; damnable Arian doctrine is ſpreading, whereby Chriſt is robbed of the glory of his ſupreme Deity, denying his being the eternal Son of God, co-equal, and co-eſſential with the Father *. The devil himſelf was more orthodox than our Arian doctors, when he owned, Mat. viii. 29. that Chriſt was the Son of God; *What have we to do with thee, Jeſus thou Son of God?* The devil ſpake more honourably of him, than they do, when he ſaid, Mark i. 24. *I know thee who thou art, the holy One of God.* My text leads me to what I am ſaying; for, if Chriſt were not the ſupreme God, equal with the Father, the gathering of the people to him, to believe in him, to worſhip and adore him, would be unlawful; it would be idolatry. For, as *the Lord our God is one Lord;* ſo we muſt *worſhip the Lord our God,* and *him only muſt we ſerve:* and it is idolatry to worſhip any other. Yea, to the Son, he ſays, *Let all the angels of God worſhip him:* and for this end, muſt all the people be gathered to him. My preſent work allows me not to trace the other doctrines, that rob him of his glory, and tend to lead people elſewhere than to Shiloh: only, whatever maſk of truth, or holineſs, any doctrine ſhall put on, if it tend to gather people to Moſes, and not to Shiloh; or to lead them to the law, and not to Chriſt, who is *the end of the law for righteouſneſs to every one that believeth,* it favours not of the *truth as it is in Jeſus,* Eph. iv. 21.——But the main inference I deſigned at preſent, was for exhortation; and therefore, paſſing all other inferences that might be drawn, I come to apply it,

Secondly, For *exhortation.* And I deſign, as the Lord may pity and aſſiſt, to direct it to three ſorts of perſons, with relation to this gathering of the people to Shiloh. 1. Some may be *doubtful* whether they were ever gathered to Shiloh, or not; therefore I would exhort them to try. 2. Some may be ſure they were *never* yet gathered to Shiloh; therefore I would exhort them to gather under his wings. 3. Some are believers, that have, through grace, *been gathered* by him, and made to gather to him; and I would exhort them to their duty, with reſpect to their *further gathering* to him.

1ſt, Some may be *doubtful,* whether they were ever gathered to Shiloh, or not; and therefore my exhortation to ſuch, is, that they would try and examine, whether it be ſo or not. Examination is a neceſſary duty at all times, as well after, as before a communion. He that ſays, with reference to the ſacrament, *Let a man examine himſelf, and ſo let him eat;* ſays alſo, with reference to any ſeaſon, *Examine yourſelves, whether you be in the faith, prove your ownſelves; know ye not your ownſelves, how that Chriſt is in you, except ye be reprobates?* 2 Cor. xiii. 5. Oh! poor dying mortal! will you try if you have been gathered to Shiloh, or not? Whether you have gone in to him by a faith of his own operation? For according as this takes place, ſo will it fare with you through all eternity. If you die out of Chriſt, or in unbelief, you *die in your ſins,* John viii. 24. And better die in a ditch, and die like a dog, than die in your ſins. If you die in your ſins, you will riſe in your ſins, and

* About this time the Arian hereſy was not only revived, but had gained conſiderable footing in our neighbouring kingdom of England, under the patronage of Mr. Whiſton, and others; but alſo diffuſed its baleful and pernicious influence into Scotland, befriended by many, adopted and publicly taught in one of our principal Seminaries of learning; for which a proceſs was commenced by the preſbytery of Glaſgow, againſt profeſſor Simſon, Anno 1726, and carried on, before the reſpective judicatories, till concluded by the Aſſembly 1729. the charge being found clearly proven; and he, in conſequence thereof, got but a very inadequate ſentence, being only ſuſpended from teaching and preaching, inſtead of depoſition and excommunication.

ſtand

ſtand before the tribunal of God in your ſins, and ſo be condemned. If you be gathered to Chriſt, you will be found in him, and ſo found happy, when death, judgment, and eternity appear; therefore I exhort you ſolemnly to reflect upon this matter, whether you be gathered, or not. If all that you are worth in a world, as I noticed on a former occaſion, lay in one precious ſtone, and that ſtone were to be tried by a ſkilful jeweller, whether it were true or falſe, whether it would fly, or endure under the ſmart ſtroak of his hammer; ſurely, your thoughts would not be unconcerned about the iſſue of ſuch a trial. Why, man, woman, all that you are worth in this world, and the world to come, depends upon this matter, whether you be of the people that are gathered to Shiloh, or not. Try whether your faith in the promiſed Shiloh, will fly, or endure the ſtroak of the hammer of God's word: have you no concern in this matter? You would be loath to put to ſea, though it were but to croſs a narrow ferry, in a rotten leaky veſſel; and will you dare to venture on the ocean of eternity, in a falſe rotten bark? Whatever profeſſion you have, whatever blaze you make, whatever eſteem others may have of you, whatever opinion you may have of yourſelf, and of your faith, you will be drowned for ever in the deluge of God's wrath, if you be not gathered in to the ark, Jeſus Chriſt: I would therefore offer you ſome helps to make this trial. And here all that I ſaid upon the fourth general head, concerning the *means* and *manner* of this gathering; how God acts in gathering, and how he makes the ſoul to act, might be brought in; but, paſſing all theſe, I offer theſe few following marks, by which you may try whether or not, you have ever been gathered to Shiloh.

1. If ever you was gathered to Shiloh, then Shiloh hath *come to you*, before ever you was gathered to him. The text makes the *coming of Shiloh* to be the very *cauſe* of the *gathering of the people to him:* as his coming in the fleſh did uſher in the gathering of the Gentiles; ſo it is his coming in the Spirit that makes the ſpiritual gathering to him. Try then, if ever he hath come to you. Surely, if you be gathered to him, you can ſay, I would never have come to him, unleſs he had come to me: now, if Chriſt never came to you by his Spirit, as a Spirit of conviction, convincing you of ſin and miſery, and diſcovering your need of Chriſt, and that you was loſt for ever without him, ſurely you have not yet been gathered to him. You that never yet had a ſorrowful hour for want of Chriſt, and was never brought to a *wo's me, for I want Chriſt and ſalvation!* nor to a *what ſhall I do to be ſaved?* you have reaſon to conclude that you was never yet gathered to him: for, when he comes by his Spirit, he *convinces the world of ſin;* when he gathers the people to him, he comes and *convinces them of ſin, becauſe they believe not in him*, John xvi. 8. Some never wanted faith, which declares they never had it; they never miſſed Chriſt, which ſays they never matched with him. As he that was never a real wanter, was never a real and true ſuiter; ſo it is the needy wanter that is the ſteady ſuiter. Thus here, man, woman, if you had never a want of Chriſt, you was never in ſuit of him, never gathered to him: though he hath been in ſuit of you by the goſpel-offer may be a thouſand times, yet you being pleaſed with your old match, your ſins, luſts, idols, ſelf-righteouſneſs, or the world; his ſuit was never regarded, becauſe you was never a wanter; and being never a true wanter, you was never a true ſeeker or receiver of him; and ſo never gathered to him: for you was never convinced of your want of Chriſt, and want of faith in him. Deceive not yourſelf, O ſinner; you was never a believer, if you was never a wanter; if the Spirit of conviction never came and made you ſay, Oh! I want grace, I want holineſs, I want faith, love, repentance, and all good; yea, I want God, I want Chriſt, I want the Spirit! Hence it is the property of a believer, notwithſtanding all he gets, yet he is ſtill a wanter; always poor and needy, and nothing in himſelf: and it is the property of an unbeliever, notwithſtanding all that he wants, yet he is always *rich, and increaſed with goods, and wants nothing;* hence we find ſome ignorant people expreſſing what others that pretend to more knowledge do conceal; aſk them, Do you want faith? Oh! no; we always truſted in God. Do you want hope? No; we hope in his mercy. Do you want love? No; I had ever a love to God and his people all my days. Do you want grace? Nay, God forbid, that I ſhould be altogether graceleſs. Do you want Chriſt? Oh! no; my ſweet Saviour, what would come of me if I wanted Chriſt? Why, man, woman, I know nothing that you want; you are not a wanter: the Lord pity you; for, what you dream you never wanted, you never had to this day. The Spirit of conviction hath never come; and, inſtead of being gathered to Shiloh, you was never yet gathered to the porch-door of true Chriſtianity; for the Spirit's coming to convince of the want of Chriſt, and of faith in him, is the very beginning of all true religion. But if Shiloh hath come by his Spirit, and ſhewed you your want of all things, but ſin, it is a good beginning; for thus he gathers you out of your falſe hopes and lying refuges.—But next, if Shiloh hath come to you for gathering you to himſelf, then he hath come not only as a Spirit of conviction, but alſo as a Spirit of *powerful illumination*, diſcovering the glory of Shiloh to you, even the glory of his perſon, offices, righteouſneſs, fulneſs, and other things of Chriſt, ſo as to glorify Chriſt in your view, John xvi. 14. *He ſhall glorify me; for he ſhall receive of mine, and ſhew it unto you.* Now, if Shiloh ever came by his Spirit in the goſpel, to ſhew ſomething of the glory of Chriſt to you, and the glory of God's perfections in him, ſo as to make him appear more glorious to you than all the world, it ſeems you have not yet been gathered; *For if our goſpel be hid, it is hid to them that are loſt; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, leſt the light of the glorious goſpel of Chriſt, who is the image of God, ſhould ſhine unto them*, 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. But if ever you was gathered, then *the God who commanded light to ſhine out of darkneſs, hath ſhined into your hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jeſus Chriſt*, ver. 6. For as, when the *Lord builds up Zion, he appears in his glory;* ſo, when he gathers ſouls, he appears in his glory, and brings them *from darkneſs to his marvellous light.* I do not ſpeak of the higheſt degree of ſpiritual light, nor yet of any extraordinary manifeſtations; all that I mean is, the Spirit's coming to enlighten your minds

minds in the knowledge of Chriſt, whereby you have *ſeen his glory, as the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth*; and have ſeen a fulneſs of all grace in him. Theſe are not enthuſiaſtic deluſions, but ſpiritual expreſſions: for, perhaps ſome perſon may think or ſay, What is that the man is ſpeaking, of beholding ſuch a glory? I never ſaw any greater glory in all the world than that of the ſun, moon, and ſtars in the firmament. What ſay you, man? Saw you never any greater glory than that which your bodily eyes have ſeen betwixt earth and heaven? Then I may ſay to you, that you was never yet gathered to Shiloh; for he never came in his Spirit to ſhew you his glory. I ſpeak not of weak powerleſs fancies and imaginations that ſome may have of Chriſt's glory, but I call it a powerful illumination, conquering the will, and captivating the heart, and carrying in all the affections to the embracing of Chriſt; for, when the *Sun of righteouſneſs ariſes*, it is with *healing under his wings*; healing the reſiſtence of the will, and the hardneſs of the heart, and melting down the whole ſoul in the warm arms of his gathering grace and love, while he draws with loving-kindneſs. And indeed, *No man can come to me*, ſays Chriſt, *except the Father which hath ſent me draw him*; and ſaving diſcoveries are of a drawing nature. The true Sun hath not only light, but heat, whereby the heart is warmed; and the true Light is the light of life, whereby the ſoul is quickened. If ever you was gathered to Shiloh, then know it, that Shiloh hath *come to you* before ever there could be a gathering to him.

2. If ever you was gathered to Shiloh, then as Shiloh hath come to you, ſo you have been made *particularly to come to him*, under the drawing power and influence of that Spirit I have been ſpeaking of. And indeed, as none can come unleſs he draw them, ſo none can ſtay away when he is drawing them: and hence every believer finds, that as it is impoſſible to believe till power come, ſo it is impoſſible not to believe when divine power comes: it is as eaſy then, as it was difficult before. If ever you was gathered to Shiloh, then as the coming of Shiloh to you hath prevented your coming to him, ſo your coming to him hath been effectuate by his coming to you, and making the general call of the goſpel effectual, in enabling you to a particular application, ſo as to give a particular anſwer to the general call. If you have been but hearers of the word all your days, without ever applying it to your own uſe; and hearers of the general offer and promiſe of Chriſt, without ever ſeeing yourſelves involved, incloſed, and included in the general promiſe and offer, and without ever making a *particular, perſonal application* thereof, you are not yet gathered to Shiloh; for, when ſouls are gathered, the general call gets a particular anſwer; *When thou ſaidſt, Seek ye my face; my heart ſaid, Thy face, Lord, will I ſeek*, Pſal. 27. 8. The goſpel-call is general, *Believe in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; but the anſwer muſt be particular, *Lord, I believe; help thou my unbelief.* When people ſuffer goſpel-truths to hover in the brain, without application, or learn things as children do their catechiſm by rote, never reflecting, what am I doing? where am I going? what will become of me? and what effect hath this word upon me? Unbelief remains undiſturbed; the word comes and goes; and there is no good done, no gathering to Shiloh, becauſe no particular application. It is the very deſign of the Spirit's convincing and enlightening work, to bring the ſoul to this particular application of Chriſt; and therefore this mark may clear the former. If you think, how ſhall I know if I have ſuch a meaſure of conviction and illumination as is ſufficient to evidence that I am gathered to Shiloh? Why, any meaſure that God pleaſes to give is enough, if it iſſue in the ſoul's particular reception and application of Chriſt. When is it that the metal is melted enough in the fire? Why, it is melted enough when it runs eaſily into the mould. Now, there may be natural meltings, under the common influences of the Spirit: but, when is the ſoul melted enough with the beams of the Sun of righteouſneſs, or with the fire of the Spirit? Why, it is melted enough when it runs into the goſpel-mould. There are ſome, as I have noticed on a former occaſion, that have, as it were, too much of the fire; theſe are they that apprehend themſelves ſuch great ſinners, that they *dare* not come to Chriſt: There are others that have, as it were, too little of the fire; theſe are they that only think they are not ſo good as they ought to be, and therefore they *ſhould* not come to Chriſt: there are others that have nothing of the fire at all, and theſe are they that think they are good enough already, and they *need* not come to Chriſt: but then only is the ſoul ſufficiently melted, when it runs into the mould. What is the goſpel-mould? It is even Chriſt; and when the melted ſoul runs into this mould, there does it get the right ſhape and form, and there only. As it is not the melting of the metal that gives it a ſhape, faſhion, or form, but the mould that gives it the form; ſo never expect to have any good form, any good ſhape, any good qualifications, till your ſouls run into this mould. It is the very deſign of the Spirit's coming to induce people to relinquiſh their own fancied goodneſs, and oblige them to come to Chriſt for all. Try then, if ever you was gathered to Shiloh, by this, namely, whether your ſoul, in a day of divine power, was made to run in to him like melted lead into a mould, cloſing with, and cleaving to him by a particular application. But how the ſoul acts here, by a *particular appropriation* and *fiducial perſuaſion*, upon the divine word, under divine conduct, I have formerly deſcribed*; therefore I proceed to another mark.

3. If ever you was gathered to Shiloh, then the *gathering place* will be very *precious to you*; I mean the promiſed Shiloh, Chriſt himſelf, 1 Pet. ii. 6, 7. There he is held forth as the *chief corner-ſtone*, to which all the ſtones of the Spiritual building are gathered together, and unite; and to all ſuch as are gathered to him, it is declared, *He is precious*: and the word ſignifies, *He is* HONOURABLE; he is an *honour* to them, and they put honour upon him, and entertain him honourably, in a ſuitableneſs to his high quality, as he is God-man; and particularly, as he is Shiloh, that is, the Meſſias, the Sent of God, the Father's extraordinary Ambaſſador. Some eſteem Chriſt, but not according to his grandeur and glory; and therefore, it is evident, they are not gathered to him as

* See this intereſting point of doctrine copiouſly handled, Ser. X. p. 193, 194, 195, 218, 221.

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the Shiloh, the Sent of God; but they that are gathered to him, they receive, eſteem, and entertain him, according to his dignity. If a ſubject ſhall receive, or entertain his prince, or the king's extraordinary ambaſſador, no otherwiſe than he would do his country neighbour, this would be interpreted a contempt: ſo, if Chriſt be not received, eſteemed, and entertained according to his grandeur, dignity, and ſtate, he counts it a contempt, rather than a due reception or eſtimation of him. If Chriſt be not eſteemed as a King, he is but diſregarded; if he be not honoured as the Father's Ambaſſador-extraordinary, he is but deſpiſed: for, as Shiloh, he hath Heaven's ſealed commiſſion; *Him hath God the Father ſealed.* The unbelieving Jews were content to receive and eſteem Chriſt as a great prophet, as the Mahometans do; but they would not receive and entertain him according to his greatneſs, grandeur, and glory, which he was inveſted with: therefore they were challenged as rejecters and deſpiſers of him, Acts xiii. 41. *He came to his own, but his own received him not;* for they did not receive him, as the Son of God, and the Sent of God: whereas, it is ſaid of the believing Jews, who received Chriſt, That they *beheld his glory, as the glory of the only begotten of the Father;* that is, they ſo received him in all his glory, grandeur, majeſty, and ſplendour, that they eſteemed honourably of him. Hence, ſays Chriſt, John xvii. 8. *They have known that I came out from thee, and have believed that thou didſt ſend me.* If you be gathered unto Shiloh, then you eſteem honourably of him, as he is the glorious Shiloh, the Sent of God. Is Chriſt thus precious to you, and honourable?

4. If you be gathered unto Shiloh, then you will be *cloathed with him*, for he is ſent to be a *robe of righteouſneſs;* and all that are gathered to him, do put on that mantle, and gather in under that cover; and in that cloathing do they ſtand *perfectly righteous* in the ſight of God; being *accepted as righteous in his ſight, only for the righteouſneſs of Chriſt.* Hence, it is given as a mark of the true church and children of God, that are gathered to Chriſt, that they are *cloathed with the Sun*, Rev. xii. 1. It is indeed called a *great wonder;* for the myſtery of free and perfect juſtification, and of being cloathed with a perfect righteouſneſs, is ſuch a myſtery, that natural men cannot conceive it, nor believe it, though a man ſhould *declare it to them*, as the apoſtle ſpeaks, Acts xiii. 41. Yea, the believer himſelf cannot believe it, without *holy wondering*, and *joyful trembling*, Jer. xxxiii. 8, 9. This wonder is ſaid to be of a *woman in heaven;* that is, the church militant, and every particular believer under a goſpel diſpenſation, wherein there is a full revelation of this righteouſneſs. Now, here it is ſaid alſo, *ſhe was clothed with the Sun;* that is, with Chriſt, the Sun of righteouſneſs; the woman being married to Chriſt, as the Lord her righteouſneſs, ſhe is, as it were, gathered in to the Sun in the firmament, and ſo cloathed with the perfect righteouſneſs of Chriſt; that however black and dark ſhe is in herſelf; yet, in point of juſtification, this Sun, wherewith ſhe is cloathed, makes her ſhine in a perfect righteouſneſs, as gloriouſly in God's eyes, as the bodily ſun ſhines gloriouſly in our eyes, when it ſhines in its meridian ſplendour. The believer is not only *fair as the moon*, in the ſight of men, in point of *ſanctification;* which moon, may be indeed, and is full of ſpots, and very changeable; but *clear as the ſun*, in the ſight of God, in point of *juſtification*; the Sun of righteouſneſs, with which he is clothed, being perfectly glorious. But, perhaps, ſome may ſay, If this be an evidence of one that he is cloathed with the Sun of righteouſneſs, how ſhall I examine myſelf by this, or know that I am thus cloathed? Why, you may examine it by what follows. If you be *cloathed with the Sun*, then you have got the *moon under your feet*, and upon *your head a crown of twelve ſtars.* Have you got the moon under your feet? What is that, may you ſay? I find ſome underſtand two things by it; the one is, the moon of your own *righteouſneſs*, and the other is the moon of the *world.* As to the former then, if you be gathered to Chriſt, and cloathed with the Sun of righteouſneſs, then you have got the moon of your own *righteouſneſs* under your feet; that is, you will make no account of your own righteouſneſs of ſanctification before God, in compariſon of the garment of Chriſt's righteouſneſs, which is the Sun that you are ſo glorioufly cloathed with. Nay, when your own righteouſneſs, or graces, put in for any ſhare of juſtification before God, you will, in this reſpect, trample them under your feet as a *menſtruous cloth*, as the prophet Iſaiah did, chap. lxiv. 6. *All our righteouſneſs are as filthy rags.* Yea, when it claims to be a righteouſneſs, before an infinitely holy and juſt God, you will trample it under your feet as *dung*, as the apoſtle Paul did, Phil. iii. 8. *Yea, doubtleſs, I count all things but loſs, for the excellency of the knowledge of Chriſt; yea, I do count them but dung, that I may win Chriſt, and be found in him, not having mine own righteouſneſs, that is after the law, but that which is through the faith of Chriſt, the righteouſneſs which is of God by faith.* This he ſpeaks not only of his phariſaical righteouſneſs before his converſion, but his righteouſneſs of ſanctification after his converſion. The man that is cloathed with the Sun of righteouſneſs, accounts his own righteouſneſs a contemptible nothing, in compariſon of Chriſt's righteouſneſs. It is not gain, but loſs, becauſe, as Chryſoſtom, one of the Fathers, ſays, "When the ſun ſhines, it is but loſs to ſit by a "candle-light:" Why? becauſe his righteouſneſs is God's righteouſneſs. God is the worker of it; and, in compariſon thereof, our beſt righteouſneſs, whereof we are the workers, even with divine aſſiſtance, is but dung, to be trampled upon, when it competes with the other, or would have any ſhare in the matter of our juſtification before God. If you be cloathed with the Sun then, and be thus gathered to Shiloh, you have got this moon under your feet; and whatever light of ſanctification you have, it will flow from your juſtification, as the light of the moon does come from the ſun; and as the moon gives light in the dark night, ſo will the moon of your ſanctification give light to other men, walking in the dark night of this world: *Your light will ſo ſhine before men, that they ſeeing your good works, may glorify God.* And here is a myſtery in the believer's life; he ſhines like the moon, in point of ſanctification, doing all the good works he can, that he may glorify God, and edify his neighbour in the world; and yet he keeps this moon of his own works and righteouſneſs under his feet, and tramples upon it, in the matter of juſtification, becauſe, in that reſpect, his only cloathing

cloathing is the Sun of righteouſneſs.—Again, as to the other ſenſe, if you be cloathed with the Sun, and gathered to Shiloh, then you will have the moon of this *world* under your feet; the profits, honours, and pleaſures of the world, which being changeable and unconſtant, as the moon, the believer hath it under his feet; becauſe, being cloathed with the glorious Sun of righteouſneſs, and thereby diſcerning the glory of God and Chriſt, and heavenly things, he cannot but deſpiſe and undervalue all earthly things, when coming in competition with heavenly; as Moſes did, Heb. xi. 25, 26. when he vilified all the glory and grandeur of Pharaoh's court, *Chooſing rather to ſuffer affliction, with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleaſures of ſin for a ſeaſon; eſteeming the reproach of Chriſt greater riches than the treaſures of Egypt.* You that had never the moon of this world under your feet, but have the world in your heart, and nothing but the world, ſurely you are not gathered unto Shiloh; for they that are gathered to him, they are gathered out of the world, and ſet apart from the reſt of the world; *They are not of the world, but choſen out of the world.* Hence, they that are gathered to Shiloh, are brought off from their old worldly companions: there are ſinful gatherings, wicked clubs and cabals, that will be hateful to them; of which, their heart will ſay, as Jacob ſaid of Simeon and Levi, Gen. xlix. 6. *O my ſoul, come not thou into their ſecret; to their aſſembly, mine honour, be thou not united*; and, with David, Pſal. xxvi. 9. *Gather not my ſoul with ſinners.* If you belong to theſe drunken, tippling, idle, and debauched gatherings; you may be ſure, that you are not gathered unto Shiloh. The godly may indeed fall into ſuch company, but it is not their element to embrace their ſociety; nay, fellowſhip with *the ſaints, the excellent ones of the earth, is their delight*; and fellowſhip with the wicked, is ſo far from being their delight, that their ſociety is rather a burden, and brings them to a *wo is me, wo is me, that I ſojourn in Meſhech, and dwell in the tents of Kedar! I had rather be a door-keeper in the houſe of God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedneſs.* Now, ſee to it, if you be not gathered out of the world, you are not yet gathered to Shiloh: for, if you be cloathed with the Sun, then you have the moon of this world under your feet, and upon *your head a crown of twelve ſtars*; that is, the doctrine of the goſpel, delivered by the twelve apoſtles, and preached by goſpel-miniſters, which are called *ſtars in his right-hand*, will be your crown, a golden crown to you: yea, his word will be to you, as more to be *deſired than gold, yea, than much fine gold.* And this leads me to another mark of thoſe that are gathered to Shiloh.

5. If you be gathered to Shiloh, then *gathering means* and *ordinances* will be always deſirable to you; for they that are gathered, will be always a gathering to him, till they be for ever with him, in the full and immediate enjoyment of him: now try yourſelf by this mark. I enlarge a little upon each, becauſe I deſign not to multiply particulars.—If you be gathered to Shiloh, then the gathering *means* will be deſirable to you. Now, what conſcience do you make of the means? For, there is a generation, that boldly ſay, they have religion, yet they uſe not duly, either public, private, or ſecret means. If ever you be gathered to Chriſt, all the gathering means, all his ordinances, will be ſweet to you: you will ſeek him where he is to be found; not in the *city*, about the *ſtreets* and *broad ways*, among the *watch-men*, but a *little further*, Song iii. 2, 3. 4. They that never uſed means, were never gathered; they that are gathered, are ſtill endeavouring to improve them, becauſe they are always gathering to him: therefore try yourſelves here further, on this ſcore, and ſee where you are, in Shiloh, or not. If you be gathered to Shiloh, you will be conſtantly gathering to him, and living on him; for ſuch are not of *thoſe that draw back to perdition*, but of *thoſe that believe, to the ſaving of their ſouls.* They that *go out from him, were never of him*; therefore ſays Chriſt to his diſciples, *Will ye alſo go away?* John vi. 67. To which, the true believer's anſwer is, *Lord, to whom ſhall we go, thou haſt the words of eternal life?* ver. 68. Let me therefore aſk you, whether or not you intend to abide with Chriſt? Surely, if you be gathered to him, you reſolve, through grace, to remain with him, and to be ſtill *coming to him*, 1 Pet. ii. 4.; and *as new-born babes, deſiring the ſincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby*, ver. 2. Indeed, they that abide with Chriſt cannot but grow; and this, I ſay, to find out hypocrites, that perhaps uſe the outward means, and reſolve, in their faſhion, they will abide with Chriſt; that is, they will not turn papiſts or malignants, turn who will, and yet know not what it is to be ever gathering to, and growing in the Lord Jeſus. I know that ſaints have their winter-blaſts, that ſet them back; but they have alſo their ſummer-refreſhings, to ſet them forward again, and make them grow in knowledge, faith, love, experience; or elſe, for want of this growth, they are always quarrelling themſelves: but, for other profeſſors, that never were rooted in Chriſt, they keep ſtill their old footing and diſpoſition. Men would bluſh for ſhame, to have it ſaid to them, they are as fooliſh this day, as they were this day twenty years; or, that they are as bad in their callings, and as ill at their trade, as when they began; and yet, in Chriſtianity, many are as ill as they were thirty, forty, fifty years ſince; as ignorant of Chriſt and the goſpel, as great ſtrangers to communion with God in Chriſt. Surely, they that are gathered to Chriſt, they will ſtrive to get forward, they cannot get enough of him, but *preſs toward the mark.* They that have got enough of Chriſt, have got nothing as yet; and they that have got him, they may think they have got nothing to what they ſee to be in him; and therefore they preſs forward, whenever they are themſelves. And, indeed, when you are not going forward, you are going backward. When a man rows againſt the ſtream, he holds up the boat; but let him lay aſide the oars, he will go further down than he came up. Hence, gathered ſouls are aſſiduouſly for making uſe of the oars of gathering means, that they may reach forward: and hence, as God's gathering means will be delightful, ſo the devil's ſcattering means will be hateful to him that is gathered; every thing that tends to make a ſeparation betwixt Chriſt and him, will be uneaſy, eſpecially when he hath made any progreſs at ordinances. Oh! to think of a ſeparation again, will be ſad and ſorrowful! Wo is me, that I am going back to a world of ſin, and ſinners, and temptation again! Being gathered to him, he cannot think of being ſeparated from him.

6. If

6. If you be gathered to Shiloh, then it will be your desire and endeavour to gather *others* to him; the soul that comes to Christ, will seek to draw others after him, John i. 45, 46. Whenever Christ found Philip, Philip found Nathanael, and says, *We have found the Messias; O come and see him.* When Christ manifested himself to the woman of Samaria, she invites the men of the city to come to him; *O come, see a man that told me all things that ever I did*, John iv. 29. Never a soul was gathered to Christ, but desired to gather others, especially its friends and relations. The parent that is in Christ, will be careful to gather his children to Christ; the master his servant, Gen. xviii. 19. *I know*, says God of Abraham, *that he will command his children and his houshold after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord.* It is not possible, but that soul that comes to Christ, and hath got a draught of his free love, if it could command ten thousand, it would command them to come to Christ. If you never had a care or concern this way, to know the Lord, you declare you was never gathered to him. But, you whose soul's desire is, to gather others to Christ, you may be sure, concerning yourself, that you are gathered to Shiloh.——Now, if you try yourselves impartially by these marks, you may come to find whether you have been gathered to Shiloh, yea, or not.

2*dly*, The *second* sort then, that I would speak to, are some that may be *sure*, that they were NEVER *gathered to Shiloh*; and it is to be feared, that unbelievers make up the greatest part of this assembly: and therefore I must be allowed to speak, especially to them; and if believers themselves give ear, and the Lord concur with the word of general exhortation, they may get a new grip and a firm hold of Shiloh, by the bye. My exhortation to the people in general, then, especially those that were never gathered unto Christ, is in the words of the prophet, Zeph. ii. 1. *Gather yourselves together; yea, gather together, O nation not desired*; that is, either not *desiring*, even you that have no desire towards God and Christ, and his grace and favour, but are very indifferent about it; or, nation not *desirable*, having nothing lovely or amiable about you, to recommend you to God: yet, *O gather together, before the decree bring forth*, and *before the fierce anger of the Lord come upon you*; for, *if once his wrath begin to burn, blessed are all they that trust in him*, and gather to him. Also, in the words of the prophet, Isa. xlv. 20, 22. *Assemble yourselves, and come*; why? what is that? it follows, *Look to me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else.* Shiloh is come, and he is come for the salvation of the people. O let all the people say, AMEN; *even so, come Lord Jesus*: here is the *feast of fat things, that the Lord of hosts hath made on this mountain, for all people*, Isa. xxv. 6. *Therefore let all the people assemble themselves and come, that they may eat and drink.* I allude to Ezek. xxxix. 17. where God speaks to every feathered fowl, and every beast of the field, saying, *Assemble yourselves and come, gather yourselves on every side to my sacrifice, that I do sacrifice for you, even a great sacrifice upon the mountains of Israel, that you may eat flesh, and drink blood.* Indeed, *except you eat the flesh, and drink the blood of the Son of God, you have no life in you*, John vi. 53. Therefore, assemble yourselves and come, gather to this sacrifice upon the mountains of Israel for you; a *sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour unto God.* Here is the *carcase*; O let *the eagles be gathered together.* We must *preach this gospel to every creature*, every rational creature; yea, to men that have lost their reason, and turned to beasts: every beast of the field, tame or wild, clean or unclean, Acts x. 12. What means the *opening of the heavens there*, and the *descending of the sheet*, the *great sheet knit at four corners*, containing *all manner of wild beasts*, and *creeping things*, and *fowls of the air?* Why, the meaning was, Go call all, and every one of the people. The Gentiles, some of them are creeping in the dust, and wallowing in the mire of sinful lusts and worldly-mindedness; others are flying in the air of pride, vanity, and selfishness: but, go you and call the poor sinful creatures within your reach, whether they be creeping on the earth, or flying in the air: all the sinful house of Adam, are made up of such a sort of people; but go, and tell them, that now Shiloh is come; and, *to him must the gathering of the people be.* Therefore, in the name of the great Shiloh, and in his Father's name, we invite and exhort all the people, that have hitherto been gathering to the devil, and gathering to their lusts, and gathering to the world, and gathering to their idle cabals, and drunken gossipings, sinful diversions, and damnable debaucheries, now to think in earnest of gathering unto Shiloh; for, Shiloh *is come*, and let *the gathering of the people be to him.*

Now, seeing nothing but divine almighty power can gather souls unto Christ; therefore, O man, woman; every individual who is just now hearing me, whether old or young, look to God for power to accompany the call; for the gospel call uses to be the channel, in which divine power runs, for conquering souls. And because, I know not, but this power may accompany this call, for making out the promise in the text, that *to him shall the gathering of the people be*; therefore, I shall offer some considerations, for pressing home this exhortation upon the people.

1. Consider, that Shiloh is *come* to the people, that the people may come to him; for this is what I mean, by gathering to him, namely, a coming to him by faith: and this faith, you know, is a *receiving and resting upon him alone for salvation, as he is offered in the gospel.* Now, since he cannot be received, but in and by the gospel-offer, the word of grace, the word of promise in the gospel; therefore, to receive him, is to *believe in him*, John i. 12. As it is by *unbelief* that we *depart from him*, Heb. iii. 12. *Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God:* so it is by *believing in him* that we *gather to him;* and to believe in him, is to credit the record that God hath given of his Son; *And this is the record, that God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son: he that does not thus believe, hath made God a liar*, 1 John v. 10, 11. To come to him by faith, then, is to close with him in the gospel-record, and upon the divine testimony; to have a divine persuasion of the truth and goodness of the gospel-message, with particular application to yourself, saying, O here is *a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came to save sinners, of whom I am the chief*, 1 Tim. i. 15.; and so it is just a taking him at his word, and taking his word of grace, his word of honour for your salvation, according to the gospel-offer of him. If you be saying,

ſaying, then, that you cannot come to him by faith; it may be very true, for indeed you cannot come, till he *draw you*, John vi. 44. You cannot believe, till the Spirit of grace mix in with this word of grace; but do you know what you are ſaying, when you ſay you cannot come to him by faith, though the word of grace came to you in particular, to be believed by you? You are ſaying, in effect, that God is a liar; I cannot take his word for it; I cannot believe that he is ſpeaking to me; or that he means any good to me. *To you is the word of this ſalvation ſent*, ſays the goſpel: "No, "ſays unbelief, never a word of that is true, "with reſpect to me: let them apply it to whom "it is ſent, but I cannot think it is to the like "of me." Wretch! you are calling the God of truth a liar: Oh! blaſphemy! If it were not to you, your unbelief would not be your ſin; but of all ſins it is the moſt damning, as well as the prolific womb that genders other ſins. However, Shiloh is come to you, that you may come to him; *He came to his own, and his own* [*viz.* the Jews,] *received him not*; intimating, that the deſign of the work, and deſign of his coming, was that they might come to him, receive him, and gather to him. And now he is come to you, Gentiles; he is come to *the people*; and ſhall the people reject him too? He is come to us in the fleſh, by taking on our nature; he is come to us in the goſpel, the goſpel-offer, the goſpel-promiſe, the goſpel-invitation; and though he ſhould never come any other way, yet it ſtates your obligation, and lays a foundation for your coming to him; and if you reject him, you are as inexcuſable, as the Jews that rejected him were.

2. Conſider *whom* it is you will be gathered to, when gathered unto Shiloh: ſurely, *They that know his name will put their truſt in him*, and ſo gather to him. Pſal. xxiv. 9, 10. *Lift up your heads, O ye gates, that the King of glory may come in:* Oh! who would not caſt open the gates of their hearts to receive ſuch an honourable gueſt! Oh! if you knew what a glorious one Chriſt is, you could not find in your heart to reject and deſpiſe him: he is not a man ſimply, or an angel, but a God-man, the Lord of men and angels. It is not poſſible to tell what glory is in him, for God is in him; *Great is the myſtery of Godlineſs, God manifeſted in the fleſh*, 1 Tim. iii. 16. A God-head dwelling in our fleſh is the world's wonder: it is ſuch a myſtery, that the world cannot receive it; but this is the goſpel that we preach, *That God is in Chriſt reconciling the world to himſelf*, 2 Cor. v. 19. O think, what of God is in Chriſt! (1.) The *authority* of God is in him; *My name is in him*, Exod. xxiii. 21. this is his proper name, Shiloh, the Sent, the Authoriſed, and Sealed of the Father, John vi. 27. He came in his Father's name, as well as his own, *To ſeek and ſave loſt ſinners*. As the authority of God, ſo, (2.) The *wiſdom* and *power* of God is in him; *We preach Chriſt crucified,—the wiſdom of God, and the power of God*, 1 Cor. i. 23, 24. All the treaſures of divine wiſdom, and all the magazine of divine power are in him. And not only ſo, but again, (3.) The *Spirit* of God is in him; *I have put my Spirit upon him, that he may bring forth judgment to the Gentiles*, Iſa. lxii. 1. He hath not only the Spirit of wiſdom, to contrive for the beſt; and the Spirit of power, to ſave to the uttermoſt; but alſo the Spirit of grace, to confer upon the people: and ſhall not the gathering of the people be to him? O! What of God is in him! (4.) The *righteouſneſs* of God is in him; and his righteouſneſs is the *righteouſneſs of God*, which is revealed to you in this goſpel, *from faith to faith*, Rom. i. 17. (5.) The *love* of God is in him, for divine love is wrapt up in this garment of fleſh and blood; *In this was manifeſted the love of God towards us, becauſe God ſent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him*, 1 John iv. 9. (6.) The *mercy* of God is in him. Oh! poor ſinner, when you come to your dying moments, readily, *God's mercy* will be your cry; but in vain will you ſeek God's mercy, to the prejudice of God's juſtice; and behold, juſtice and mercy meet together, and kiſs one another, only in Chriſt: mercy will vent no otherwiſe, but in Chriſt, in whom alone God is well-pleaſed, and by whom his juſtice is ſatisfied. What ſhall I ſay? (7.) The *ſalvation* of God is in him, Acts iv. 12. *Neither is there ſalvation in any other; for there is no name given under heaven, among men whereby we can be ſaved, but the name of Jeſus.* Yea, (8.) The *fulneſs* of God is in him; *For it hath pleaſed the Father, that in him ſhould all fulneſs dwell*, Col. i. 19.; and accordingly, Col. ii. 9. *In him dwells all the fulneſs of the God-head bodily.* None of God's attributes and excellencies are out of him; *He is the brightneſs of the Father's glory, and the expreſs image of his perſon**. There is enough here to provoke all the world to gather to him.

3. Conſider *what* you muſt be gathered to, if you be not gathered to Shiloh.

(1.) If you be not gathered to Chriſt, you will be gathered to your *idols* and *luſts*: and have you not provoked God too much already, by gathering towards that airth! May not *the time paſt ſuffice you to have wrought the will of the Gentiles?* Will you prefer a baſe luſt to bleſſed Jeſus? a luſt that would damn you, to a Jeſus that would ſave you? Again,

(2.) If you be not gathered to Chriſt, the beſt airth you can pretend to go to, is to be gathered to the *law* as your huſband: and, Oh! is a broken covenant of works a better bargain, think you, than Chriſt? Nay, nay; *As many as are of the works of the law, are under the curſe*, Gal. iii. 10.; that is, as many as think to be juſtified and accepted of God by their obedience to the command of the law, they are under the threatening and curſe of the law; for, *Curſed is every one that continues not in all things written in the book of the law to do them:* and hereby, you are a *debtor to do the whole law*, Gal. v. 3.; and, becauſe you cannot pay the debt of obedience to the command, you muſt ly under the debt of ſatisfaction to the curſe: and therefore under the heavy curſe and condemnation of the law is your ſoul gathered, while you are out of Chriſt. Yea,

(3.) If you be not gathered to Chriſt, you muſt be gathered to the *devil*; for there is no medium, either Chriſt or the devil muſt be your maſter: if Chriſt be not entertained, you entertain the devil in his room. And do you conſider what ſort of gueſt he is? He is a gueſt that will *blind* you; for, he is *the God of this world, that blinds the minds of them that believe not.*—He is a gueſt that will *blaſt* you, and blaſt every word to you that you hear, or elſe run away with it, that you may never get good of it; for he *catches away the very ſeed that is ſown in the heart;*

* The above particulars may be ſeen ſomewhat more fully illuſtrated, Ser. X. p. 237.

heart, Matth. xiii. 19.—He is a gueſt that will *deceive* you, by perſuading you that you have either been gathered to Chriſt already, and that you are a good enough believer, or elſe that it is time enough for you to be gathered to Chriſt.—And ſo he is, in a word, a gueſt that will *deſtroy* you, and devour you, as well as delude you; for, *The devil goes about like a roaring lion, ſeeking whom he may devour.* And as now he is your tempter, ſo afterwards he will be your tormentor. Therefore, again,

(4.) Let me tell you, if you be not gathered to Shiloh, you muſt be gathered to *hell*; for, *He that believeth not ſhall be damned*, Mark xvi. 16. And it is not the miniſter that ſays it, it is the *ſay* and *affirmation* of the God of truth; and if his *ſay* be not enough, know he hath ſworn, as well as ſaid it, Heb. iii. 18. He *ſwears in his wrath, that you ſhall not enter into his reſt.* And to whom does he ſwear, thus in his wrath? Even *to them that believe not.* Alas! there is no little wrath abiding that ſoul againſt whom God ſwears in his wrath; it will be wrath proportioned to the worth of that blood of Chriſt which you do trample under your feet. Oh! *How ſhall you eſcape, if you neglect ſo great ſalvation?* Let not the devil perſuade you, that all theſe things are but fancies; for, when death's cold ſweat begins to break upon you, you will find them to be ſad realities, if you be not gathered unto Shiloh. And therefore, again,

4. Conſider *what things* are a-gathering, that ſhould haſten your gathering in to Shiloh. *Clouds* are gathering faſt in our ſky; a cloud of wickedneſs, a cloud of error, a cloud of wrath, a cloud of death.

(1.) A cloud of *wickedneſs* is gathering; nay, this cloud is already gathered to ſuch a blackneſs, that we cannot ſay, *The iniquity of the Amorite is not yet full*; or that the iniquity of Britain and Ireland is not yet full; nay, our covenant-breaking, covenant-burning, covenant-burying ſin and defection, beſide all our other evils, have made our cup full, ſome time ago: but it ſeems God hath a mind our cup ſhould run over, that ſo his cup of judgments may run alſo: for a cloud of wickedneſs is gathering more and more.

(2.) Clouds of *error* are gathering alſo; a black cloud, eſpecially of Arianiſm, which threatens the deſtruction of the very foundation of Chriſtianity; *And if the foundation ſhake, what ſhall the righteous do?* Of this I ſpoke formmerly*; therefore, I ſhall only ſay, when theſe clouds of wickedneſs and error are gathering to a prodigious blackneſs of darkneſs, it is a time to be gathering to Shiloh, who is *the way and the truth*: the way to walk in, in oppoſition to the way of wickedneſs; and the truth to be believed, in oppoſition to all the paths of error. But, moreover, theſe black clouds bode more a-coming.

(3.) There is a cloud of *wrath* gathering over Britain; a cloud of judgment and calamity is gathering over Scotland, and hath been gathering theſe many years bygone, eſpecially ſince the time that Scotland was incorporate with her neighbour: a cloud of wrath hath been gathering over us, both as a church and nation; what drops have fallen out of that cloud, to the rending and dividing of our church, and to the ſinking and impoveriſhing of our ſtate; what clouds of diſorder and confuſion are hovering over our head, is too well known: but the Lord knows what will be the end of theſe things, more dreadful ſhowers of temporal judgments are in all appearance haſtening on: and, Oh! is it not time to be gathering to Shiloh, the only place of ſoul-ſafety? They that are in him have the lee-ſide of the buſh, and are in abſolute ſafety, whatever way the wind blows. But though you ſhould eſcape the cloud of national judgments, yet there is a cloud of perſonal affliction gathering, be it ſickneſs on your body, or the like: is it not beſt to be under covert before the ſhower come on? Or, if you ſhould eſcape that, yet,

(4.) Certainly there is a cloud of *death* gathering and coming upon you, as faſt as days, and hours, and moments fly away; and if your bodies be gathered to the grave before your ſouls be gathered to Shiloh, you will be miſerable as long as God ſhall be bleſſed, that is for ever and ever. You may make a ſhift to live as merrily as you can now; but, *What will you do in the day of viſitation?* Iſa. x. 3. What will you do when the king of terrors is gathering his forces againſt you, and when you ſhall be gathered before God's awful tribunal to hear and receive that direful and alarming ſentence pronounced againſt you, *Depart from me ye curſed, into everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels!*

5. Conſider *how long* he hath been offering to gather you. And *how oft*, O ſinner, *would he have gathered you, as a hen does her chickens under her wings, but ye would not?* How long? Even all day long; Rom. x. 21. *All day long have I ſtretched forth my hands unto a diſobedient and gainſaying people.* God hath been ſtretching out his arm to take hold of you, even the arm of his grace in the goſpel-offer and invitation, and you are not laid hold upon to this day. All the day long that the goſpel-ſun hath been ſhining have I been ſtretching out my arms, ſays God; for God counts the time how long he waits upon you; he reckons up the time how long you let him ſtand knocking at the door of your heart: he counts every hour's refuſal, and every year's refuſal, though it be forty years; *Forty years long was I grieved with this generation.* God hath been calling on ſome of you, ten, twenty, thirty, forty years; and, it may be, to gray hairs, but he counts the time how long: he hath been purſuing you with his grace, while you have been catching feathers in the wind; delighting yourſelves in nothing but vanity; yea, lying vanity, forſaking your own mercy; as perſons that have neither care for heaven, nor a fear of hell. What if the time be now come, wherein he is ſaying, I will wait no longer; *Ephraim is joined to his idols, let him alone*; if this very call be ſlighted, *My Spirit ſhall ſtrive no more with you*; I have long ſought your kindneſs, and you refuſed it; I offered my kindneſs, and you thought nothing of it; *I would have gathered you, and ye would not?* The cauſe of your damnation then, if you periſh, is not in God, but in you: it is not in his act of reprobation, but in your act of rebellion and wicked will. You are a gainſaying and rebellious people againſt the God that ſtretched forth his hands towards you: ſay not then, what ails God at me? but rather, what ails your wicked nature at God? Oh! may conquering grace at length come! But again,

6. Conſider what *relation* Chriſt ſtands in to the people, that the gathering of the people may

* See above, p. 322.

may be to him: not only is Shiloh come in our nature, but he is come in the capacity of a Shiloh; that is, the *Sent of God*, under ſuch manifold relations to the people as may engage the hearts of the people. Since the text makes him the *Sent of God*, let us ſee what he is ſent for, and whether the people have any concern therein. —He is ſent to be the *Saviour* of the people; *To you is born in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Chriſt the Lord*, Luke ii. 11. *This is indeed the Chriſt, the Saviour of the world*, John iv. 24. Is he ſent to be the Saviour of the people; and ſhall not the gathering of the people be to him?—He is ſent to be the *Deliverer* of the people; *There is come out of Zion the Deliverer, that ſhall turn away ungodlineſs from Jacob*, Rom. xi. 26. Oh! ſhall he come to deliver the people, and none of the people come to be delivered by him?—He is ſent to be the *Helper* of the people; yea, all the help of the people is laid upon him; *I have laid help upon one that is mighty*, Pſal. lxxxix. 19. *O Iſrael, thou haſt deſtroyed thyſelf, but in me is thy help*, Hoſ. xiii. 9. Is he the helper of the people, and the help itſelf; and ſhall not the people come to him, to ſeek his help, and take his help?—He is ſent to be the *Prophet* of the people; *The Lord hath given him the tongue of the learned, to ſpeak a word in ſeaſon to the weary*, Iſa. l. 4. He is the only powerful preacher and teacher of the people; *Never man ſpake like this man*: and ſhould not the people hear him? *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleaſed, hear ye him.*—He is ſent to be the *Prieſt*, and the *Sacrifice* of the people. As he is a *Prieſt for ever*, Pſal. cx. 4.; ſo *he gave himſelf to be an offering, and a ſacrifice of a ſweet-ſmelling ſavour unto God*, Eph. v. 2. And all was, that the people may gather under the covert of the blood of the ſacrifice.—Again, he is ſent to be the *King* of the people; *I have ſet my King upon my holy hill of Zion*, Pſal. ii. 6. Shall he have no ſubjects for your part? Will none in all this large audience be influenced to become willing and loyal ſubjects of this glorious and immortal King? Will none match with him?—He is ſent to be the *Friend* and *Favourer* of the people: hence called, a *Friend of publicans and ſinners*; not a friend to their ſins, but ſuch a friend to their ſouls, as *to ſave them from their ſins.*—He is ſent to be the *Juſtifier* of the people; the *Juſtifier of them that believe in Jeſus*: yea, hence, he is ſaid to *juſtify the ungodly*; for he came not to be a condemner, but a juſtifier; *God ſent not his Son to the world, to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be ſaved*, John iii. 17. Oh! ſhall not guilty people come to him to be *juſtified from all things, from which they could not be juſtified by the law of Moſes?*—He is ſent to be the *Shepherd* and *Biſhop* of the people, that the people may return unto him, as *the Shepherd and Biſhop of their ſouls*, 1 Pet. ii. 25.—He is ſent to be the *Phyſician* of the people; hence, his name is JEHOVAH-ROPHI; *The Lord that healeth thee*: And *as many as touched him were healed. The whole need not a phyſician, but they that are ſick.* And, who are they that need not his healing? Therefore, let the gathering of the people that need healing be to him.—He is ſent to be the *Witneſs*, the *Leader*, and *Commander* of the people; *Behold, I have given him for a Witneſs, a Leader, and Commander of the people*, Iſa. lv. 4.; and all that the gathering of the people may be to him.—He is ſent to be a *Counſellor*, a *Father*, and a *Prince* of the people; *To us a child is born, to us a ſon is given, and his name ſhall be called, Wonderful, Counſellor, the mighty God, the everlaſting Father, the Prince of peace; and the government ſhall be upon his ſhoulders*, Iſa. ix. 6.—He is ſent to be the *Builder* of the people, and the *Foundation-ſtone*, upon which the people ſhould build; *Even he ſhall build the temple of the Lord, and he ſhall bear the glory*, Zech. vi. 13. *Behold, I lay in Zion, for a foundation, a ſtone, a tried ſtone, a precious corner-ſtone, a ſure foundation*, Iſa. xxviii. 16.; and all that the gathering of the people may be to him.—He is ſent to be the *Bleſſer* of the people, that the people may gather to him for a bleſſing; *God having raiſed up his Son Jeſus, hath ſent him to bleſs you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities*, Acts iii. 26.—He hath ſent him to *bleſs* the people; and God's bleſſing will light on all them that gather to him for a bleſſing; *Men ſhall be bleſt in him, and all nations ſhall call him bleſſed*, Pſal. lxxii. 17.—He is ſent to be the *Standard-bearer* of the people; *He is the Chief, the Standard-bearer among ten thouſand*, Song v. 10.; hence he is called *the Enſign of the people, and to it ſhall the Gentiles ſeek*, Iſa. xi. 10. Ought not then the gathering of the people to be to their Standard-bearer and Enſign?—He is ſent to be the *Burden-bearer* of the people: behold, the burden of your *ſins* is laid upon him; *The Lord hath laid upon him the iniquities of us all*, Iſa. liii. 6, 8. [or, *made them to* MEET *on him*,] he hath gathered together all the ſins of the people, and laid them on his back, that the gathering of the people may be to him, as *the Lamb of God, that takes away the ſins of the world.* As the burden of our ſins, ſo the burden of our *ſorrows* is laid upon him; *Surely he hath born our griefs, and carried our ſorrows*, Iſa. liii. 4. The burden of our *wounds*, and *bruiſes*, and *ſtripes*, was laid upon him; *He was wounded for our ſins, and bruiſed for our iniquities, the chaſtiſement of our peace was laid upon him, and by his ſtripes we are healed*, ver. 5. All the wounds that we ſhould have got with the ſword of God's wrath, and all the ſtripes that ſhould have been laid upon our backs to eternity, were gathered together, and laid upon Chriſt's back. And why was the burden of all the ſins and ſorrows of the people laid upon him, but that the gathering of the people might be to him, as the Burden-bearer of the people?—What ſhall I ſay? He is ſent, not only to be *all relations*, but *all things* to the people.—He is ſent to be the *Covenant* of the people; *I will give thee for a covenant of the people*, Iſa. lxvi. 6.—He is ſent to be the *Glory* of the people; a *Light to lighten the Gentiles, and the Glory of his people Iſrael.*—He is ſent to be the *Hope* of the people; *He is our Hope*, ſays the apoſtle; and, *The Lord ſhall be the Hope of his people*, Joel iii. 16.—He is ſent to be the *Deſire* of the people; therefore it is ſaid of him, *The Deſire of all nations ſhall come.*—He is ſent to be the *Propitiation* of the people; *He is the Propitiation for our ſins*, 1 John ii. 2.—He is ſent to be the *Salvation* and *Conſolation* of the people: *Behold thy Salvation comes*; and he is called the *Conſolation of Iſrael.*—He is ſent to be the *Door* of the people; *I am the Door, by me if any enter in, he ſhall be ſaved*, John x. 9.—Again, he is ſent to be the *Way* of the people; *I am the Way; no man comes to the Father, but by me.*—He is ſent to be the *Ladder* of the people: he is the true Jacob's ladder, that reaches from earth to heaven, by which alone we can aſcend up to glory. And, O ſhould not the gathering of the people be to him! And becauſe they cannot of themſelves enter in at this door, nor

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walk in this way, nor climb this ladder, therefore he is sent to be the *Leader* of the people; *I will lead the blind in a way they know not, and in paths which they have not known:* Yea, and to be the *Strength* of the people, that the people may gather to him, and trust in the Lord Jehovah, in whom there is everlasting strength.—He is sent to be the *wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption* of the people, 1 Cor. i. 30. He is made of God unto us, all these things; even he who is the Lord our righteousness.—And, that he might be a perfect law-biding righteousness of the people, behold with wonder, he sent him to be the *Sin* of the people, and the *Curse* of the people; *He hath made him to be sin for us, that we might be the righteousness of God in him*, 2 Cor. v. 21. *To redeem us from the curse of the law, he was made a curse for us*, Gal. iii. 13.—What shall I say? He is the *Redeemer* of the people, the *Surety* of the people, the *Advocate* of the people, and the *Ransom* of the people.——Shiloh is come, and he is sent of God, to be all relations, and all things to the people, that the gathering of the people may be to him.—God hath put all the *privileges* of the people into his hands, that he may be the *Light* and *Life* of the people; who is therefore called, the *Light of the world*, and the *Life of the world*.—He hath put all *gifts*, and *graces*, and *fulness* in his hand, for the peoples use and behoof; *He hath received gifts for men, even for the rebellious, that God the Lord might dwell among them.*——And is there nothing in all this to be a motive or argument for gathering the people unto him? Is he sent for all these ends to the people, and shall not the people be gathered to him? O! may the people come to him, who is the All of the people!

7. Consider what *house-room* there is in him, for the people to gather unto: And,

(1.) He is a *hiding-house* for the people to gather to; *A man shall be as a hiding-place from the storm, a covert from the tempest; as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land*, Isa. xxxii. 2. Behold, he is a hiding-house, a shelter-house, a refuge for the people, a sanctuary for the people, that the people may flee to him, saying, with the psalmist, *I flee to thee to hide me.*

(2.) He is a *dwelling-house* for the people to gather to; *He that dwells in the secret place of the most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty*, Psal. xci. 1. And, O they that dwell in him, they *dwell on high*, and *the place of their defence is the munition of rocks.* They that are once gathered to him, he and they do mutually inhabit one another, in the communion of the Holy Ghost; *Hereby we know that we dwell in him, and he in us, by his Spirit which he hath given us*, 1 John iv. 13.

(3.) He is a *working-house* for the gathering of the people to: not one spiritually good work can be performed out of him; for, *without him we can do nothing*, John xv. 5. But when one gets in to this house, then he is like a man in his working house, that hath all his working instruments and tools at his hand, without which he could not work at his trade: yea, then he hath Christ himself for his working hand; *I can do all things through Christ strengthening me.* He performs all my work for me, *his strength being made perfect in my weakness.*

(4.) He is the *bathing-house* for the gathering of the people to; *The blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin*, 1 John i. 7.; *If I wash thee not, thou hast no part in me.* He himself is the *fountain open to the house of David for sin and for uncleanness*: Here alone it is, that the filthy leprous people can get their souls bathed and purged, and must gather to him for that end, saying, *Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than the snow*, Psal. li. 7.

(5.) He is the *treasure-house* for the people to gather unto. Where must the gathering of the people be, but to the only store-house? Poor people may be here supplied, out of his unsearchable riches; for, *In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*, Col. ii. 3. *It hath pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell*, that out of *his fulness we might receive grace for grace.*

(6.) He is the *pleasure-house* for the gathering of the people to. He is a pleasure-house, both for God, and for the people of God; such a pleasure-house for God to dwell in, that as God is *well-pleased in him*, reconciled and satisfied in him, *in whom his soul delights;* so he is infinitely well-pleased with all that gather in to him, they are *accepted in him*, and that with pleasure; *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.* And when once sinners are gathered in to him, O they are well-pleased also; yea, *abundantly satisfied with the fatness of his house*, Psal. xxxvi. 8. *In whom believing, we rejoice, with joy unspeakable, and full of glory. In his presence there is fulness of joy.* There is no house of pleasure in the world like this.

(7.) He is the *magazine-house* for the gathering of the people to. All our magazines for military provision are in him: he indeed is *like the tower of David, built for an armoury, where there hangs a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men*, Song iv. 4.; for all the believer's spiritual armour, whereby he must fight against the devil, the world, and the flesh, is hanging in this house; and therefore, whenever he is for fighting, he is to *put on the whole armour of God*; and to *be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.* Never will a soul get a happy stroak given to the devil, or corruption, without armour got out of this magazine-house. Here lies all the powder and ammunition, whereby the most subtile engines of hell may be blown up, and broken.

(8.) He is the *banquetting-house* for the gathering of the people to; *He brought me to the banquetting-house, and his banner over me was love*, Cant. ii. 4. It is remarkable and strange, that there should be need of a banner in a banquetting-house. A banner is for war; and indeed his people, when they are fed in his house, they are fitted for war: but, O a banner of love is good provision for war; the manifestation of the love of God in Christ, encourages and strengthens the soul, both for work and warfare. He fights best, when he feeds best upon the love and favour of God in Christ, who himself is both the banquetting-house, the banner, and the feast; he is the food, *His flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed.* There he feeds them with his pardon and peace; he feeds them with his righteousness and fulness; yea, there he *sups with them, and they with him:* and *this feast of fat things is provided for all people*, Isa. xxv. 6. that they may gather in to the banquetting-house. He only is the victual-house, the true Bethlehem, the house of bread.

(9.) He is the *praying-house* for the gathering of the people to; the *true temple*, and *house of prayer for all people*, Isa. lvi. 7. Would you have

have a houſe for praying acceptably in, ſo as to be always heard and anſwered, whenever you pray? Here it is; there is no houſe of prayer like it: and where-ever you go, be it to a corner or cloſet, this houſe is at hand for you to run in to, that you may be *accepted in the Beloved:* and when you go in to this houſe of prayer, you ſhall have *whatever you aſk, that the Father may be glorified in the Son*, John xiv. 13.

(10.) He is the *praiſing-houſe* for the gathering of the people to; *Bleſſed are they that dwell in thy houſe, they will be ſtill praiſing thee*, Pſal. lxxxiv. 4. And, indeed, the farther you go into the houſe of prayer, the more will you find it to be the houſe of praiſe. Much *praiſe*, and *honour*, and *glory in the higheſt*, does God get in this houſe; whereas people, out of this houſe, do nothing but diſhonour and affront him. But, O may *all the people praiſe him*, by gathering in to this houſe! O what notable houſing is there here for the people! Therefore, *let the gathering of the people be to him.*

(11.) In a word, he is the *meeting-houſe* with God; *There will I meet with thee, even on the mercy-ſeat, between the cherubims*, Exod. xxv. 22. Here is houſe-room for all the people. There is a ſign hung up over the door of the houſe, with this inſcription, *Whoſoever will, let him come*, Rev. xxii. 17.

8. Conſider there is a *gathering place* for the people in the Lord Jeſus, with a WHAT THOUGH written below the inſcription.

(1.) *What though* you have *never come* in to this day, yet now you are welcome to come in, though you have been ſtanding without all your days till now; it is come to the eleventh and laſt hour; *Why ſtand ye here all the day idle?* Mat. xx. 6. He calls you in to his working-houſe.

(2.) *What though* you have *played the harlot with many lovers*, yet there is place in him for your gathering to; Jer. iii. 1. *Yet return unto me, ſaith the Lord*; yea, Iſa. i. 18. *Though your ſins be as ſcarlet, they ſhall be white as ſnow; though they be red as crimſon, they ſhall be as white as wool.* Have you been a drunkard, a ſwearer, an unclean perſon, *etc?* Why, *Such were ſome of you, but you are waſhed, juſtified, and ſanctified*, etc. Read 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, 11.

(3.) *What though* you have been *untoward* and *untractable* hitherto, yet there is place in him for your gathering to; *For the iniquity of his covetouſneſs was I wroth, and ſmote him; I hid me and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his own heart; yet I have ſeen his ways, and will heal him*, Iſa. lvii. 17.

(4.) *What though* you have been making God to *ſerve with your ſins*, and *wearying him with your iniquity*, yet there is place in him for your gathering to him; for, behold what he ſays, even with reſpect unto ſuch, *I, even I, am he that blotteth out thine iniquity, for mine own ſake, and will not remember thy ſins. Put me in remembrance*, Iſa. xliii. 25, 26.

(5.) *What though* you have been guilty of the *moſt provoking* and *grievous backſliding*, yet there is place in him for your gathering unto; *Return, ye backſliding children, for I will heal your backſlidings; yea, I will heal your backſlidings, and love you freely*, Jer. iii. 14, 22.

(6.) *What though* your *outward circumſtances* in the world be never ſo *mean* and *contemptible*, ſo as no perſon cares for you, more than the mire of the ſtreet, and you are caſt out at all hands; yet there is place in him for your gathering to; for, he *gathers the outcaſts of Iſrael.* And, James ii. 5. *Hath not God choſen the poor of this world, to be rich in faith, and heirs of a kingdom?*

(7.) *What though* MANY have gathered in to Shiloh already, yet there is room enough, and place enough for you to gather in alſo; for, as it is ſaid in the parable, Luke xiv. 22. Though *many were gathered in to the ſupper, yet there was room;* ſo here, though thouſands, and ten thouſands have been gathered to Shiloh, ſince he came, and before he came, yet there is room; there is place for you: as he ſays, *In his Father's houſe are many manſions;* ſo ſay I of Shiloh's houſe, that there are many manſions therein; with him there are multitudes of mercies for multitudes of ſinners. O! who can reckon the multitudes of his tender mercies? Who can comprehend the vaſtneſs of this gathering-place? It would hold thouſands of worlds, let be one world: therefore let not that ſtand in the way of your gathering unto Shiloh.

(8.) *What though* you could never think that there was *any place* in him for you, nor *any mercy* for the like of you; yet nevertheleſs there is a gathering-place in him for you, Iſa. lv. 8. *For my thoughts are not your thoughts;—for, as the heavens are higher than the earth, ſo are my thoughts higher than your thoughts.*

(9.) *What though* you be *unworthy* to come to him, yet there is place in him for unworthy ſinners to gather in to. Are you unworthy of him? Sure I am that is true; as true a word as ever you ſpake: but the more unworthy you are, the more welcome to him, who hath worth enough for you and himſelf both: he expects no worth to be in you, till once you come to him. What is it that makes you unworthy? Is it, that you are *poor, miſerable, wretched, blind, and naked?* Or, is it, that you are ſtupid and ſenſeleſs, and know not that you are in theſe circumſtances? Why, he makes that the very reaſon of his inviting you to gather in to him; *Becauſe thou ſayeſt, I am rich, and knoweſt not that thou art wretched, and miſerable, and poor, and blind, and naked. I counſel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire that thou mayeſt be rich*, etc, Rev. iii. 17, 18. Unworthy ſinners, gather in to that well-furniſhed houſe, where all that you need to make you happy and holy is to be had: and ſay not you are unfit to come; for there you ſee, that even impotent and unſenſible ſinners, whom we are ready to ſhut out, grace is ready to take in. Yea,

(10.) *What though* you be *unable* to come to him, and gather in to Shiloh, yet there is place in him for your gathering in to him; Iſa. xl. 29. For *he gives power to the faint, and to them that have no might, he increaſeth ſtrength.* If you would be gathered, he ſtands ready to reach you his helping hand, and injoins you to *take hold of his ſtrength, that you may make peace with him, and you ſhall make peace with him*, Iſa. xxvi. 3.—Yea, what though you have been *unwilling* all your days till this very moment, unwilling to be gathered? Yet he who ſays, *How oft would I have gathered you, and you would not?* is now ſaying, If you would be gathered, I am here, and my power and grace is at your ſervice, for drawing you nearer.—Yea, what though you find much *unwillingneſs* and *enmity* this moment in your hearts againſt him; yet if you would be content that he break your enmity, and make you willing, O there is place, there is place in him

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for you to gather in to. Yea, what ſhall I ſay? Though you be as unwilling as ever you was, and your ill-will againſt him is ready to land you in the burning lake; yet know, O wretched enemy to God and Chriſt! he is calling you to come to him, ſaying, *Whoſoever will, let him come.* Oh! will you not be gathered? *Why will you die? As I live, I have no pleaſure in your death;* I have infinitely greater pleaſure in your gathering to Shiloh, in whom all my attributes are glorified and well-pleaſed. And if this call do at laſt kindle a ſecret wiſh and deſire in your ſoul, ſaying, that he would come and gather me! Behold his gathering arms are ſtretched out towards you, and you ſhall be as welcome to him, as ever any ſoul was, ſince the world began.—Well, is there ſuch a gathering-place for the people here, ſuch a gathering-houſe, with ſo many *what though's* written on the ſign of the houſe, or the face of the door, to invite all paſſengers, that are travelling to eternity, to come in, and be happy for ever? And ſhall there be no gathering of the people to Shiloh? May we hope, that divine power hath made ſome to be willing, and that they are either ſaying, *Behold we come to thee, for thou art the Lord our God*; or elſe, Lord, come and draw; come and gather, and get the glory to thy name for ever.

Having offered theſe motives and conſiderations; I ſhould next offer ſome *directions*. It is divine power only that does the buſineſs; and therefore, I ſhall only give you thoſe two directions, in caſe you would know how to manage, ſo as you may not be deceived in this matter. If I could help you to heaven, I think, I would deſire to do it; and, for your help and direction, in order to your right gathering to Shiloh, I would ſay to you,

1. Never ſatisfy yourſelves with gathering *about him* and *his ordinances*, without gathering to *himſelf*. Many, like the multitude in the goſpel, may gather about him, yea, ſo near as to *preſs upon him*, while there was but one poor woman, that was gathered to him, and *touched him*: *Some body hath touched me*, ſays Chriſt: why ſay the diſciples, *the multitude preſs upon you*; and what mean you, Lord, by that, *Some-body hath touched me?* Nay, but as one of the Fathers ſaid, *Turba premit, fides tangit*; "The multitude preſs, "but faith toucheth." Satisfy not yourſelves then, I ſay, with a gathering about him, unleſs you be gathered to him. People may gather about a tree to pluck the fruit thereof, but it is another thing to be gathered to it, ſo as either to become a branch, or have an intereſt in it; even ſo, may ſome people eat of the fruit of the tree of life, in reſpect of common providence, common graces, common influences; but it is another thing to have an intereſt in the tree, and union to it: ſo here, many may be gathered to ordinances, and even to ſolemn ordinances, and partake of the external privileges thereof; and yet, not having firſt gathered to the God of ordinances, nor having any intereſt in him, or union unto him, have no right conſequently to intermeddle with the childrens bread. O Sir! ſay you, that is a hard note, that caſts me all down again. Why, may the Lord himſelf bring down all falſe refuges: but in caſe it perplex any poor ſoul, that hath been *ſitting under Chriſt's ſhadow* at this occaſion, and *his fruit hath been ſweet to their taſte*, and they may think, that all they got, is but only the fruit, while they have no union to, or intereſt in the tree: Well then, ſay you, *How ſhall one know if he only eats of the fruit, and hath no intereſt in the tree?* In anſwer to which, I will endeavour to illuſtrate it by this plain ſimile; You know, when a man hath no intereſt in the tree of a garden, if he gets the fruit, he cares not what come of the tree, though the branches of it were all broken down: he loves the fruit, and takes it; but the tree is not his own, and therefore he hath no concern about it: but, the man that hath an intereſt in the tree, though he loves the fruit, yet he loves the tree better than the fruit; and therefore he would rather that people ſhould take away all the fruit from him, than break and deſtroy the branches of the tree; for he eſteems the tree better than all the fruit that grows upon it. The application thereof is eaſy; for, even ſo the hypocrite that eats of the fruit of the tree of life, as it were, but hath no intereſt in the tree; the fruit, *viz.* the frame, the enlargement, or the like, is all that he wants; the gifts and common graces he gets, is what he ſolaces himſelf withal; he reſts there, and ſits down ſatisfied, without Chriſt himſelf, or any true love to him, and unfeigned concern for his glory and intereſt: ſelf is upmoſt with him, and therefore he pleaſes himſelf with the fruit, and loves it more than the tree. But, the true believer, that is gathered to Chriſt, he loves the fruit indeed, and takes pleaſure in the communication: but the tree itſelf is above all things to him; and the fruit he taſted ſtill the more recommends the tree to him. O Chriſt's gifts are ſweet, but himſelf ſweeteſt of all! The believer's frame is like the frame of a picture; he is not taken up with the frame, but with the picture that is within the frame, even Chriſt, who is the picture of God, the image of the inviſible God. See, I ſay, that it be Chriſt himſelf, that you are gathered to.

2. Be *ſtill about his hand*, in the *uſe of appointed means*, but with a conſtant eye to divine power. Let means and ordinances be ſtill uſed: for, though, as they are your performances, they cannot be profitable; yet, as they are his ordinance, he may put a bleſſing in them. Therefore, be ſtill in the King's high-way, in the uſe of means; for, though the natural uſe of means, and God's ſaving grace, have no connexion; yet there is far leſs a connexion betwixt that grace, and the neglect of means. The poor beggar, that needs an alms from the king, goes to the king's high-way, where he paſſes; and ſurely he is nearer his purpoſe, than if he ſhould go to the top of a mountain, where the king never comes: ſo, be you ſtill in the uſe of means in the Lord's way; but reſt not there, leſt you be like one, that, upon pretence of ſeeking a treaſure on the other ſide of the river, ſhould come to the boat, which is the mean, and reſt there, without going further; why, he may thus loſe the treaſure for ever. In your uſe of the means, look beyond the means, and cry for almighty drawing power, without which it is ſimply impoſſible you can make one ſtep towards Shiloh. God knows, you can do nothing this way yourſelf, and he does not expect it of you, that you ſhould come to him in your own ſtrength; nay, if you eſſay to do ſo, you but affront him, who is the *ſtrength of Iſrael*; and ye diſparage his power, as if a creature, far leſs a filthy ſinful creature,

dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, would act independently of him. O then, caſt yourſelf always into his almighty gathering arms, crying, O power, power, power of the eternal Spirit of God, come! — Cry for a powerful *conviction* of the Spirit, whereby you may ſee how far off you are from God and Chriſt: they that are gathered to him, are made to ſee how far they are ſeparate from him, and to ſay, "Lord, I "am lying in the arms of the devil, and I "know not how ſoon I may be in hell: O pity, "pity, of thy ſovereign mercy!" — Cry alſo for the powerful *illumination* of the Spirit, that you may ſee a God in Chriſt; not an abſolute God, ſitting on the throne of flaming juſtice, but on the mercy-ſeat, ſprinkled over with the juſtice-ſatisfying blood of the Lamb, from whence mercy does vent itſelf, to the higheſt honour, and greateſt glory of infinite juſtice. — Cry, in a word, for the powerful *operation* of the Spirit, the irreſiſtible, efficacious pull of his omnipotent arm: O long for a day of power, a gathering day! Many a black powerful hinderance and drawback you have: every luſt ſays, upon the matter, If I can get my will, he ſhall never be gathered to Shiloh; the devil ſays, If I can get my will, he ſhall never win to Chriſt; the world, and the cares of it, ſay the ſame; your graceleſs neighbours, and wicked companions, ſay the ſame: there is a ſtrong helliſh combination to hinder your coming to Shiloh. Yet, nevertheleſs, though all the intanglements of the world, all the corruptions of the heart, and all the devils in hell, ſhould join counſel together, to keep your ſoul back from Chriſt, one divine draught of the cord of love will make them all yield. Theſe are potent enemies, but here is an omnipotent God; they are mighty, but he is almighty.

O Sirs, cry, and continue to cry for his gathering power! and though you have been long ſeeking an omnipotent pull of divine grace, and, to your ſenſe, have not got it; yet, if you wait for it, cry for it, and be earneſtly ſollicitous to obtain it, it is a thouſand to one, if you miſs it: nay, it cannot be; for, *he is a God of judgment, and bleſſed are all they that wait for him*, Iſa. xxx. 18. *Judgment* here, is not judgment in oppoſition to mercy, but judgment in oppoſition to folly; that is, he is an infinitely wiſe God, who knows the beſt time of coming and paying his viſit; and becauſe *he is a God of judgment, bleſſed are all they that wait for him.* He hath long waited for you; O wait for him in his own way! And when he is ſtretching forth his arms towards you in this goſpel, offering to gather you; let your heart cry to him, ſaying, "Lord, thou who gathers the lambs with "thine arm, O do thou not only ſtretch forth "thine arms towards me, but claſp thine arms "about me; gather me, and I ſhall be gather-"ed." If you be brought to this, I would hope the good work were begun.

3*dly*, The *third* ſort, to whom I propoſed to direct my exhortation, was to *believers*, who ARE gathered to Shiloh. My exhortation to you is, that, through grace, you would gather *more cloſly to Shiloh*, than ever you have done, ſo as to be *rooted in him*, and *abide in him*, Col. ii. 7. John xv. 5. O cry for more and more of his gathering power and grace, to bring you nearer and nearer to him. More particularly,

1. Hath Shiloh come and gathered you to himſelf? Then, O *live* UPON *him*; for that is the end, for which you are gathered to him, Gal. ii. 20. that the *life you live may be a life of faith upon the Son of God*, who not only *loved you*, and *gave himſelf for you*, but gathered you alſo out of the ſtinking grave of ſin and miſery, wherein you was. You have need to live a life of dependence upon him; for all other things may ſoon fail you, and nothing in all the world may be left you, but himſelf. But, when the ſpider's web is ſwept down, yet you may ſee the houſe ſtanding ſure; even ſo, when the cob-webs of creature-confidences fail, faith will ſee a ſure foundation to rely upon; *Though the fig-tree ſhould not bloſſom, nor fruit be found in the vine*, etc. yet faith in exerciſe will induce a perſon to *rejoice in the Lord, and be glad in the God of ſalvation.* You will every day need to be living on him; for, as I noticed upon another occaſion, the veſſel that is full to-day, needs a new filling to-morrow; and the ſtomach that ſeemed to be ſatisfied juſt now, within a few hours will be empty and craving again: ſo here, your veſſel may ſoon be empty; but though the veſſel be empty, the fountain is full; and his power to help is a creating power, whereby he can command nothing in to a being.

2. Not only live on him, but *live* WITH *him*; let it appear, that you are gathered out of the world, by your living above the world, in the place where Shiloh is; *If you be riſen with Chriſt, ſeek the things that are above, where Chriſt ſits at the right-hand of God*, Col. iii. 1. Oh! how unſuitable is it for them who are gathered to Shiloh in heaven, not to have their converſation in heaven? What a pity is it, that they ſhould ſo much reſemble the bird, they call the lapwing, that hath a crown upon her head, and yet lives upon excrements? Hath the Lord *crowned you with his loving-kindneſs*, and yet you live upon the dung of this world? Hath he made you an heir to a kingdom, and yet you ly tumbling in the aſhes? Surely the believer that does not live above the world, he lives below himſelf.

3. Are you gathered unto Shiloh? Then, not only live on him, and live with him, but *live* TO *him*. For this cauſe alſo, did he gather you to him, that you might live to him, and to his glory and honour; *You are not to live to yourſelves, but to him that died for you, and roſe again*, 2 Cor. v. 15. In him there is a gathering of all gifts, and graces, and fulneſs, and all mediatorial offices, and divine qualifications, for your uſe and behoof; and, to him, O believer, ſhould be the gathering of all the powers and faculties of your ſoul, that you may glorify and honour him. — O let the gathering of your deſires and delights be to him, who is *the Deſire of all nations*, and the Delight of all the ſaints and angels in heaven! — Let the gathering of your thoughts and meditations be to him, and the meditation of his name will be ſweet! — O let the gathering of your hearts and affections be to him; for, *he is altogether lovely.* — Let the gathering of your prayers and praiſes be to him. Begging and bleſſing ſhould go together; for you will have occaſion to beg from him as long as you are out of heaven; and you will have reaſon to bleſs him as long as you are out of hell. Though you that are gathered to him have no reaſon to fear hell, *For there is no condemnation to them that are in Chriſt*; yet you have always reaſon to bleſs, that you have eſcaped it. — In a word, let the gathering of your words

and

and actions be to him, ſo as you may put honour upon him, before the world, by the whole tenor of your talk and walk, that your neighbours may take notice of it, that you have been with Jeſus, and that you are gathered to him: and let the gathering of your ſervices and ſacrifice be to him, ſaying, *What ſhall I render to the Lord, for all his benefits towards me?* O render your humble ſervice to him, ſaying, *Truly I am thy ſervant, thou haſt looſed my bands.* Render him the love of your hearts, the calves of your lips, and the obedience of your life.—Thus are you to live to him.

4. Are you gathered to Shiloh? O then, endeavour to *gather* OTHERS *to him!* See if you can get all that are in your family to come to Shiloh with you; ſaying with Joſhua, *As for me, and my houſe, we will ſerve the Lord, whatever others do*, Joſh. xxiv. 15. O have you been gathered to Chriſt? and will you be careleſs though your friends, your children, be gathered to the devil? O hath Chriſt brought you to himſelf, and will he bring you to glory, and gather you to heaven? and will you be eaſy, though all about you be gathered unto hell? No, no; that cannot be your diſpoſition, if you be a believer indeed. If you be content in your lifetime to ſerve him, you will ſtudy to your power, that others may do the like. And, this is the way to make the love of Chriſt continue in the world; for, when you teach your neighbours, your ſervants, your children, the way of the Lord, they, following your example, may teach their children too; and this will go from generation to generation, ſo as *generations to come may praiſe the Lord*; or, at leaſt, it will not fail on your part. Oh! how is it to be regrated, that few come to Chriſt! and of the few that come, how few do ſhew their love, in endeavouring to bring others to him? Therefore, O let this be amended, and endeavour, in the place where you dwell, and the ſtation you are in providence placed into, that, by your holy converſation, others may be gathered unto Shiloh too.

5. Are you gathered? O let not believers, that are gathered to Shiloh, forget their gathering together for *Chriſtian-fellowſhip* and *prayer*; Heb. x. 24, 25. *Let us conſider one another, to provoke unto love, and to good works; not forſaking the aſſembling ourſelves together, as the manner of ſome is, but exhorting one another, and ſo much the more, as you ſee the day approaching.* The wicked, that are to be gathered to the burning Tophet, are making ſpeed in ſinful ways, and gathering in clubs and cabals, to hearten and harden one another: and, O ſhall not the godly gather together, to exhort and excite one another in the way to heaven; as iron ſharpens iron, ſo does the holy gathering of ſaints uſe to ſharpen the edge of their ſpirits in the Lord's way. But ſince fellowſhip-meetings have been deſerted, many profeſſors are blunted and ruſted; ſeveral Chriſtian ſocieties are broken and evaniſhed, even at a time, when *they that fear the Lord ſhould ſpeak often one to another* in ſpiritual conferences. O! if you be gathered unto Shiloh, let your zeal for him appear, in reſtoring and reviving theſe Chriſtian gatherings in a regular manner; and pray, that the devil's ſcattering wind that he hath raiſed in our day, for ſeparating and dividing miniſters and Chriſtians from one another, may be laid.

6. To add no more, and to encourage you in the whole of your Chriſtian courſe, O you, that through grace have been gathered to Shiloh, take home the *comfort* that belongs to your gathered ſtate.—As to theſe that are yet in a diſtant ſtate, ſeparate from the Lord Jeſus, we have little comfort to offer, if you abide there; for, in the Lord's time, you will be gathered to the grave, and after that, you will be gathered before the tribunal of God, to receive the dreadful ſentence, *Depart from me, ye curſed*; and, in all appearance, ſome here will be gathered before that awful tribunal, before they be gathered together here again: it is more than probable, we are not all to meet again in this manner, till we meet before the fiery bench of the glorious Judge; and if you be not gathered to him, as an amiable Jeſus now, you muſt be gathered to him as a terrible Judge then. And, Oh! that the thoughts of this would excite poor ſouls to think of gathering to Shiloh before they part, that they may part with God's bleſſing, and not under his heavy curſe!—But, as to you that have been gathered unto Chriſt, I would have you know, that God allows you *ſtrong conſolation.* You having *fled for refuge to the hope ſet before you*, you may *rejoice in the hope of the glory of God*, that the *joy of the Lord may be your ſtrength*, in the whole of your work and warfare, as you go through the wilderneſs. You may rejoice in this, that as your hearts are gathered unto Shiloh now, ſo your happieſt gathering time is but coming; for he that hath begun to gather you as ſtones for the ſpiritual building, will never leave the work, till the building be completed, with ſhoutings of, *Grace, grace unto it.* He will never give over gathering you, till you be completely happy; from time to time the work will be advanced, by the means of his word and ordinances, till the conſummation of the work in glory; for he hath appointed a goſpel-miniſtry *for the perfecting of the ſaints, for the edifying the body of Chriſt, till they all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of Chriſt*, Eph. iv. 12, 13. He hath appointed theſe three fearful things, death, judgment, and eternity, to be three happy gatherings for you; the initial gathering being over, by your getting in to Chriſt, after your progreſſive gathering is come to a cloſe, in your having *finiſhed your courſe*, and *fought the good fight of faith*, your glorious and conſummate gathering will take place: the day of death will be the glorious commencement of it, and eternity will be the everlaſting continuation of it. The firſt coming of Shiloh hath uſhered in a gracious gathering; his ſecond coming will produce a glorious gathering; but of theſe gathering ſeaſons, I formerly ſpoke at large †; I only ſay therefore, that then, O believer, then ſhall you be *for ever with the Lord*; and it is for this reaſon you are now gathered to him, that there you may be for ever with him: and ſo ſure as you are gathered to him in time, ſo ſure ſhall you be with him through eternity; not only for ever with the patriarchs, and prophets, and apoſtles; not only for ever with angels and archangels; not only for ever with ſaints and ſeraphims; but *for ever with the Lord*; for none of theſe can make a heaven without him. Chriſt himſelf will be the centre of the aſſembly, and heart of the meeting: and though now you are but with him for a ſtart, and he is

† See the gathering ſeaſons treated of, p. 302,—314.

is with you but for a moment, and so your communion with him is but in transient glances of his glory; it may be just now you are with him in the banquetting-house, but instantly you are, as it were, at the back of the door: it is only for a little, but then for ever; and it is but a *little of him* that you have for a *little while*; yet then, O then, shall you be for ever with the Lord; *wherefore comfort one another with these words*, 1 Thess. iv. 18. Know, that being gathered to him on earth, you shall be gathered to him in heaven; and being gathered in grace, you shall be gathered in glory: for all the promises of grace and glory are gathered in him, and you being gathered to him, are in him also, *in whom all the promises are Yea and Amen.*

And, now this gathering of the people here is to part; but, O happy parting, to these who can date their first or farther gathering to Shiloh from their gathering to Carnock! For, part with whom you will, Christ and you shall never part again; whatever clouds may be in your sky, yet your sun is risen, and will never set. But the most part of you here were never yet gathered to Shiloh: and, oh! how can you find it in your heart to go away without him, and without so much as a desire after him, who is *the Desire of all nations!* For my own part, I cannot think of your going away in such a case. Alas! shall he have it to say, *I would have gathered you, as a hen does her chickens under her wings, but you would not!* Oh! wherefore did you gather to this place, if you would not be gathered to Shiloh? And if you be more willing to be gone, than willing to be gathered, wo is me, that my text will be no more but a witness against you upon Carnock green, that you would not; and, that the devil, and the world, and your lusts were more desirable to you; and you had more heart to be gathered to them, than to be gathered to Shiloh. Oh then, Sirs, heartless parting, while you are content to part with Shiloh for ever, rather than to part with a base lust, or a black devil! If that be not your choice, then let your heart say, in the sight of the living God if you can, Lord, I think I would be gathered, and would rather choose to die upon the spot, than not to be gathered unto Shiloh; and, my soul could wish, that all my dearest lusts were buried in this green, never to rise again, and that Christ might have my heart for ever, in room of them all. Why, man, can you say that to the heart-searching God? Then, poor soul, let me desire you to take the first convenient closet or corner you can get, and there tell him this over again more solemnly; and, at the same time, bless him that ever Shiloh came to you, and that ever you felt the virtue of this promise, that, *That to him shall the gathering of the people be.*

SERMON XXVIII,–XXXI.

The Main Question of the Gospel Catechism, *What think ye of Christ?* *

Matth. xxii. 42. *What think ye of Christ?*

My friends, if you have any regard to the voice of the Son of God, speaking to you in this text, then, to be sure, the application of it is begun, before ever we come to the explication of it. And, indeed, if the Lord himself would open and apply it to you, you would see more in it than we can tell you. Perhaps many here, when the minister reads his text, turn up their Bibles, and put a mark upon the place of scripture: very well; but then they think there is the minister's text, and so no more of it; as if it were only the minister's concern, or at most, that it is only the minister's business to speak to his text, and their business to hear what he says. But, my friends, you would know, that you have here more than a text, and it is my business, at the time, not only to read you a text, but to ask you a question; and I cannot resume my text without proposing it, *What think ye of Christ?* And it is your business, not only to hear seriously what is said, but to answer solemnly before God what is asked, namely, *What think ye of Christ?* If you take it up simply as my text, you will think yourselves little concerned with it; but if you apprehend it as Christ's question to you, then your concern is great. It is not my question only; but, as Christ proposed it to the Pharisees here; so, your hearing it repeated to you in Christ's name, and from his word, makes it his question to you, *What think ye of Christ?*

At such solemnities as this, you have occasion to hear much of Christ; but now the question is, What think ye of Christ, of whom you hear so much? Many, the more they hear of Christ, the less they think of him; like Israel, when they had the manna so plentifully rained down about their tent doors, they thought very little of it. But, wo will be to you, who hear much of Christ, and yet think little or nothing of him: *If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ*, says the apostle, if he hath no esteem of him, *let him be* Anathema Maranatha: [i. e. *accursed until our Lord come.*] If you have the sacramental supper in view, you know Christ hath ordered you to search and try before-hand, saying, *Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat:* and now, if you would examine to purpose, I cannot see a more short and substantial question in all the Bible, to try yourselves by, than this is, *What think ye of Christ?*

* This subject was the substance of four sermons, preached at Portmoak, *etc.* on sacramental occasions, August 22d, 1725. and hath undergone five editions.

Solomon

Solomon ſays, Prov. xxiii. 7. *As a man thinketh in his heart, ſo is he*; where he declares the man's ſtate to be according as the thoughts of his heart go. Now, ſo it is here; truly, according as you think in your heart, eſpecially concerning Chriſt, ſo are you, and ſo is your ſtate in God's ſight: according as you think highly and duly of Chriſt or not, ſo are you either a gracious or a graceleſs man; either a believer or unbeliever; either a man fit to go to a communion-table or not; and therefore enquire into it, *What think ye of Chriſt?* The trial here comes to a narrow point, wherein God only can be the witneſs, who will be the judge. You may deceive men with your words and works, which is all we have to know you by: but here you are called to try yourſelves by your thoughts, before that God that ſearches the heart, and ſees the thought; *What think ye of Chriſt?*

The occaſion of Chriſt's propounding this queſtion, was this. The Phariſees had propoſed ſeveral queſtions to him concerning the law, by which they thought to have expoſed him, while they did but expoſe themſelves; particularly from ver. 15. and downward, thinking to intangle him, *They ſent forth their diſciples with the Herodians, ſaying, Maſter, what thinkeſt thou? Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæſar, or not? What is lawful? or, what ſays the law concerning this?* Chriſt anſwers the queſtion to their aſtoniſhment and confuſion.—Again, from ver. 23. and downward, the Sadducees, who denied the reſurrection, came to him with a queſtion on that head; and they ſtart a difficulty out of the law of Moſes, which they thought was irreconcilable with the doctrine of the reſurrection: but Chriſt anſwers that alſo, and puts them to ſilence.—Again, afterwards, from ver. 34. and downward, the Phariſees finding that the Sadducees were ſilenced by him, they gather together their forces to puzzle and tempt him; and one of them, that was a lawyer, comes with another queſtion to him, ſaying, *Maſter, what is the great commandment in the law?* Now, they having aſked ſo many queſtions at him, and he having anſwered them all, it was time for him to aſk them a queſtion; and he does it while they are gathered together in confederacy againſt him; though their forces were unite, and every one preſent to help another, yet he puzzles them; for God delights to baffle his adverſaries, and conquer his enemies, when they think themſelves ſtrongeſt, and have all the advantages they can deſire. Now, Chriſt aſked them a queſtion, which they could eaſily anſwer: it was a queſtion in their own catechiſm; *What think ye of Chriſt?* And, *Whoſe Son is he?* They anſwer truly according to ſcripture, that *he was the Son of David.* This they were taught, from Pſal. lxxxix. 35. and ſeveral other places, ſhewing, that the Meſſias was to be the *ſeed of David*, the *rod out of the ſtem of Jeſſe*. But now Chriſt ſtarts a difficulty upon their anſwer, which they could not eaſily ſolve; nay, which ſilenced them, and all that ſought occaſion againſt him, ver. 43, 44, 45. *If Chriſt be David's Son, how then is he David's Lord?* Chriſt did not hereby intend to enſnare them as they did him, but to inſtruct them in a neceſſary truth which they were to believe, namely, that the expected Meſſiah is God as well as man; David's Lord as well as David's Son; and ſo *both the root and offſpring of David*, Rev. xxii. 15. Now herein they were puzzled, and put to ſilence.

Many are proud of their knowledge, becauſe they can anſwer ſome queſtions of their catechiſms, as the Phariſees here did in general; but yet they have reaſon to be aſhamed of their ignorance: for when the queſtion is opened up, they cannot confirm the truth which they affirm, nor reconcile one truth with another, no more than the Phariſees here could; by which it was evident, that though they anſwered, yet they did not underſtand this queſtion, which he propoſed, 1. More generally, *What think ye of Chriſt* the Meſſias? 2. More particularly, *Whoſe Son is he?* It is the queſtion, as propoſed in general, that I confine myſelf unto, yet not excluding the other branch of, as the ſubject may bring it in. When Chriſt propoſed this queſtion to the Phariſees, *What think ye of Chriſt?* no doubt they reckoned their thoughts of the Meſſias were very ſound and right every way, while they thought he was the Son of David; but, like the damnable deluded Arian doctors of our day, they did not think ſo highly of him, as to apprehend him to be the Son of God; they did not think ſo honourably of him, as to own his being the ſupreme God, equal with the Father; for all their acquired and imagined knowledge, there was more in that queſtion than they underſtood, *What think ye of Chriſt?*

The Phariſees had aſked Chriſt ſeveral queſtions concerning the law, and the great precept of the law; and now it was fit that Chriſt ſhould aſk them a queſtion concerning the great promiſe of the goſpel: they were ſo taken up with the law, they had no thought of the goſpel; they thought ſo much of Moſes, that they had no thought of Chriſt; therefore ſays he, *What think ye of Chriſt?* Many are ſo full of the law, that they forget him, who *is the end of the law for righteouſneſs, to every one that believeth.* Here is a queſtion to check the pride of legaliſts, *What think ye of Chriſt?* There is a depth in every place of ſcripture, which, though it ſeems to be very plain to the carnal eye, yet the ſpiritual depth thereof cannot be ſounded without the help of the Spirit of God: there is alſo a great depth in this queſtion; angels cannot ſound the depth thereof, they pry into it, and cannot think enough of Chriſt; they can never think too much of him: and what ſhall men ſay in anſwer to it, *What think ye of Chriſt?*

To divide this text too critically, would, I ſuppoſe, be the way to confuſe it; but I think every word hath an emphaſis therein.

1. There is an emphaſis in the interrogative particle *What*; WHAT *think ye of Chriſt?* what place do you give him? what value do you put upon him? what grandeur and glory do you aſcribe unto him? what eſteem have you of him? And ſo,

2. There is an emphaſis in the verb *think*: ſome think not of him at all, God and Chriſt is not in all their thoughts; ſome think meanly, ſome think baſely, ſome think diſhonourably, ſome think hardly of him: but what think ye? what is your judgment of Chriſt? what is your opinion of him? what is your ſentiment of him? what is your apprehenſion of him? how ſtand you affected towards him? and what conſideration have you of him?

3. There is an emphaſis in the pronoun *ye*; *What think* YE *of Chriſt?* ye Phariſees and Sadducees; *What think* YE *of Chriſt?* Ye that are ſo buſy in ſtarting queſtions about the law, *What think ye of Chriſt, the end of the law?* Ye legaliſts

and self-righteous persons, *What think ye of Christ?* Yea, though it was put to the Pharisees in particular, yet it concerns all in general. The trying question that is proposed for the conviction of hypocrites, and to find them out, is useful for the consolation and confirmation of believers, and for discovering their uprightness. While the daughters of Jerusalem think no more of Christ than of another beloved, saying, *What is thy beloved more than another?* the spouse of Christ thinks him to be the *Chief among ten thousands.* Therefore it comes to you all, *What think ye of Christ*, believers and unbelievers? Surely *to them that believe he is precious.*

4. There is an emphasis in the *object* or *matter* of the question, *Christ; What think ye of* CHRIST; what think ye of the Messias? what think ye of the Anointed of God, the Christ of God? It is remarkable, Christ says not here, *What think ye of* ME? but, *what think ye of* CHRIST? that is, *God's Anointed*, and the *Messias promised to the fathers:* and hereby it is intimate to us, that as Christ loves to magnify his office, as the Sent, and Sealed, and Anointed of God; so we cannot have right and becoming thoughts of him, unless we apprehend him in his saving offices, to which he is authorized of the Father: and so, when he says not, *What think ye of* ME? but, *What think ye of* CHRIST? He does not simply commend himself, but his Father also, who anointed him to that office; and himself, bearing his Father's commission, and invested with his authority to save sinners, *What think ye of Christ?* Here is the proper object of the esteem of rational creatures, and especially mankind sinners, on whom their thoughts ought to be terminate. It is not, what think ye of God absolutely considered? for, *God out of Christ is a consuming fire.* It is not, what think ye of Moses? You magnify Moses and the law; but, *A greater than Moses is here*, even he by whom the *law is magnified and made honourable.* It is not, what think ye of the ministers and their sermons? Oh! they are nothing but the image of death without him! but the question is, *What think ye of Christ?* The word itself is but a dead letter without Christ. It is a remarkable saying that Christ hath to the same purpose, John v. 39, 40. *Search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they that testify of me: and ye will not come to me that ye might have life.* You think you have *eternal life* in the scripture, but the *scripture testifies of me;* yet *ye will not come to me*, though the scripture testifies that eternal life is only to be had in me. Christ is *the true God and eternal life*, 1 John v. 20. *And this is the record, that God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son*, ver. 11. Seeing, then, that the scripture testifies of Christ, that eternal life is in him; in vain do men think to have eternal life, even in the scripture, while they will not come to Christ, that they may have life. People may think respectfully of the scripture, and yet perish in their ignorance, and die in a delusion, while they do not think respectfully of Christ, in a suitableness to the testimony that the scripture gives of him; therefore the great question is still, *What think ye of Christ?*

OBSERV. *That the great question of the Christian catechism, by which people are to try themselves, is this,* WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST?

Here, you see, CHRIST, who is the catechist, that puts the question, is also the catechism, the matter of the question. It is to this same purpose that Christ demands an answer to this question, both with respect to the people in general, what they thought of Christ; and also with respect to the disciples themselves, what they thought of him, Luke ix. 18, 19, 20. *Whom say the people that I am?* What is the sentiment and opinion of the people about Christ? It is answered for the people, that some took him for *John the Baptist, some for Elias, some for one of the old prophets:* they had an esteem of Christ, but not according to his worth and excellency, his grandeur and glory. Well, but says Christ to his disciples, *Whom say ye that I am?* What is your thought and judgment? Peter answers, in the name of the rest, saying, *Thou are the Christ of God.* Believers only can answer this question to purpose, *What think ye of Christ?*

The method which I would here essay to prosecute, as the Lord may assist, shall be the following, *viz.*

I. To premise some *general remarks* for clearing of this doctrine.
II. To shew what is the *import* of this question in the several parts thereof.
III. Offer some *reasons* of the doctrine, shewing why this is the leading and trying question in the Christian catechism.
IV. Deduce some *inferences*, and so make application of the point, for informing of our minds, trying of our state, and directing of our thoughts and affections concerning Christ.

I. The *first* head proposed is, To offer some *general remarks* for clearing of the doctrine.

1. *Remark*, "That man is a thoughtful, or "a thinking creature." God created him with a thinking faculty, capable of discursive thought and ratiocination; capable of rational cogitation concerning God, and spiritual objects, and celestial things; which beasts, that have some sort of thoughts, yet are not capable of. I need not insist upon this; for some of you know, that even Pagan philosophers are acquaint with this, and that heathen poets have inferred it from the very frame and structure of the human body; as Ovid.

Pronaque cum spectant animalia cætera terram,
Os homini sublime dedit: Cœlumque tueri
Jussit, & erectos ad sidera tollere vultus.*
METAM. lib. i. fab. 2.

Man was endowed above beasts with a faculty capable of celestial contemplation. It is peculiar to the creatures called MEN and ANGELS, to think of God, and to think of Christ; other creatures are not capable of such thoughts: this is plainly supposed in this question, *What think ye of Christ?*

2. *Remark*, "That man's thoughts, together "with all the faculties and powers of his soul, "have got such a dash by the fall of Adam, "that they were set a wavering after other "objects, besides God the chief good: yea, the "fall in a manner dashed out his brains; and "his head being broken, God went out of his "head, and the creature came in." Since that time, he could never have a right thought of God in his head: yea, *God is not in all his thoughts;*

* *i. e.* "While other animals look downwards upon the earth, the Creator gave man a lofty face; and ordered him to look to heaven, "and lift his countenance upright towards the stars."

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innumerable other things fill up the room which God ſhould have. *He created man upright, but he hath found out many inventions*, inſomuch that now *every imagination of the thoughts of his heart is only evil continually*, Gen. vi. 5. The world, and the luſts thereof, do monopolize and ingroſs all the thoughts of the children of men, and God is thruſt out of them; there is no room for God, or the Son of God. This wrong ſett of the thoughts is alſo here ſuppoſed in the queſtion, *What think ye of Chriſt?*

3. *Remark*, "That whatever confuſed thoughts, "and dark apprehenſions men may naturally "have, now in their fallen ſtate, concerning "God and his law, like the confuſed chaos, "Gen. i. 2. *Without form and void, and darkneſs "upon the face of the deep*; yet thoughts of Chriſt, "or of God in Chriſt, are what no man could "ever have had in the leaſt glimmering idea "by nature, without divine goſpel-revelation." Adam fallen retained ſome awful and terrible thoughts of God; but no thought could he ever have had of Chriſt, unleſs God had revealed him as *the ſeed of the woman* that was to *bruiſe the head of the ſerpent*. This is *the myſtery that was hid from ages and generations*: the *great myſtery of godlineſs, God manifeſted in the fleſh; God in Chriſt reconciling the world to himſelf*, could not enter into our thoughts. Some natural impreſſions men have of God as a lawgiver, ſtanding upon terms of obedience with them, according to the firſt covenant, [namely, of works,] made with the firſt Adam; but God in Chriſt, as the *end of the law for righteouſneſs*, and *fulfilling the righteouſneſs of the law* in the ſinner's room, is ſuch a hidden myſtery, ſo far above the natural thoughts of man, that even where the objective revelation of this myſtery is made, without the ſubjective, internal, ſaving illumination in the knowledge thereof, men cannot have or entertain any due apprehenſions of it, but remain doting upon their legal dreams and imaginations concerning God, as in the old covenant-relation to them. This was evident in the Phariſees here, notwithſtanding of the goſpel-light they had both from the Old-Teſtament prophecies and promiſes of Chriſt, and from the rays of the Sun of righteouſneſs himſelf, now ariſen among them; ſtill they were doting upon the law, and had ſome dark thoughts of God with relation thereto; therefore Chriſt, to direct their thoughts in the only way to God, he leads them to himſelf. And as the diſciples themſelves, being but partly enlightened herein, need to be directed in their faith and ſpiritual thoughts of God, that they be not legal, terminating upon God abſolutely, but evangelical upon Chriſt, or God in him, John xiv. 1. *Ye believe in God, believe alſo in me*; ſo much more do blind Phariſees need to be directed to the right road, as here our Lord does. Ye think of God, but, *What think ye of Chriſt?*

4. *Remark*, "When Chriſt is revealed, people "may think of him, and yet think amiſs, un"leſs their thoughts be ſpiritualized by a ſu"pernatural change of the mind, and ſaving "illumination of their underſtanding in the "knowledge of Chriſt." Thoughts may be conſidered as either rational and ſpeculative, which is juſt the work of the brain, and lies only in a bare theory of divine things; or, as practical and ſpiritually operative, which does not reſt in the head, but affects the heart, and ſets the affections in motion towards divine things, and raiſes the ſpiritual eſtimation thereof. Now, whatever thoughts of Chriſt the natural man may have in the former ſenſe, yet no ſuitable thoughts of Chriſt can he have in the latter ſenſe, till a ſupernatural change be wrought by ſaving illumination. It is as impoſſible in the black ſtate of nature to think upon Chriſt, or ſpiritual things, in a ſpiritual manner, as it is for a man that was born blind to judge of colours, or to be taken up with their beauty and luſtre; *The natural man receives not the things of God, they are fooliſhneſs unto him, neither can he know them, for they are ſpiritually diſcerned*, 1 Cor. ii. 14. This *diſcerning* he cannot have, till he be *tranſlated out of darkneſs to God's marvellous light*, and till the *God, who commanded light to ſhine out of darkneſs, ſhine into his heart, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jeſus Chriſt*, 2 Cor. iv. 6. People then may think of Chriſt, and yet think amiſs, without this ſaving illumination. This is alſo ſuppoſed here in the queſtion; for the Phariſees did not want ſome thoughts of Chriſt the Meſſias, and partly right thoughts too upon the matter, while they thought he was *the Son of David*; yet they were ſo far from being right thoughts of Chriſt, as God-man, and as to the manner of thinking of him, that they had no due eſteem of the true Chriſt; nay, *He was deſpiſed and rejected of them, as a root out of a dry ground*, and as *having no form or comelineſs*, Iſa. ii. 3. And thus he is ſtill undervalued by multitudes, who yet judge they have right enough thoughts of Chriſt; they think of him, but think amiſs: and therefore the queſtion is not merely concerning the act of thinking, but the quality thereof; it is not, have you *any* thoughts of Chriſt; do you ever think of him? but it is, What think ye of him?

5. *Remark*, "That man's thoughts are with"in God's juriſdiction, and under his autho"rity." The commands of God extend not only to the outward, but the inward man of the heart, and conſequently further than ever any earthly command could go: where was there ever a monarch that could give out ſuch laws, as would bind the heart and thoughts of men? If any mortal ſhould make a law, that his ſubjects ſhould not dare, upon their peril, to welcome a traiterous thought againſt his royal perſon, otherwiſe he would be avenged upon them; really ſuch an one would deſerve to be laughed at for his pride and folly, more than Caligula, who threatened the air, if it durſt rain when he was at his paſtime, who yet durſt not look upon the air when it thundered. It were the height of madneſs, for any crowned head in the world, or potentate on earth, ſo far to forfeit their reaſon, as to think, that the thoughts of mens hearts were within their territories or juriſdiction: but behold, they are all under the authority of God; for his name is Καρδιογνώστης, *the Searcher of the heart*, Acts i. 24. and the *Trier of the reins of the children of men*. Think not that thoughts are free, any more than your words or actions before God. It is his prerogative to lay hands upon the inner man, and to *judge the ſecrets of men by Jeſus Chriſt*, Rom. ii. 16. who is here the catechiſt, putting the queſtion to you; and he is the fitteſt hand, for he knows what way your thoughts are running: he is the witneſs, and will be the judge of your thoughts, which are all under his juriſdiction. Therefore

fore it is his unqueſtionable right, to call you to an account of your thoughts; thoughts are as viſible and evident as actions to him; Heb. iv. 12. 13. *The Word of God*, [the eſſential Word, the *Word that was made fleſh*,] *is quick and powerful, and ſharper than any two-edged ſword, piercing even to the dividing aſunder of ſoul and ſpirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a diſcerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart; neither is there any creature that is not manifeſt in his ſight: but all things are naked, and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.* He knows our thoughts afar off, even before we conceive them; and thoughts are actions before him: heart-thoughts are heart-acts, and real deeds in his ſight; the adulterous thought, is adultery before him, and will be judged as ſuch; the covetous thought, is idolatry before him; the malicious thought, is murder; and the unbelieving thought, is unbelief; the contemning thought of Chriſt, is contempt itſelf: he is an infinite Spirit, that ſees your thoughts better than men ſee your actions; and therefore anſwer for your thoughts to him. *What think ye of Chriſt?*

6. *Remark*, "That as men may expect to be "catechiſed and examined of God, with reſpect "to their thoughts, as well as their actions, "ſo eſpecially concerning their thoughts of "Chriſt." And as God will judge us by the thoughts we have of Chriſt, ſo we ought to try and judge ourſelves by this rule; for as our thoughts are, ſo are we; yea, God's thoughts of us are according to our thoughts of Chriſt. If we think nothing of Chriſt, God thinks nothing of us; if we think highly of Chriſt, God thinks highly of us in him: for, as God's thoughts of Chriſt are very high and honourable, he being the Father's darling and delight, Iſa. xlii. 5.; ſo, when our thoughts of Chriſt, in ſome meaſure, agree with God's thoughts of him, and we think highly and honourably of him, as God does; ſurely it is evident, that we have the Spirit of God; and that as God is well-pleaſed with Chriſt, ſo he is well-pleaſed with us in him. Now, if *our thoughts and hearts condemn* us in this matter, *God is greater than our hearts, and knows all things*; but *if our hearts and thoughts condemn us not, then we have confidence towards God*, 1 John iii. 20, 21. It is true, the natural conſcience of men, and their thoughts, may *accuſe or excuſe*, and ſo condemn or juſtify them, according as they do good or evil, Rom. ii. 15.; and to be thus condemned and juſtified, is no evidence of the man's ſtate before God; for this only ſhews the work of the law, written in our hearts by nature, even the covenant of works, which ſays, That *the doer of the law ſhall be juſtified*, ver. 13. and the breaker of the law condemned. Theſe are ſome of the beams of nature's light; all men may find themſelves condemned here, and they that think themſelves juſtified here before God, by their good deeds, they but diſcover their ignorance of the law, which condemns all vain and evil thoughts, as well as evil deeds; and therefore no man can have his heart and thoughts juſtifying him before God, nor a good conſcience or confidence towards God, till once he come to think duly of Chriſt, from whom the law hath got full ſatisfaction to all its commands and demands, and by whoſe blood the fiery law is diſtinguiſhed: the *conſcience being ſprinkled with that blood*, and *ſo purged from dead* legal *works to ſerve the living God*, the man hath *confidence towards God*, according to the meaſure of his faith, and regular thoughts of Chriſt. The more a man thinks upon the law, the more his thoughts condemn him, if he underſtood the ſpirituality of the law: but, the more he thinks of Chriſt, as *the end of the law for righteouſneſs*, the more will his thoughts and conſcience ſmile upon him, and give him confidence towards God; for, we *have boldneſs to enter into the holieſt*, and to come to a holy God, *by the blood of Jeſus*, Heb. x. 19. They that think much of themſelves, and think little or nothing of Chriſt, they are leaſt in the kingdom of heaven; yea, they are not of that kingdom at all; they deſpiſe Chriſt, and God deſpiſes them: but they that think little of themſelves, or think nothing of themſelves, but think much of Chriſt, and think every way highly and honourably of him, they are great in the kingdom of God; Chriſt is great in their eye, and they are great in God's eye, being *accepted in the Beloved*: therefore, the great queſtion is, *What think ye of Chriſt?*

II. The *ſecond* head propoſed, was, To ſhew the *import* of this queſtion, *What think ye of Chriſt?* That people may not deceive themſelves with paſſing thoughts they may have of Chriſt, I would more cloſely open up the meaning and import of the queſtion; and this being the main head upon the doctrinal part, we muſt explain the ſeveral branches of the queſtion, and ſo ſhew the import of it. 1. *Objectively*, with reſpect to the *object*, CHRIST. 2. *Actively*, with reſpect to the *act* of thinking. 3. *Formally*, with reſpect to the *quality* of the act, what ſort of a thought it is; *What* think ye of him? 4. *Subjectively*, with reſpect to the perſons that are the ſubjects, *ye*; *What think* YE *of Chriſt?*

1*ſt*, Then, I am to conſider the import of this queſtion, with reſpect to the *object*, or matter of our thoughts, namely, CHRIST: *What think ye of Chriſt?* And here I own it is impoſſible for me to go through all that I thought might be ſaid here: there are ſo many things in Chriſt, that I found to be the matter of the queſtion, he being *all in all*, and *all the fulneſs of the Godhead being in him*, that before ever I was aware, there were more than an hundred queſtions occurred to me, that might be put upon this one particular; and therefore I found a neceſſity of reſtricting myſelf. And though, if time allow, in the application I may, through grace, dilate upon ſome of theſe; yet at preſent I ſhall confine myſelf to what I judge preciſely to be the ſcope of the text and context, and the intent of the Spirit of God in this queſtion, *What think ye of Chriſt?* That is, 1. What think ye of his *righteouſneſs?* 2. What think ye of his *pedigree?* 3. What think ye of his *perſon?* 4. What think ye of his *anointing?* Theſe four, I ſuppoſe, we will find as the ſpecial import of the queſtion here.

[1.] What think ye of his *righteouſneſs?* This I place firſt, becauſe I judge, from what goes before, as the occaſion of this queſtion, that the great deſign of Chriſt therein was to lead off theſe ſelf-righteous Phariſees from the righteouſneſs of works and of the law, concerning which all their queſtions were put to him, and to lead them to another righteouſneſs, even to himſelf as the Lord their righteouſneſs, the end of the law. As if he had ſaid, You think to be juſtified by the deeds of the law; but, how is that poſſible, ſeeing *by the law is the knowledge*

knowledge of ſin? Rom. iii. 20. If ye will ſtand cloſs to theſe old-covenant terms with God, then let the law itſelf catechiſe you. Where is your righteouſneſs of nature and practice, that the law requires? Where is your righteouſneſs of thought, word, and deed, that it requires? Where is your righteouſneſs of affection and action, that it requires? Where is your perfect, perſonal, and perpetual obedience; your righteouſneſs internal in heart, external in life, and eternal in duration, which the law requires? for, *Curſed is every one that continues not in all things written in the book of the law to do them*, Gal. iii. 10. The law will tell you, that though you keep it wholly, and *yet offend in one point*, you are *guilty of all*, James ii. 20. Now, is there no point wrong in your ſtate, nature, heart, or thought all your days, not to ſpeak of your words and actions? If there be, then you are guilty of all; and ſeeing by the law is the knowledge thus of your ſin and guilt, how can you be juſtified by the law? Can that holy righteous law pronounce you juſt and righteous? No, no; in vain do you think of righteouſneſs by the law: therefore, what think ye of Chriſt the Meſſias, who is called, JEHOVAH-TSIDKENU; *the Lord our righteouſneſs*, Jer. xxiii. 6. It is he that came to *fulfil* the righteouſneſs of the law in his own perſon, really and actively, that *the righteouſneſs of the law might be fulfilled in us*, imputatively and paſſively, Rom. viii. 4. Is not this the only righteouſneſs that *magnifies the law and makes it honourable?* You magnify your own righteouſneſs, which does but diſgrace and diſhonour the law; but, *what think ye of Chriſt?* Do you magnify and honour him, as *the Lord the righteouſneſs?* Ought not you to magnify that righteouſneſs that magnifies the law, ſeeing it is more than an angelical righteouſneſs? It is not the righteouſneſs of a man only, or of *David's ſon*; but the *righteouſneſs of God*, and of *David's Lord*. If you think no more of Chriſt but that he is *David's ſon*, no wonder then you be relying upon and following after the law, and a poor pitiful righteouſneſs of your own; you have never ſeen the glory of Chriſt's righteouſneſs: but if you think duly of Chriſt, you will ſee him to be the LORD JEHOVAH, and his righteouſneſs to be a glorious divine righteouſneſs, ſo as you will *count all things but loſs and dung for the excellency of the knowledge of him, and to be found in him, not having your own righteouſneſs that is after the law, but the righteouſneſs which is of God* in Chriſt *by faith*, Phil. ii. 8, 9. Let all your queſtions about the law then, might Chriſt ſay, give way to this great queſtion, *what think ye of Chriſt*, and his law-biding righteouſneſs? Your righteouſneſs will not abide the firſt fire of the law when it comes to be diſcharged againſt you, and to exact obedience and ſatisfaction; but Chriſt's obedience and death anſwers the whole charge of its precept and ſanction both to the full: therefore, *What think ye of Chriſt?* and what think ye of his righteouſneſs? This is the firſt thing imported in this queſtion, as it ſtands here.

[2.] What think ye of his *pedigree?* That this is imported in the queſtion, appears from the connexion alſo, *Whoſe ſon is he?* What think ye of his pedigree? They thought it was eaſy to anſwer that queſtion, by ſaying only, *He is David's ſon.* They might have known it was not ſo eaſy to anſwer that queſtion, if they had conſidered the queſtion of the prophet Iſaiah, chap. liii. 8. *Who ſhall declare his generation?* And the deſcription which that prophet gives of him, Iſa. ix. 6. that the name of the Meſſias, the child born, and ſon given to us, ſhould be, *Wonderful*, *Counſellor*, and *the mighty God*, *the everlaſting Father*, *the Prince of peace.*—What think ye of his pedigree as he is *man?* No doubt this was partly implied in the queſtion; for Chriſt did not diſprove their anſwer, though it was but to the leaſt part of the queſtion: *He is David's ſon*, ſay they; and it is right to think of him as the ſon of David, cloathed with our nature: here was the *great myſtery of godlineſs*, *God manifeſted in the fleſh.* It was no myſtery for the Phariſees to think only that he was the ſon of David; David had other ſons, and a numerous ſeed: and if that be all, that he was the ſon of David, they might thus think of Chriſt, and yet think nothing of him. But it is another thing to think of him as God in our nature. If we think duly of Chriſt as the ſon of David, or in human nature, then, muſt we not think that God is come very near to us, ſo as there is a natural fibneſs betwixt him and us, he being *bone of our bone*, *and fleſh of our fleſh?* Muſt we not think, that he wonderfully emptied himſelf of his divine glory, and humbled himſelf unto death? Though *he thought it no robbery to be equal with God*, yet he ſuffered himſelf to be denuded of his glory, cloathed with rags of our fleſh: God calls him *the man that is his Fellow*, yet he was made a fellow to thieves and malefactors, and a murderer preferred before him. Though he was *the Prince of life*, yet, as the word may be rendered, he EVACUATED or EMPTIED *himſelf unto death*; and yet, to them that know him, he is moſt lovely, even in his greateſt abaſement. What think ye of Chriſt as man, as the ſon of David, the ſon of man, a man of the ſame infirmities with us; except ſinful infirmities? *He was made in all things like unto us*, *ſin only excepted:* He became a poor man, in all outward reſpects; a diſtreſſed man, *a man of ſorrows and acquainted with grief*; a tempted man, toſſed and tempted of the devil ſometimes, he going through all the ages of a man, firſt conceived, then born, then a babe, then a youth, and at laſt the perfect ſtature of a man: He became a mortal man, and accordingly was put to a painful and ſhameful death; yet a holy man, a wonderful man, a God-man: What think ye of the man Chriſt Jeſus?—But the main thing imported in the queſtion here with relation to his pedigree, is, What think ye of his pedigree, as he is *God?* What think ye of Chriſt, in this reſpect? For to ſeparate Chriſt from God, is to make him no Chriſt; therefore the queſtion is, *What think ye of Chriſt*, whoſe ſon he is, with reſpect to his divine nature, as well as his human nature? That this was the import of the queſtion, appears from his reply to their anſwer, *How then does David call him Lord?* He is Lord JEHOVAH, the *only begotten Son of God*, John i. 18.; *the brightneſs of the Father's glory*, *and the expreſs image of his perſon*, Heb. i. 2.; *by whom all things were made*, John i. 3. It is the Arian blaſphemy, to affirm him to be no more but *Omoiuſius patri*, but not *Omouſius*; that is, *like unto the Father*, but not the ſame eſſence and ſubſtance with him. He is, according to his Godhead, arrayed with all glory. All the creatures are to him as the *drop of a bucket*; yea, as *nothing*, *and leſs than nothing and vanity*;

vanity; he hath a *name above every name*; and all the creatures are but ſhadows to him, who is the ſubſtantial image of God. He is the eternal Son of God, by an ineffable generation; whatever Arians and Atheiſts think of Chriſt; yet Chriſt himſelf *thought it no robbery to be equal with God*, Phil. ii. 6. Therefore, *What think ye of Chriſt?* is he no more but the ſon of David? The Jews looked upon Chriſt, as an ignorant clown, or filly perſon, will look upon the ſun; and, it may be, will think it no bigger than his bonnet; or at moſt, no larger than a milſtone: ſo did the Jews. The Phariſees looked upon the Son of God, ſaying, *Is not this the carpenter's ſon?* but their utmoſt was, that he was *the ſon of David*; they did not ſee him to be the Son of God. *What think ye of Chriſt?* Do ye ſee all the attributes of God to be in him? and all his actions, as Mediator, to be dignified with infinite virtue and value? that he was able to ſatisfy infinite juſtice? that *he is able to ſave to the uttermoſt?* that he is the adequate object of divine worſhip, and a full ſuitable portion for an immortal ſoul, becauſe he is the Son of God, as well as the ſon of David? All this is imported in the queſtion, *What think ye of Chriſt?*

[3.] What think ye of his *perſon?* This queſtion is alſo plainly imported in that, *What think ye of Chriſt*, namely, as he is God-man in one perſon, and the ſecond perſon of the glorious Trinity? It is plain, that Chriſt ſpeaks of himſelf here as perſonally conſidered, and as having two diſtinct natures in one perſon. Now, the human nature of Chriſt is not a perſon diſtinct from the divine; though the natures are diſtinct, the perſon is one. But the anſwer of the Phariſees to this queſtion, ſhewed they had no diſtinct knowledge of this myſtery; for they anſwer, *He is the ſon of David*; without knowing that he was the Son of God, as well as the ſon of David, in one perſon; which made Chriſt here to declare his ſovereign Lordſhip and Godhead, as well as his manhood. The myſtery of the queſtion then, which they did not underſtand, was, What think ye of that wonderful perſon God-man, in whom the human nature is advanced to ſuch an unſpeakable dignity, as to be united to, and of the ſame perſonality with the Son of God? Here is matter of thought to an intelligent mind; What think ye of the wonderful manner, in which ſinful men may come to be *partakers of the divine nature*, even by the holy Son of God his being a partaker of the human nature? Here is a glorious ſubject for thought and contemplation. What think ye of the wonderful way, that God, in his infinite wiſdom, hath taken, to bring God and men together, even in and through him, who is both God and man, and partaking of both natures in one perſon, is fit for bringing both God and man into one, and to lay his hand upon both parties? What think ye of ſuch a glorious perſon as finite and infinite, time and eternity, Creator and creature joined together? *The Word was made fleſh, and dwelt among us; and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth*, John i. 14.

[4.] What think ye of his *unction* or anointing? This, I ſuppoſe, muſt alſo be the import of the queſtion objectively conſidered, as it is here generally propoſed; for, Chriſt ſignifies *Anointed*; in the Hebrew it is Meſſias; in the Greek, it is Chriſt; and in our language, it is the Anointed: and this being the main word, on which the weight of the general queſtion itſelf lies, it is the more neceſſary that this be particularly opened.—The queſtion then comes to this in general, What think ye of his *Father*, the Anointer? John vi. 27. *For him hath God the Father ſealed*; How? See Pſal. xlv. 7. *God, thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladneſs above thy fellows.* How much pains is Chriſt at, in the goſpel, to recommend his Father, as ſending and authorizing him to his mediatorial work?—Again, What think ye of his *office*, to which he is anointed? He hath not taken the honour of the mediatorial office upon him, without being called of God, and anointed of God thereunto, Heb. v. 5. We do not think honourably enough of any of his ſaving offices, unleſs we, at the ſame time, apprehend his divine unction thereunto.—Again, it comes to this, What think ye of his *Spirit*, the ointment, wherewith he is anointed? Iſa. lxi. 1. *The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, for he hath anointed me.* Iſa. xlii. 1. *I have put my Spirit upon him, and he ſhall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.*—— There is the meaning of the queſtion in general, with reſpect to this Chriſt, who is the ſubject-matter of the queſtion: but there is much in this name CHRIST, and more than we can tell; I only name ſome particulars further here imported.

1. What think ye of his *prophecy* and *teaching?* For, as Chriſt, he is anointed to be a Prophet: *Who teaches like him?* ſays Elihu, Job xxxvi. 22. Other prophets and teachers have no wiſdom but what he gives them; but, *in him are hid all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge.* Other prophets may err, but he teaches infallibly: for he is the truth itſelf; *full of grace and truth.* Other teachers may be daſhed, but he teaches authoritatively; *he ſpeaks as one having authority, and not as the ſcribes.* Other teachers may fail in their deſign, and prove unſucceſsful in their work; but he teaches efficaciouſly: men work upon a capacity, but he can give a capacity; *The entrance of his words giveth light; he gives underſtanding to the ſimple.* The *excellency* of his teaching is ſingular, if we conſider his ability and fidelity; the *matter* of his teaching is ſingular, if we conſider it is the whole will of God for our ſalvation; the *manner* of his teaching is ſingular, if we conſider it is by his word and Spirit; and even by a human voice he can convey his divine power; the *extent* of his teaching is ſingular, if we conſider it extends to all ſorts of perſons, Jews and Gentiles, and to all ſorts of things neceſſary to eternal life: this anointing teaches *all things*, 1 John ii. 27. In a word, none have authority to teach, but by commiſſion from him; neither can any other teacher preach himſelf; *We preach not ourſelves, but Chriſt Jeſus the Lord*; and, *To him gave all the prophets witneſs*: but it is his prerogative alone, to preach himſelf, ſaying, *Come to me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you reſt. Look to me and be ſaved: I am the roſe of Sharon; I am the light of the world; I am the way, the truth, and the life.* O then, was there ever any prophet or teacher that could compete with him? *The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me*, ſays Chriſt, *for he hath anointed me to preach glad tidings to the meek.* He is the Chriſt, the anointed prophet; and, *What think ye of Chriſt?*

2. What think ye of his *prieſthood?* For, as Chriſt

Chriſt, he is anointed to be a *Prieſt for ever after the order of Melchiſedeck.* All the Levitical prieſts were but ſhadows and types of him who was the true Prieſt, the true Temple, the true Altar, the true Sacrifice, all in one. What high thoughts may we have of his oblation, or *obedience unto death, even the death of the croſs?* For here was the grand condition of the covenant of redemption, or grace, fulfilled. The covenant of grace was all grace with reſpect to God, who, of his grace, found out the ranſom; and with reſpect to us, who are *ſaved by grace:* but, with reſpect to Chriſt, it is a covenant made upon terms and conditions, namely, his obedience, righteouſneſs, paſſion, and oblation; *Whom God hath ſet forth to be the propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteouſneſs for the remiſſion of ſins that are paſt*, Rom. iii. 25. O what a free, full, perfect, holy, ſweet, and ſatisfying ſacrifice did he offer up of himſelf, even a *ſacrifice of a ſweet-ſmelling ſavour unto God*, whereby juſtice was ſatisfied, wrath appeaſed, ſin expiated, God atoned, death vanquiſhed, hell quenched, heaven purchaſed, and the devil's kingdom deſtroyed; for, *by death he deſtroyed him that had the power of death*, that is, *the devil!* What may we think of his interceſſion, grounded upon this oblation? *For he is able to ſave to the uttermoſt all that come to God by him, becauſe he ever lives to make interceſſion.* Here is the antidote againſt all charges and accuſations, Rom. viii. 33, 34.; the antidote againſt all temptations, Heb. ii. 17, 18. iv. 14, 15.; an antidote againſt all the ſnares of the world, John xvii. 15.; againſt all ſins, failings, and infirmities, 1 John ii. 1, 2.; againſt all fears, thro' ſenſe of unworthineſs, to draw near to God's throne of grace, Heb. iv. 15, 16. x. 19,—22.; and againſt all fears of apoſtaſy and falling away, John xvii. 11. O Sirs, his promiſe, his power, his prayer, give great ſecurity, and greater cannot be given: he hath prayed for the Spirit, and the conſtant abiding thereof, John xiv. 16, 17. ſee alſo John iv. 14. Chriſt's interceſſion is founded on his oblation; and the Father is ſo well-pleaſed with the oblation, that he cannot refuſe his interceſſion; nay, *he hears him always.* Therefore, *What think ye of Chriſt?*

3. What think ye of his *kingdom* and *royalty?* The queſtion, *What think ye of Chriſt?* imports this alſo; for, as Chriſt, he is anointed to be a King; *I have ſet my King*, [or, as it is in the Hebrew, ANOINTED *my King*,] *upon my holy hill of Zion*, Pſa. ii. 6. Is not *all power in heaven and earth committed unto him*, having on his veſture and thigh this name written, KING OF KINGS, *and* LORD OF LORDS? He is *the King eternal and immortal;* the *government is upon his ſhoulders;* and *of the increaſe of his kingdom and government there ſhall be no end.* His *delivering up the kingdom to the Father at laſt*, is but a changing the *manner* of his adminiſtration, and delivering up all his members, of whom his kingdom conſiſts, unto his Father, to be eternally crowned and glorified: he will reign through eternity, and the *children of Zion will be joyful in their King*, and ſing through eternity. I might here ſhew what a powerful and peaceable, mild and merciful, wiſe and holy, juſt, and righteous King our Lord Jeſus is; and then aſk you, *What think ye of Chriſt?* But it is not poſſible to give ſo much as a hint at the thouſandth part of his glory and royalty. His kingdon is ſpiritual and internal: if you be his ſpiritual ſubjects, his *kingdom is within you;* yea, though you be yet ſubjects to the devil, he hath power over all hearts, and can ſoften the hardeſt, and bind the ſtouteſt, and make the people fall down under him: yea, as he is able, ſo he is willing; for, he is not only the God of power, but *the prince of peace*, Iſa. ix. 6.; and therefore, as a *Prophet*, he preaches peace; as a *Prieſt*, he purchaſes peace; and, as a *King*, he proclaims peace; yea, *Creates the fruit of the lips peace; peace to him that is afar off, and to him that is nigh.* As a powerful Potentate, he is able; and, as a Prince of peace, he is ready, to ſave to the uttermoſt. As he is full of power, ſo he is full of pity; and his power and peace both are joined together, for the encouragement of ſinners to come to him; *Let him take hold of my ſtrength, that he may make peace with me, and he ſhall make peace with me*, Iſa. xxvii. 5.—Perhaps, by the bye, ſome poor ſoul is thinking, Oh! but I have no ſtrength to take hold of his ſtrength. Well, it is right to think ſo of yourſelf, and of your own weakneſs and wickedneſs: but no ſtrength comes in by that thought, while poring on yourſelf only; that is but the half of what you are to think, when you think right of yourſelves, as weak and wicked. But, what think ye of Chriſt our glorious King? If you can think honourably of him, as able and willing to help you, O then you would find ſtrength coming in with ſuch a thought: and high thoughts of a powerful and merciful King JESUS, is one of the ways of taking hold of his ſtrength. If you ſuppoſe that you think he is able and ready, and yet you find no ſtrength coming in, O Sirs, ſuſpect your own thought of him, that it is but a miſbelieving and diſhonourable thought: for, I aſſure you, right thoughts of Chriſt will ſet the heart all in motion towards him. But now, O! there would be no end in ſpeaking of the royalties of King JESUS; his royal throne, his royal crown, his royal victories, his royal triumphs, and the royal entertainment that he gives to his ſubjects at his table above, and even below, when he brings them to his banquetting-houſe. I ſhall only add, that as it is ſaid of Solomon, *there was no king like him;* ſo, behold a *greater than Solomon is here:* there is no King like him who is the *King of Zion;* he hath all other kings under his check and controul; and, what think ye of Chriſt then? Other kings have their dominions, for the moſt part, by uſurpation, by encroachment: but Chriſt is King conſtitute of his Father; *I will make him my firſt-born, higher than the kings of the earth*, Pſal. lxxxix. 27.; and all this for the good of the people: *He hath put all things under his feet, and given him to be head over all things unto his church*, Eph. ii. 22. This leads to another import of the queſtion; that is,

4. What think ye of his *authority* and *ability*, *commiſſion*, *fulneſs*, *furniture*, and *fitneſs* for executing theſe ſaving offices? For all this is implied in the deſignation CHRIST, *the anointed;* that is, one commiſſionated and qualified of God, by a ſupereminent unction, John iii. 34. Behold his excellency here, above all that ever had the like offices. Behold he is anointed, for the concurrence of all theſe offices, whether general, as Saviour, Surety, and Redeemer; or particular, as Prophet, Prieſt, and King. Some have been prophets, ſome prieſts, ſome kings anointed; but never any was anointed to all theſe but Chriſt: *What think ye of Chriſt?* — Behold the

matter

matter of his anointing; others have been anointed with material oil, but he is anointed with holy oil, the holy Spirit.—And whereas others have had the Spirit in some respects, therefore behold the *measure* of his anointing; others were anointed in measure, but he *without measure;* they may have a fulness of sufficiency, but he hath a fulness of redundancy; they a fulness like the fulness of a vessel, but his the fulness of an ocean; they a plenitude, but he a fountain.—Behold and view the *duration* of his anointing; his saints and servants may have the Spirit sometimes working, sometimes ceasing, sometimes flowing, and sometimes ebbing; but Christ is anointed with an enduring unction, John i. 33. The Spirit that descended on him, did remain and rest upon him; see Isa. lix. 22.—Hence behold also the *equality* of his anointing with himself: the Spirit given to others, that were invested with an office in God's house, did work with them as mere men; there was no equality betwixt them and the Spirit given to them: but as Christ is anointed with the Spirit, as he is Mediator, God-man; so, as to God, he is co-equal with the Spirit, wherewith he is anointed; yea, the same in substance, equal in power and in glory with the Father and with the Holy Ghost. And, *What think ye of Christ?* his authority, ability, and furniture for his work?—In a word, behold the *efficacy* of his anointing; and the communicable nature thereof: *He is anointed above his fellows;* yet so, as he hath fellows to whom he allows fellowship in the same anointing: he hath not only received the Spirit of all grace and gifts for himself, but *he received gifts for men, even for the rebellious*, Psal. lxvii. 18. Hence, according to his pleasure, he allows the oil to drop down to the skirts of his garment; yea, *like rain upon the mowen grass, or showers that water the earth*, Psal. lxxii. 6. It is true, ministers anointed with the Spirit are to drop, Ezek. xx. 46. *Son of man, drop thy words towards the south:* and Moses says, *My doctrine shall drop as the rain:* but as the clouds from whence the rain descends have not their water originally in themselves, but from the sea, and moist places of the earth, exhaled and drawn up by the heat of the sun; so, no minister of Christ hath a faculty of teaching heavenly and divine things, and saving gospel-truths of himself; but it is drawn up out of Christ, as out of a full sea and ocean of all wisdom and knowledge: and is conveyed unto them by the heat and vigour, not of their own spirit, but the Spirit of Christ, who is anointed, to anoint others. And, O for a liberal share of his anointing among us at this occasion!—In a word, the name *Christ* imports such an anointing, as that he is qualified with all authority and ability, all furniture and fittedness for his work of saving sinners; with all fulness of divine perfections, and all fulness of mediatorial gifts and graces: and all this is imported in the question, *What think ye of Christ?*

5. What think ye of his *aromatical savour?* for this is his name, *Christ, the Anointed;* his ointment casts a perfume through heaven and earth. How savoury is he to God? Why, his *sacrifice was of a sweet-smelling savour unto his Father*, Eph. v. 2. The stinking smell of sin is extinguished thereby; and the persons and performances of believers perfumed: and hence, how savoury also to believers? Song i. 3, 5. *Because of the savour of thy good ointments, thy name is as ointment poured forth; therefore do the virgins love thee.* Were it no more but the name JESUS a SAVIOUR, may it not be so delightful to sinners, as to cause their hearts to leap within them when they hear it; as John leapt in his mother's womb for joy, at the voice of the blessed virgin's salutation? Luke i. 44. O! what think ye of the sweet name JESUS! It should even pluck your heart out of your bosom, and transplant it into the bosom of Christ. How delightful is the very naming of a temporal saviour to them that are in misery, when they hear of his ability and readiness to deliver them? And, may not your heart even exult within you for joy, when you hear us speak to you of such a Saviour that saves from sin and wrath? O sweet-smelling name! O have you no sense of smelling! *What think ye of Christ?*

6. What think ye of his *beauty* and *comeliness?* This is also imported in his name CHRIST, and so in the question, *What think ye of Christ*, the Anointed? *Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart*, says Solomon, Prov. xxvii. 6. Now, Christ is *anointed with the oil of gladness*, Psal. xlv. 7.; and *a glad heart makes a chearful countenance;* yea, *Oil makes the face to shine*, Psal. civ. 15. A saint, that hath but a sprinkling of this oil, how will his face shine, and his countenance, like Hanna's, be no more sad? How did Moses's face shine when some of this oil was upon him? But, O what think ye of the shining glory and comeliness of Christ, who is anointed from head to foot! Is he not *altogether lovely?* Is he not *white and ruddy, the Chief among ten thousands?* Is he not a perfect beauty? All God's fulness is in him; all God's beauty is in him; all God's glory is to be seen in the face of Jesus, 2 Cor. iv. 9. O then, *What think ye of Christ?*

7. What think ye of his *worth* and *preciousness?* This is also imported in the name CHRIST, and so in the question, *What think ye of Christ*, the *Anointed?* for it is *precious ointment*, Psal. cxxxiii. 2. Ointment was reckoned of great worth and esteem among the Jews; it was among the precious presents that were sent unto kings, Isa. lvii. 9. Hos. xii. 1. O how great is the preciousness and worth of Christ! It is the delight and recreation, the study and occupation of elect angels, to pry into the preciousness of Christ, to look upon the frame and fabric of salvation to mankind-sinners by Christ, that they may therein observe the glorious attributes of God: his wisdom, power, holiness, justice, truth, mercy, all shining and glittering in it, like bright stars in the firmament. Let a profane world think what they will of Christ; let them slight him and his gospel; let them scorn him, and cast him at their heels; let them trample on his blood and passion, as their manner is, making it a common and worthless thing; let them despise his high and celestial mysteries: we need not care for their thoughts; it is enough that God the Father hath honoured and exalted him; that the holy angels do reverence and worship him; and that all the saints do magnify him: *To them that believe he is precious.* O! his blood is precious blood, his promises are precious promises, his love is precious love; and every thing about him is precious: *What think ye of Christ?*

8. Again, to add no more here, what think ye of his *virtue* and *usefulness?* This, I suppose, is also imported in the name CHRIST, and in the

the queſtion objectively conſidered, *What think ye of Chriſt, the Anointed?* For, as ointment was, and is of manifold uſefulneſs, ſo is Chriſt: eſpecially oil hath a twofold virtue, (1.) A *molifying* virtue, and a ſoftening quality; ſuch is the virtue of Chriſt. Were the heart never ſo hard, he can ſoften and molify it; a drop of that oil with which he is anointed, I mean, the ſmalleſt ſaving motion of his Spirit, can melt and diſſolve the heart, though it were harder than a ſtone or adamant, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. (2.) It hath a *medicinal* virtue; hence it is ſaid of the Samaritan, Luke x. 34. that he *poured in oil into the wounds* of the diſtreſſed man. Chriſt is the tender-hearted Samaritan; his blood and Spirit is the ointment for curing all the wounds that we got by the old ſerpent. What wounds, what plagues, what deadly diſeaſes and deſperate maladies are among you! Behold, there is no diſeaſe out of hell that ſurmounts the medicinal virtue that is in Chriſt! O then, *What think ye of Chriſt?* Is there none here to think highly of him?——Now, theſe particulars that I have mentioned are imported in the very name CHRIST, and ſo implied in the queſtion objectively conſidered, or with reſpect to the object thereof, *What think ye of Chriſt?*

2*dly*, The *ſecond* thing here propoſed, was, to ſhew the import of this queſtion *actively* conſidered, or with reſpect to the *act* of thinking; *What* THINK *ye of Chriſt?* Now, the full import of this queſtion, thus viewed, may comprehend more than people are ready to imagine. It is not a paſſing thought, or fleeting imagination; we ought not to explain the words of Chriſt by the motions and notions of our own ſpirits: we need the Spirit of Chriſt to explain the words of Chriſt according to the mind of Chriſt, 1 Cor. ii. 17. We may be ſure, as the apoſtle ſays, 2 Cor. iii. 5. that *we are not ſufficient of ourſelves to think any thing as of ourſelves, our ſufficiency muſt be of God.* And if we can think of nothing aright of ourſelves, far leſs can we think of Chriſt: and as none can ſpeak duly of Chriſt, nor call Jeſus LORD, without the Spirit; ſo neither can we think duly of Chriſt, without the Spirit of Chriſt. What then is the meaning of this queſtion relating to its *act* of thinking, *What* THINK *ye of Chriſt?* There are theſe following particulars, which, I ſuppoſe, are implied therein, and which I alſo propoſe by way of *Query*, that you may ſtill ſearch yourſelves and apply as we go along.

1. *What think ye of Chriſt?* That is, What *know* ye of Chriſt? what *underſtand* ye of Chriſt? Surely ye cannot have a right thought of that which ye do not know or underſtand. Have you got the *Spirit of wiſdom and revelation, in the knowledge of Chriſt?* Eph. i. 17. Hath *the God, who commanded the light to ſhine out of darkneſs, ſhined into your hearts, to give you the light of the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jeſus Chriſt?* Hath God *revealed his Son in you?* Gal. i. 16. Have you *ſeen the Son?* He that ſees the natural ſun in the firmament, hath a thought of it ſuitable to the ſight he hath thereof: but a man that hath been born blind, and never ſaw the light, he cannot have a right notion or thought of the ſun, though you ſhould ſpeak never ſo much of the glory of it to him. I have heard of a man born blind, on whom a great deal of pains was taken to let him underſtand what a glorious creature the ſun was, and what bright beams and rays it ſends forth through all the world; but he was ſo far from having any right thoughts about it, that, after all the pains taken on him that was poſſible, he cries out, "O now, ſays he, I know what it is like, it is "juſt like the ſound of a trumpet." Poor man! that was the beſt notion he could frame about it, for he never had eyes. So it is here, Sirs; we are all born blind, having no ſpiritual eyes till God open the eyes of the underſtanding, and enlighten the mind in the knowledge of Chriſt: we may ſpeak of his glory and excellency; but the beſt you make of him is, O he is like a very ſtately and majeſtic perſon as ever ye ſaw or heard tell of! and ſo you frame the image of a great man, ſitting on a lofty throne, compaſſed about with ſo many ſparkling attendants in fine robes: and what you have heard with your natural ears of any perſon, or ſeen with your natural eyes, or can conceive with your natural underſtanding and reaſon, helps you to, or furniſhes you with materials for framing ſuch a notion of him. But what is all this? It is nothing but an image of your own brain, a carnal fantaſtical thought; the true Chriſt is the *image of the inviſible God*, the *wiſdom of God*, and the *power of God*, God-man in one perſon. Now, have you got a ſpiritual diſcerning; for, *The natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God; they are fooliſhneſs to him, neither can he know them, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned.* The world cannot think of Chriſt, far leſs think much of him, becauſe they do not know him: like Æſop's cock, contenting himſelf with, and thinking more of a barley-corn than of a pearl, becauſe he knew not the worth of it; ſo the world think more of a barley-corn of temporal good things, than they think of the *Pearl of great price*, becauſe they know it not. Therefore the queſtion imports, what *know* ye of Chriſt?

2. *What think ye of Chriſt?* That is, What *believe* ye of Chriſt? Knowledge and faith are like the two eyes of the ſoul: knowledge is the diſcerning and apprehending eye; faith is the applying and appropriating eye. And as ſaving knowledge is objective faith, and ſaving faith fiducial knowledge; ſo without knowledge we cannot think duly of Chriſt, with reſpect to what he is in himſelf; and without faith we cannot think duly of Chriſt, with reſpect to what he is to us, ſo as to receive the record of God, namely, *That God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son*, 1 Joh v. 11. Which record, *Whoſoever believeth not, hath made God a liar*, ver. 10. That the queſtion concerns this believing thought of Chriſt, is plain from the context, wherein Chriſt ſhows they had but unworthy thoughts of him, if they did not ſee him to be *David's Lord*, that is, the *true God, and eternal life*; in and through whom, as the God-man, this life was to be conveyed from God to man. This queſtion then is a trial of our faith, which *faith is the evidence of things not ſeen.* And, I ſuppoſe, one of the reaſons why Chriſt here ſays, *What think ye of* CHRIST? and not, *What think ye of* ME? is, becauſe, though now they were ſpeaking to him, and ſeeing him with their bodily eyes; yet their faith was not to terminate on what was the object of their ſenſe. We have no more faith than an ox or a horſe, if we believe no more than we ſee or feel: the brute beaſts think they have what they find they have by ſeeing and feeling; but what do you, that are rational creatures, think of things that cannot be ſeen or felt? *Faith is*

the evidence of things not seen. The Pharisees here, they saw Christ, they saw his miracles; but yet, for all that, they saw not the true Christ by faith, while they saw not his invisible glory, his invisible Godhead, nor the invisible seal appended to his commission for saving sinners. Therefore it is not, *What think ye of* ME? Your eyes see me, as if I were no more but a man like yourself: but, *What think ye of* CHRIST? Do you believe no more of Christ than you see? If so, then you have no right thoughts of Christ at all, because you have no faith. My friends, the question concerns you also: it is not, what see or feel you of Christ? but, *What believe ye of Christ?* There is a threefold seeing or feeling, that is to be separate from believing.

(1.) The *first* is a *corporeal* seeing or feeling. Thomas thought it a better way to believe Christ to be risen, by seeing and feeling him, than by running to the promises without sight of him; and we all naturally follow him: but Christ tells him, that the best and most blessed way was quite contrary to that; *Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed,* John xx. 29. Again,

(2.) There is a *rational* seeing, that is to be separate from believing. Though none can believe, without the exercise of their rational faculties spiritualized; and though it be the highest reason to believe what God speaks; yet to make natural reason the rule or ground of faith, is not to believe at all, but the way to doubt of all that ever God said. Thomas consulted with reason, and reason consulted with death and the grave, whether they could send their guests away back and live again into the world; and so he believed not. If Abraham had not separated the sight of reason from his faith in the promised seed, where would his faith have been? natural reason might say, "Heark "you, Abraham, is it possible that you and "Sarah can now have a son betwixt you, "when you are both come to such an age, "that you are but dead stocks?" But, when reason began to speak, Abraham stopt his ears; *He considered not the deadness of his own body, nor of Sarah's womb; He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in the faith, giving glory to God; being fully persuaded that he that had promised was able to perform,* Rom. iv. 19, 20, 21. Perhaps, reason is whispering into the ears of some here, saying, O man, woman, you are but a dead stock, a dead stone; do you ever think to be a child of Abraham, or that you will bring forth fruit unto God? but, if you, believe with Abraham, you will say, Hold your peace, carnal reason, you are but a blind fool in the matters of God: cannot *God out of stones raise up children unto Abraham?* And as he is able, so he hath given me many promises in his word, which he allows me to build upon, and commands me to believe. Unbelief builds always upon sense and reason; but faith builds upon the power and promise of God. What *believe* you of Christ?

(3.) There is a *spiritual* seeing that is to be separated from faith. It is true, there is a spiritual seeing of sanctified knowledge and understanding, which I spoke of already, that is essential to faith; there can be no believing without this seeing: *He that sees the Son, and believes in him, hath everlasting life.* But there is a spiritual seeing of experience, or experimental sense and feeling, which is to be separate from believing; such as spiritual mourning, spiritual joy, spiritual enlargement, or such like workings of the Spirit. Where these are, they should indeed be cherished with thankfulness, as being a taste of heaven, and a comfortable means of glorifying God on earth: but it is dangerous to make them the ground of faith; for they are ebbing and flowing, up and down, it may be twenty times in the space of one sermon; and your faith that is built thereupon will be up and down therewith. If you believe no longer than you see and feel, no wonder that you be always doubting when you are not feeling. And so you are never living by faith; for you are not properly believing, when you are feeling; faith is one thing and feeling another: or, if you build partly on the feeling of God's work within you, and partly on the truth of God's word without you, then you are like one that would build a house partly upon thawing ice, and partly on a firm rock; surely that part of the house, that was built on the ice, will tumble down whenever the ice melts: but, were the building of faith wholly upon the firm rock, that changes not with the changes of your sense and feeling, you will find no more cause of doubting when you have, than when you want these changeable things: you would be thankful when you have them, and yet not doubtful when you want them. Unbelief, which builds upon things seen and felt, says and thinks, in the want of these, O! all is good, and so razeth the foundation; but faith, which *is the evidence of things not seen,* says, even in the want of these, all is yet well and secure, Christ is what he was, the promise is what it was, the truth of God is what it was, however I be changed. These are the different thoughts of faith and unbelief; and what think ye? I suppose, when the meaning of the question is, what believe ye of Christ? the most part will find, that either they have no faith, or very little.

Thus Paul believed contrary to sense and feeling, when he got the promise of his own life, and the life of all that were in the ship with him; *I believe God,* says he, *that it shall even be as it was told me,* Acts xxiiv. 25. See in what circumstances he was, when he thus believed, verses 15, 18, 20.; their light was gone, the tempest was on them, and all hope from outward appearance was gone; yet Paul was assured and persuaded that God would do as he had said: why, might unbelief say, if the sun were shining, and a fair wind blowing; if the Sun of righteousness were shining on me, and the wind of heavenly influences blowing, and I were fair before the wind, then I would believe: but now, when there is nothing but darkness and tempests, how can I believe? No, indeed, you cannot, while you make sense and feeling the ground of your faith, and not the truth and veracity of God in his word of grace and promise. Thus it is in the matter of justification before God. The believer is to look upon himself as righteous, through the righteousness of Christ; to believe himself perfect in Christ, and fiducially to think himself righteous in Christ: no, says unbelief, I cannot think that, because I feel the contrary; I feel my own unrighteousness, sin, and corruption: why, if there were no sense or feeling of sin, there would be no room for faith; if you had a righteousness of your own, and a feeling

thereof

thereof, then you would have no need of Chriſt's righteouſneſs; but now, that you have a feeling of your unrighteouſneſs and ſin, there is room for faith, according to ſuch a word as that, 2 Cor. v. 21. *He hath made him to be ſin for us, that we might be made the righteouſneſs of God in him.* The very eſſence of faith here is to believe the quite contrary to what we ſee and feel in ourſelves, ſaying, In myſelf I have no righteouſneſs, no ſtrength; but, *Surely in the Lord have I righteouſneſs and ſtrength.*—Now, though I ſhould ſhew no more of the import of this queſtion, *What think ye of Chriſt?* but theſe two, namely, What know ye of Chriſt? and what believe ye of Chriſt? Surely it is a matter of eternal conſequence to anſwer this queſtion, thus explained; for if you miſs the right anſwer to theſe two branches of this queſtion, your doom at the great day will be dreadful; 2 Theſſ. i. 7, 8. *He will be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know him not, and obey not the goſpel;* that is, who never had ſuch thoughts of Chriſt, as to know him, and believe in him as the Chriſt of God. Again,

3. *What think ye of Chriſt?* That is, What *love* ye of Chriſt, and what favour have ye for him? As they that know him will believe, and put their truſt in him; ſo they that believe in him will love him; for, *faith works by love.* It muſt be a loving thought, that Chriſt here intended by this queſtion, while in the context he ſets forth himſelf, not only as David's ſon, but David's Lord; a God-man, and ſo a glorious object of love, *altogether lovely.* Were our affections enlarged wider than the higheſt heaven, there is lovelineſs enough in a God-man to fill it; and, could our hearts hold an ocean of love, there is infinite lovelineſs in Chriſt to beſtow it all upon: every thing in Chriſt is lovely; and therefore the queſtion, *What think ye of Chriſt?* muſt be, What *love* ye of Chriſt? *If any man love not our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, let him be* ANATHEMA MARAN-ATHA, ſays the apoſtle; ſurely they are not believers, that are not lovers of Chriſt. It is true, Chriſt hath many pretended lovers, that love him only for his bounty, but not for his beauty, and that ſay they love him; but it is not ſo, if you conſider the qualities of their love.

(1.) It is an *eaſy* love, they came eaſily by it, without ever getting their natural enmity diſcovered or broken: they were never humbled for their want of love; ſuch a love is of little value; yea, not worth a farthing. Or,

(2.) It is an *idle* love; it does not lead them to his ſervice, nor draw them to their prayers; his commands are ſtill grievous to them, and they have no pleaſure and delight in them. Or,

(3.) If it be not an idle, it is a *legal* love: it may be the law comes to them, and ſays, as Pharaoh ſaid to the Iſraelites, *Ye are idle, ye are idle,* Exod. v. 17.; and ſo they fall a-doing for their life, according to the DO and LIVE of the firſt covenant. But it is not doing from love to Chriſt: it is not a goſpel-love to him, as a *Lawfulfiller;* but a legal love to him, as only a *Lawgiver,* and as if he was ſtill ſtanding upon the old-covenant terms with them. Or,

(4.) If it be not a legal love, it is a *looſe* and *licentious* love they have to him: it is love with a latitude, allowing as much room for the devil, as for Chriſt; as much room for the world, as for Chriſt; and as much room for luſts, as for Chriſt: ſurely, they that have no other love to Chriſt, but ſuch an eaſy, idle, legal, looſe, or licentious love, they are not true lovers; nay, they are true haters of him, and enemies to him. Let them ſay as they will, that they love Chriſt, yet in reality they think nothing of him.

But, believer, *What think you of Chriſt?* When the meaning of the queſtion to you is, *Simon, ſon of Jonas, loveſt thou me more than theſe?* O! can you anſwer it with an appeal, *Thou that knoweſt all things, knoweſt that I love thee?* or, at leaſt, can you anſwer it with a ſigh, Wo's me that I cannot love him as I ought! Surely, if you have not a love of delight, rejoicing in him; ye have a love of deſire, lamenting after him. Sometimes the loving ſoul goes to a communion, and the ſecret groan is, Oh! let me find Chriſt at this occaſion! Oh! I muſt have him, I muſt have him! Why *muſt* you have him? Even becauſe he muſt have you; *Other ſheep I have, which are not of this fold; theſe alſo I* MUST *bring, and they ſhall hear my voice,* John x. 16. He hath ſaid firſt, I *muſt* have you; and that hath brought you to ſay, I *muſt* have him. Here are two neceſſities meeting; his neceſſity, and your neceſſity: his neceſſity, indeed, is a pure neceſſity of *love;* but your firſt neceſſity was the neceſſity of *want:* but, ſince he from *love* hath a need of you, as well as you from *want* have a need of him, you muſt of neceſſity meet together in love. *You love him, becauſe he firſt loved you;* you ſeek him, becauſe he firſt ſought you. Therefore henceforth, as he ſeeks you from love, ſo do you not only ſeek him from want, that is too ſelfiſh; but alſo let your way of ſeeking him grow up to more conformity to his way of ſeeking you, namely, from love, ſaying, *Saw ye him whom my ſoul loveth? tell him that I am ſick of love.* O! what think ye, what love ye of Chriſt? Again.

4. *What think ye of Chriſt?* That is, What *eſteem* ye of Chriſt, or what eſtimate and valuation have you for him? This is plainly imported in the queſtion here. Why, might Chriſt ſay, ye Phariſees are ſhewing your ignorant eſteem of the law, by all the queſtions you are propoſing about it; but, *What think ye of Chriſt,* who is the Lord of the law, as well as David's ſon and Lord? You have an ignorantly high opinion of Moſes, but, *What think ye of Chriſt?* what honour and reſpect do you put upon him? Surely, *to them that believe he is precious;* or, as the word imports, he is HONOURABLE. Where there is true knowledge of Chriſt, there is faith; where there is faith, there is love; and where there is love, there is a high eſteem. Some things, the more they are known, the leſs they are eſteemed: but it is not ſo with Chriſt; they that know him moſt, do eſteem him moſt; God the Father knows him beſt, and he eſteems him moſt highly, Iſa. xlii. 1. Saints and angels in heaven know him next beſt, and how they eſteem him, you may ſee, Rev. v. 8, 10, 11, 12. The more that any on earth knows him, the more do they eſteem him; and only theſe that do not know him, do not eſteem him, 1 Cor. i. 21,—24. They that are beſt judges, think highly of Chriſt. What judge ye, what eſteem have ye of him? There is a fourfold lodging or room that the eſteem of Chriſt hath in the ſouls of them that duly eſteem him.

(1.) In their *intellective* faculty; that is, in their underſtanding this eſteem lodges, ſaying, O! *I determine to know nothing but Chriſt!* O Sirs, if a man had the knowledge of all the univerſities

verſities of the world concentred in him, and yet know not Chriſt, he is but a poor ſilly ſot. Paul, brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, had a great deal of knowledge, and human literature; but whenever he came to know Chriſt, O, ſays he, *I count all but dung for the excellency of the knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus my Lord.*

(2.) In their *elective* faculty; that is, in their choice does this eſteem lodge. O they that eſteem Chriſt, they ſelect and ſingle him out for a Head and Huſband, with whom they reſolve to live and die, ſaying, *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon the earth that I deſire beſides thee.*

(3.) In their *proſecutive* faculty; that is, in their affections does this eſteem lodge; theſe do ardently and vehemently purſue after him. As nothing can ſatisfy a hungry man but food, ſo nothing ſatisfies ſuch a ſoul but Chriſt; hence proceeds their induſtry in the uſe of means and ordinances.

(4.) In their *retentive* faculty; that is, in their memory will this eſteem alſo lodge; while their eſteem of him makes them remember him, and their meditation of him to be ſweet: *When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night-watches, my ſoul ſhall be ſatisfied as with marrow and fatneſs, and my mouth ſhall praiſe thee with joyful lips,* Pſal. lxiii. 5, 6. What we love and eſteem, will have a lodging in our minds and thoughts. And, where does the ſtrain of our thoughts and meditations run? is, no doubt, implied in this queſtion, *What think ye of Chriſt?* What room do you give him in your heart and thoughts? Now, theſe four particulars, namely, 1. What *know* ye; 2. What *believe* ye; 3. What *love* ye; 4. What *eſteem* ye of Chriſt? are here implied.

3*dly*, The *third* thing here propoſed was, to ſhew the import of this queſtion *formally* conſidered, with reſpect to the *quality* of the act. I have ſhewed what may be implied in this queſtion, with relation to the object, and alſo the act of thinking: now, the interrogative particle WHAT, pointing at the *quality* of this act, may furniſh us with ſome further thoughts concerning the import of the queſtion *formally* conſidered. It is the *what* in the text that now I am eſpecially upon; and beſides the general, *What* is your opinion of Chriſt? *What* is your judgment about Chriſt? There is a fourfold WHAT here implied.

1. What *good* do you think of him? you Phariſees think much good of yourſelves: who but you, and your righteouſneſs, your alms, your ſacrifices, your temple, your zeal for Moſes, and the law? but, *what think ye of Chriſt?* Is he no more in your view than a mortal ſon of a mortal man? no wonder then, in this caſe, you think little good of him. Can you aſcend no higher in your contemplation to apprehend him as the immortal Son of the immortal God; the eternal Son of the eternal Father: the righteouſneſs of God, the gift of God, the true ſacrifice, the true temple, the antitype of all the types, the ſubſtance of all the ſhadows, the fulneſs of all the prophecies and promiſes? What! do you think him good for nothing, but to be deſpiſed, debaſed, and trampled upon! What good do you think of him?

2. What *glory* do you think to be in him? Do you not darken his glory, when you look upon him only to be the *ſon of David*, and not alſo to be the *Lord of David*, and the *Lord of glory*, the *root and off-ſpring of David*; not only the *off-ſpring of David*, as man; but the *root* of David, as God? What think ye of him as the glory of God, and the God of glory, bringing in a diſpenſation much more glorious than that of Moſes, *which glory was to be done away?* 2 Cor. iii. 7, 8, 9. Chriſt, as the *Sent of God*, being anointed with the Spirit for that end. *If the miniſtration of death, written and engraven on ſtones, was glorious,—how ſhall not the miniſtration of the Spirit be rather glorious? If the miniſtration of condemnation be glorious, much more does the miniſtration of righteouſneſs exceed in glory.* And, what glory do you think to be in Chriſt, who is the glory of all this glory? Do you ſee Chriſt to be thus glorious, and me to be the Chriſt? Though now, might he ſay, this glory is under a vail of fleſh, a vail of exinanition and humiliation; yet this mean appearance that I am making now, as if I were no more but a frail mortal man, was clearly foretold to you by the prophets concerning Chriſt, even that he ſhould be a *man*, and a *man of ſorrows*: can you ſee nothing of my glory and excellency under this vail? Is there no glory in the ſun, becauſe there is a cloud betwixt you and it?

3. What *uſe* do you think he is of? for, if he were only the ſon of David, he could be of no great uſefulneſs to a periſhing world of ſinners: but, do you think and conſider, that herein is the myſtery of divine grace? *God ſo loved the world, that he ſent his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in him might not periſh, but have everlaſting life.* If the brazen ſerpent, which was but a type of Chriſt, was of uſe to the ſtung Iſraelites, what think you of Chriſt? can any thing in the world be ſo uſeful to ſinners as Chriſt? Of what uſe is the law, whereof you are boaſting? it is but a *dead letter*, a killing word, a ſentence of condemnation, a death-ſummons, a dead warrant againſt them, without Chriſt, who is the *end of the law for righteouſneſs*. Who, but Chriſt, can reconcile God to man, and ingratiate man with God? Who, but he, can fulfil the law and ſatisfy juſtice for them, pay their debts, heal their diſeaſes, juſtify, ſanctify, and ſave them, vanquiſh ſin, death, and hell for them, and at laſt raiſe the mouldered carcaſe from corruption to incorruption, and inveſt it with a ſtate of everlaſting glory in the higheſt heaven, with *fulneſs of joy, and pleaſures for evermore at his right-hand?* Is he an uſeleſs Chriſt to you, though he fills *all in all*, and alone can give abundant ſatisfaction to the immortal ſoul, whereas all things elſe are but dry and empty without him, and leave men deſtitute? Oh! drymeans, dry miniſters, dry ordinances, dry ſacraments, dry ſermons, and dry prayers, if Chriſt be away! Oh! dry breaſts, if he be not the milk; dry branches, if he be not the ſap; dry clouds, dry wells, if he be not the water! O what uſe think ye he is for? what work and ſervice have ye for him?

4. What *worth* do you think he is of? Your thoughts are employed, might Chriſt ſay, how to tempt me with queſtions about the law, undervaluing that Lord God that gave the law, and that now is come in the perſon of the Meſſias to fulfil the law; and is he unworthy to have a room in your thoughts? or what worth do you think him of? If you judge rightly and think duly of him, you will find he hath more real worth than all the world beſide: for, put all the creatures in heaven and earth

earth in one scale, and Christ in another, you will find them all to be lighter than vanity. This is plain, if you consider, that when all the world of men, and angels, and creatures were weighed in the balance with divine justice, they were found too light to counterpoise it, or give satisfaction to it; all they together could not make up the full sum or value that should satisfy that justice: it cost more to redeem a soul, than all that they were worth; *The redemption of the soul is precious, and ceases for ever*, says the psalmist. But Christ, having *unsearchable riches*, is a mass of treasure big enough for the purpose; and therefore, when he was laid in the balance with infinite justice, he was found of sufficient weight to poise it, without any creature's help to hold down the scale: nay, *He looked, and there was none to help, none to uphold; therefore his own arm brought salvation. And he trode the wine-press alone, and of the people there were none with him*, Isa. lxiii. 3, 5. Who, among the creatures, could go thorow conquering and to conquer, as Christ did, when he had heaven, earth, and hell to grapple with? What think ye of Christ then? what worth do you think he is of?

Upon the whole, before I leave this point, let me ask these two questions, to bring home this one, concerning what worth do you think Christ is of.

The first question is, *What* PRICE *would you buy him at, if you were to buy him?* Surely, if you had a due thought of Christ, and a discovery of the Pearl, you would, for joy, sell your *all* to buy it, Mat. xiii. 44. 45, 46. And when all is done, you would see, your *all* to be nothing at all, and the Pearl to be *all in all*. Indeed this treasure is so great, this Pearl is so precious, that it cannot be bought at any price; and therefore the price of it is, *no money, no price*; altogether free, Isa. lv. 1. *Ho every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price.* To *buy* here, is to beg, and take freely; yet, if the question be, *What would you give for him, if he were to be bought?* Surely, if you knew your own need, and his infinite fulness and suitableness for you, the question will suggest some great thought of Christ. O a thousand worlds, if I had them, would I give for him! Yea, but there are some that hold him at a very low price, they would not give a groat or sixpence for Christ or his interest; they would not part with a shilling, or a crown, for Christ or his cause, Christ or his gospel; nay, they will not part with a beastly lust for him, their idols and the world are of greater price to them. But there are others that know his worth better, and are willing to forsake all for him; *We have forsaken all, and followed thee*, Mat. xix. 27. The holy martyrs thought not their lives and their hearts-blood too dear for Christ; Rev. xii. 11. *They loved not their lives unto the death*; that is, they despised their lives in comparison of Christ; they exposed their bodies to horrible and painful deaths, their temporal estates to the spoil, *taking joyfully the spoiling of their goods*, and exposing their persons to all manner of shame and contempt for the cause of Christ. O but a soul that by faith apprehends the worth of Christ, will chearfully and willingly give all for him; and having got Christ, will go away rejoicing, and think his bargain to be very good, very great!

The second question is, *What* RATE *would ye* SELL *him at, if ye were to sell him?* Judas sold him, and the high priests bought him for thirty pieces of silver, *A goodly price that I was prized at of them*, Zech. xi. 13. It is ironically spoken, *A bonny price for a God-man; Cast it to the potter*, says the Lord. Men of darkened understandings, corrupt minds, and depraved affections, will sell Christ and his cause, Christ and a good conscience, for a trifle: yea, many betray his cause for some poor worldly consideration. O for such a spirit as I read of in the forty martyrs, that suffered under Licinius, Anno 300, that when Agricolaus his deputy, one of the devil's agents, set upon them several ways to draw them to deny Christ, and at last tempted them with an offer of money and preferment, they all cried out with one consent, Ὦ Αἰδιότης, ὦ Αἰδιότης, χρήματα δίδες τὰ απομένοντα: "O Eterni-" ty, Eternity! give us money that will last to " eternity, and gold that will abide for ever, " such as Christ can give us." They slighted that pitiful wealth which was current only in this beggarly world, when coming in competition with Christ and his durable riches; they would not sell Christ for a world, nay, not for a world of worlds. Oh! at what rate would you sell Christ! Surely, if you think duly and highly of him, you will buy him at any rate, but sell him at no rate. It is easy indeed to frame a passing thought, Oh! who would put Christ in the balance with any thing! But stay till a day of trial come, and the question be brought close home, *Now, will you quit Christ and his cause, or will you quit with father and mother, and wife and children, and estate and fortune, houses and yards, and life and all?* I imagine that would be a hard question; *Skin for skin, and all that a man hath will he give for his life;* he will quit all before he quit with his life. Surely, if Christ be your life, you would quit all other lives for him; a natural life, a temporal life, a life of pleasure, a life of honour, a life of ease and worldly accommodations; and if you think much of him, there is some life you have quit for him already, at least in part, and in desire and endeavour, namely, a life of sin, a life of self, a life of legal righteousness, that *the life you live may be a life of faith on the Son of God.* Now, I suppose, all these *whats* are imported in the question, 1. What *good* do you think of him? 2. What *glory* do you think to be in him? 3. What *use* do you think he is for? 4. What *worth* do you think he is of, when he is to be bought or sold? This question bears all these in its bosom, *What think ye of Christ?*

4*thly*, The *fourth* and *last* thing proposed upon the explication of the import of the question, was, to shew the import of it *subjectively* considered, or with respect to the persons that are the subjects thereof, or to whom the question is put, in the pronoun YE, *What think* YE *of Christ?* And under this consideration we may take a fourfold view of the question.

1. View it as it was put to the *Jews* in general, for so were these to whom Christ is here speaking: ye that are Jews, *What think ye of Christ?* Ye that are the people of whom concerning the flesh, Christ came, for (as ye own concerning Christ) he is the son of David; and ye are the people to whom he and his gospel behoved first to come; for, *salvation is of the Jews*, John iv. 22. Ye are his own people; and, *What think ye of Christ?* Alas! *He came to his own, and*

and his own received him not; they thought nothing of him when he came: and therefore, as Paul says, Acts xxviii. 28. *The salvation of God is sent to the Gentiles;* and he adds, *they will hear it.* Now, of consequence, Christ and the gospel, and this question with it, comes to you, Gentiles, saying, *What think ye of Christ?* Oh! will ye think nothing of him? or, will ye make Paul a liar, who said, ye should hear it? or rather, will ye give the lie to the Spirit of God? Nay, whatever the most part do, yet *as many as were ordained to eternal life* will be brought to think highly of Christ, by getting the saving knowledge, faith, love, and esteem of him.

2. View the question as it was put to the *Pharisees*, a sett of hypocrites and self-righteous persons: ye that are Pharisees, *What think ye of Christ?* Ye are strict observers of the letter of the law, and think much of your long prayers, your giving alms of all that you possess, your fasting twice a week, your being no open drunkards, whoremongers, extortioners, nor like this or that publican; but while you think so much of yourselves and your own righteousness, and think nothing of Christ, *publicans and harlots go into the kingdom before you;* therefore, what think ye of Christ the son of David, the Lord of David, the Lord of the law, by whom alone *everlasting righteousness is brought in*, answering the spirit, and not the letter of the law only? The question then comes to be proposed to all of the same kidney with these Pharisees: Ye that are *hypocrites*, and *self-justifying* persons, *What think ye of Christ?* Ye that are thinking, O you are an honest man, you have always been a good neighbour, just in your dealing, civil in your carriage, and so you fancy yourself to be *touching the law blameless;* what, man! are you content to be judged by the law? then to Cæsar let us go; to the law let us go: but only look the law broad in the face, look not only to the out-side of the law, like a man looking only to the back and out-side of a looking-glass, or to the frame and edge of it, where he does not see himself; but look to the in-side of the looking-glass of the law, to the spirituality of it; set your face to the face of the glass, and you will see what a deformed filthy creature you are, so you will find it cursing you to your face, and cursing you to hell for every wicked thought, as well as action, saying, *Cursed is every one that continues not in all things written in the book of the law to do them.* Therefore, you have need to think again, and think better than ever you did, about a law-justifying righteousness, and to think there is need of this question, *What think ye of Christ?*

3. View the question as it was put to the *Sadducees;* for it seems they were combined with the Pharisees here against Christ, if you compare ver. 23. and 34. Now, these Sadducees were a sett of people that denied the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the body, the existence of spirits and angels, Acts xxiii. 8.: In a word, they were half atheists, if not wholly so; like the graceless wits of our day, that call themselves *Free-thinkers:* Well, says Christ, *What think ye of Christ? whose son is he?* If you could view him as not only David's son, but David's Lord and God; and as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, *not the God of the dead, but of the living;* would you persist in these atheistical tenets, concerning the resurrection of the body, the being of souls? No, no. The question then is applicable to all that sort of people: ye that are Atheists, Deists, and damnably erroneous Free-thinkers, Oh! *what think ye of Christ?* No doubt, with Herod and his men of war, you set him at nought! But, Oh! will you think again, and recal your thoughts? let them fix upon Christ a while, and you shall find all the truths of the Bible cleared and vindicated, by him who is the truth itself; and that this eternal Son of God is sent from the Father, of purpose to confirm them by his doctrine, life, death, and resurrection. Again,

4. View the question, with respect to its general design, which is (together with all other scriptures) the *profit* of all to whom it comes; for their *reproof, correction,* or *instruction in righteousness,* 2 Tim. iii. 16.; and for convincing of sinners, or confirming of saints: and so it comes to all and every one of us, ministers or people, high and low, rich and poor; *What think ye of Christ?* And here I have occasion to look round about me, and ask the question at all and every one that hears me; and indeed we may begin first at ourselves.

Q we that are MINISTERS, *What think we of Christ?* Is he the son and Lord of David, the eternal Son of God? Surely we cannot think, or speak, or preach too much of Christ. It is our honour, if we can say, *We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord;* and that to us, *who are the least of all saints* (may some of us say) *should this grace be given, to preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.* But, while we speak of Christ to others, what do we think of Christ ourselves? To be sure, if we do not think of Christ as we ought, we will not speak of Christ as we should. Christ in the heart, and Christ in the mouth, make right preaching. If any *preach Christ out of envy,* as the apostle says, *it is well that Christ is preached:* but as it must be but bungling work to such; so they would do well to consider, that the question is not, *What* PREACH *ye of Christ?* but, *What think ye of Christ?* —Again, O ye that are the PEOPLE, *What think ye of Christ?* Whatever be your state or condition, sex or quality, the question comes to you; and let none of you dare to neglect the pondering on it, when Christ himself is posing you with it, *What think ye of Christ?* —Ye that are MAGISTRATES, or in places of power, trust, and authority, *What think ye of Christ?* Are you employing your power for Christ, and his cause and interest? —Ye that are MASTERS, or MISTRESSES of families, *What think ye of Christ?* Is it the language of your soul, *As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord?* Are you desiring, with Abraham, to command your children, and your household after you, to *keep the ways of the Lord,* and praying for them, and instructing them in the knowledge of Christ? —Again, Ye that are CHILDREN under your parents, O! *What think ye of Christ? whose son is he?* Do you know him to be the son of David, and the Son of God too? And would it not be your great happiness, to be the sons and children of God in him? Your father and mother may die, and leave you, therefore it is your best to seek an interest in him to be your everlasting Father. —Ye that are SERVANTS, *What think ye of Christ?* Would you have him for your Master and Lord? Is it not your greatest honour to be his servants, who is David's Lord? He that was David's son, was David's Master: and as David in spirit called him LORD; so, should not all that is within you

you call him Lord? Serve your maſters honeſtly; but let him who is the *Lord of lords* be a maſter above all maſters to you.—Ye that are TRADESMEN, *What think ye of Chriſt?* Have you no trading with heaven? Does your civil trade in a world take up all your thoughts? Surely it is either an unlawful trade, or unlawfully uſed, that cannot conſiſt with this Chriſtian trade of giving the chief of your thoughts to him, that is the *Chief among ten thouſand*, Song v. 10.—Ye that are HUSBANDMEN, *What think ye of Chriſt?* Do you think more of your ploughs and oxen, or corn and cattle, and barns and goods, than of glorious Chriſt? Do you not know, whether you be tenants, feuars, or freeholders, that you are tenents to him, and hold your all of him? Are you more taken up in thinking of a great crop, or a good harveſt, than of him who is the *Lord of the harveſt*, both in a natural and ſpiritual ſenſe, and Lord of all that you have?—Ye that are mean COTTERS, *What think ye of Chriſt?* Wo's me, does your cote-houſe, and your cow, and your ſmall yard, ly nearer your heart than precious Chriſt? Oh! if you were acquainted with communion with him, you would find a mean cottage with Chriſt better than a princely palace without him.—Ye that are poor BEGGARS, *What think ye of Chriſt?* To the *poor the goſpel is preached*; to you is Chriſt and his unſearchable riches offered: but I fear there are ſome of you who think more of a half-penny than you think of Chriſt: everlaſting poverty and miſery will be your portion, if your thoughts be not changed and renewed. You come to communion-occaſions only to beg alms, not knowing that then you are at the *beautiful* gate of the temple, where you might get an alms that might enrich you for ever. You have the art of begging from men, and from door to door, but perhaps you never think of begging at Chriſt's door: Oh! will you begin to think, and to think of Chriſt, before the door of mercy be ſhut!—Again, ye that are RICH and WEALTHY in the world, *What think ye of Chriſt?* Hath he given you riches, think you, to ſteal away your hearts from him, or rather to improve them for, and conſecrate them to his honour, and for the good of others, eſpecially of the houſhold of faith? Men may court your favour, but you are to be pitied, as poor miſerable wretches, if you have your portion only in this life: though you had all the gold of Ophir, without Chriſt you have nothing but a ſhadow; you are deſtitute of the true ſubſtance.—You that are WISE, MIGHTY, or NOBLE, *What think ye of Chriſt?* May it not ſtartle you a little, that he hath ſaid, *Not many wiſe after the fleſh, not many mighty, not many noble are called; but God hath choſen the fooliſh, weak, baſe and deſpicable things of the world:* you have no reaſon to deſpair, for he hath not ſaid *not any* of them; but yet you have reaſon to think where you are, for he hath ſaid *not many* of them: and indeed, as an evidence of this, look to the great men of our day, you will ſee, that the generality of the nobility and gentry of Scotland and England, they think very little of Chriſt.—You that are SCHOLARS and STUDENTS, *What think ye of Chriſt?* What will all the wiſdom and literature, liberal arts and ſciences, and beſt accompliſhments in the world avail you, without Chriſt? They will qualify you to be more eminent ſervants to the devil, and his intereſt, if you learn not Chriſt together with them. You may be ſtudents of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew: ſtudents of philoſophy, aſtronomy, aſtrology, geography, and mathematics; yea, and ſtudents of divinity too; and yet loſe all your pains, if you do not ſtudy Chriſt.—Ye that are IGNORANT and ILLITERATE perſons, *What think ye of Chriſt?* It may be you cannot read the Bible; you was never at a ſchool; your parents died when you were young, or elſe were poor, and could not, or graceleſs, and would not ſet you to the ſchool; or if you can read, that is all: you know not ſo much as the firſt principles of the doctrine of Chriſt, and can hardly tell whoſe Son he is. If you could be brought this day to think highly of Chriſt, then *ſhould you know*, and *follow on to know the Lord.* Oh! neglect not henceforth the means of the knowledge of Chriſt! if you learn of him, he will make you wiſer than the reſt of the world, for as far behind as you are; even wiſe unto ſalvation.—Ye that are OLD men and women, *What think ye of Chriſt?* How many thouſands and millions of thoughts have you beſtowed upon the devil, the world, your luſts, and idols in your time, which would have been better beſtowed upon Chriſt, and the concerns of your eternal ſalvation? And now, that death, judgment, and eternity are hard at hand; Ah! how can you think of going down to the grave, and in to an everlaſting ſtate, without being in caſe to anſwer this queſtion to purpoſe, *What think ye of Chriſt?*—Ye that are YOUNG men and women, *What think ye of Chriſt?* Ye are now in the flower of your age; Oh! ſhall not Chriſt have the flower of your thoughts, that according to the Father's promiſe to him, he may have the *dew of his youth*, by your dedicating to him the dew of your youth, and fleeing all youthful luſts?—Ye that are CHILDREN and little-ones, lads and laſſes, boys and girls, capable to think, O! *What think ye of Chriſt?* Alas! my dear children, (to ſay a word to you) you may ſee what ill hearts you have, that make you think more of little plays and trifles, nignays and butterflies, than you think of Chriſt: you mind any thing ſooner than your *Creator* or *Redeemer*, whom God calls you to *remember in the days of your youth.* Therefore, after this, when you are playing, will you think more of praying? for God ſays, *I love them that love me, and them than ſeek me early ſhall find me:* and think more of reading the Bible, like young Timothy, who, *from a child knew the holy ſcriptures.*

In a word, if there be any perſons here who think I have not touched at their caſe, let them know, that the queſtion is to all and every one of you, *What think ye of Chriſt?* Oh graceleſs world! How unworthily do you think of Chriſt? The covetous man thinks more of a ſmall piece of money than of Chriſt, like Demas. Ambitious men think more of a hat than of Chriſt; like Haman, or as Saul, who ſaid to Samuel, *Honour me before the people.* The voluptuous man thinks more of a baſe luſt, than of Chriſt. The drunkard thinks more of a hearty cup, than of Chriſt. The glutton thinks more of a hearty meal, than of Chriſt. The proud man thinks more of himſelf, than of Chriſt. Pride of righteouſneſs thinks more of prayers, and attendance on ordinances, than of Chriſt. Pride of grace thinks more of a good frame, than of Chriſt. Pride of wiſdom thinks

thinks more of a witticism, or of a fine discourse, than of Christ. Pride of beauty thinks more of a skin-deep complexion, than of Christ. Pride of bravery thinks more of a fine suit of clothes, than of Christ, though the silly sheep wore it on its back before them. Behold how Christ is vilified and undervalued in the world!

But, O BELIEVER! *What think ye of Christ?* Surely, if you be a gracious person, Christ will be to you a precious person; and you will wonder at the folly and madness of the world, that sets every thing above Christ, in their thoughts and esteem. Why, they are ignorant of Christ, and ignorant of themselves: if they were convinced of their sin and misery, they would think much of a Saviour and Redeemer; if they knew their disease, they would think much of such a physician to heal them; if they knew their nakedness, they would think much of such a garment to clothe them; if they knew their pollution, they would think much of such a fountain to wash them; if they knew their deep arrears to divine justice, and bankrupt-state, they would think much of such a Surety to pay their debt. Surely, if they knew, they would not thus despise the Lord of glory. However, be it known to all and every one of you, that this question is put to you; and you ought to put it to yourselves, before God, by discovering what you are, and where you stand. —And now, having opened the import of the question, in the several branches of it, I proceed next to

III. The *third* general head proposed, namely, to offer some *reasons* of the doctrine, why this is the great leading question in the Christian catechism, by which people are to try themselves; or why this question is put as a touch-stone, for discovering what metal we are of, *What think ye of Christ?* Why,

1. This question, *What think ye of Christ?* is put, because without *right thoughts of Christ*, there is no *right thoughts of God*; and without the knowledge of Christ, there is no true knowledge of God. God is an invisible God, and Christ only *is the image of the invisible God*, Col. i. 15. There are three ways to know, see, and comprehend God: one is, by the creatures he hath made; *The invisible things of God are clearly seen from the creation of the world, even his eternal power and Godhead*, Rom. i 20. Another is by the scriptures, for they make God known: but the third and only saving way of knowing and apprehending God, is by Christ. Now, the knowledge of God, that we have by the creatures, is like the knowledge we have of a man by his workmanship, which he hath wrought: if the workmanship be rare and excellent, such as hath required great art and strength, then we conceive the man that hath done it, hath been a wise man, a strong man, and the like, according to the nature of the workmanship: so, when we know God by the creatures, we conceive that the God that hath made them, must be a great God, a wise God, a powerful God. But next, the knowledge that we have of God by the scriptures; I mean, the literal knowledge, is like that knowledge that one gets of a famous learned man, by reading what he writes; if in his writing he hath discovered much learning, vast sense, and solid judgment, accordingly we conceive him to be a sensible judicious man: so, by reading the word, we conceive of God's excellency, as we do of a man by his writing; but the knowledge of God, that we get by Christ, is like that knowledge which one gets of a king, by having seen his image, or rather his son, who is as like him as he can look. Now, Christ is like the Father, and so truly and really his image, that though blind Arians cannot see the essential glory of the Father in him, yet he says to Philip, John xiv. 6. *He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.* Now, in the book of the creature, we may see the being of God; in the book of the scripture, the will of God: but above all these, we have another book written, as it were, with the rays of the sun, even, CHRIST, whom we may call a book, for he is still ὁ Λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ, *the Word of God*, Rev. xix. 13.; but he is not made with ink and paper, he is a living book, a living picture and representative of the Father; the *brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person*, Heb. i. 3. The saving knowledge of God is by Christ, John i. 18. and in Christ, 2 Cor. iv. 6. And again, hence,

2. This question, *What think ye of Christ?* is put, because, without right thoughts of Christ, there can be *no religion*, and consequently *no salvation.* There is no coming to God, but in Christ; *I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh to the Father, but by me*, John xiv. 6. Without believing thoughts of Christ, then, we cannot worship God aright, or acceptably; for, *Without faith it is impossible to please God*, Heb. xi. 6. And I have shewed you already, that right thinking is believing; and without believing in him, there is not salvation: *He that believes not shall be damned;* for, *there is no other name given under heaven, whereby we must be saved; neither is there salvation in any other*, Acts iv. 12. A man, that cannot think of Christ as he should, cannot perform a religious action as he ought: as the *evil man, out of the evil treasure of his heart, brings forth evil things;* so a *good man, out of the good treasure of his heart, brings forth good things*, Matt. xii. 35. Now, Christ in the heart, by his Spirit, is indeed a good treasure: and as natural thoughts produce natural actions, carnal thoughts carnal actions; so spiritual thoughts bring forth spiritual actions, and Christian thoughts Christian actions. True religion begins and advances with the right thoughts of God. I defy a man that knows the Lord, to pray or worship God comfortably, without some due apprehension of Christ: for, as in Christ alone God is well-pleased; so it is in the view of Christ, or of God in him, that the soul is well-pleased.

3. This question, *What think ye of Christ?* is put, because it is the *best rule of self-examination*, seeing, as mens thoughts of Christ are, so is their state; as *men think in their heart, so are they*, Prov. xxii. 9. If a man be *risen with Christ*, then his thoughts and *affections are set on things above, where Christ sits on the right-hand of God*, Col. iii. 1, 2. If you be Christians indeed, then you have *Christ in you, the hope of glory*, Col. i. 27.; and if Christ be in you, he will have a high room in your thought and esteem: and therefore it is laid down as the best rule of examination, 2 Cor. xiii. 5. *Examine yourselves, whether you be in the faith; prove yourselves; know ye not your ownselves, how that Christ Jesus is in you, except ye be reprobates,* ἀδόκιμοι, UNAPPROVED, or REJECTED? *If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his*, Rom. viii. 9. *Now, they that*

that have the Spirit, do mind the things of the Spirit, the things of God, and particularly the CHRIST of God.

4. This queſtion, *What think ye of Chriſt?* is put, becauſe this queſtion comprehends *all other queſtions in religion.* After the Phariſees had done with aſking their difficult queſtions about the law, Chriſt propoſes a queſtion, which ſwallows up all their queſtions, and comprehends all that is neceſſary to be known; and if we could anſwer this queſtion to purpoſe, we would be in caſe to anſwer all the queſtions that concerns both the law and the goſpel; for, *Chriſt is the end of the law*, and *the ſum of the goſpel.* They that know Chriſt, they know where to find all the righteouſneſs that the law requires, and all the grace that the goſpel promiſes: and ſo this queſtion is the compend of the *Chriſtian catechiſm*, and that not only with reſpect to knowledge, but alſo with reſpect to practice and experience. Chriſt is the ſum of practical godlineſs; for, *without him you can do nothing*; and by him ſtrengthening you, you can do all things. And Chriſt is the ſum of experimental religion alſo: that experience is not worth much, that hath not Chriſt for the ſum total of it; for, it is *out of his fulneſs we receive grace for grace:* and when a man can ſay, *Beholding his glory, I have been changed into the ſame image*, it is a rich experience. In a word, all queſtions that relate to Chriſtian experience may be reduced to this one, *What think ye of Chriſt?* If the queſtion be, what know ye of conviction? what know ye of converſion? what know ye of illumination? what know ye of regeneration? what know ye of juſtification? what know ye of ſanctification? what intereſt have ye in Chriſt? what part and portion have ye in the Son of Jeſſe? what ſhare have ye of his grace? and what hope of his glory? All ſuch queſtions may be anſwered with the anſwer of this, *What think ye of Chriſt?*

5. This queſtion, *What think ye of Chriſt?* is put, becauſe he would, by this, put a ſtop, and give a check to *all unneceſſary curious queſtions.* They were but curious queſtions at beſt, that the Sadducees and Phariſees had aſked of Chriſt; but here Chriſt gives a check to them, by a queſtion of everlaſting moment. Some, that are but ſenſeleſs profeſſors, ſhew a deal of curioſity in ſome of their queſtions, ſuch as, *Who was Melchizedeck's father?* and the like: but, O here is a more neceſſary queſtion, *Who was Chriſt's Father? What think ye of Chriſt? and whoſe Son is he?* Here is an ocean of wiſdom, that you may profitably dive into, and yet never get to the bottom of it; for, who can anſwer that queſtion about Chriſt's Father, *What is his name, and what is his Son's name, if thou canſt tell?* Prov. xxx. 4.

6. This queſtion, *What think ye of Chriſt?* is put, becauſe our thoughts are but *loſt*, if they be not beſtowed upon him. Till we be brought to think of Chriſt duly, all our thoughts are but loſt thoughts, and vain thoughts; *O Jeruſalem, waſh thine heart from wickedneſs, how long ſhall vain thoughts lodge within thee?* The Lord ſees the thoughts of men to be but vanity: our thoughts are like birds flying from mountain to mountain, and ſkipping from place to place; and like children running after butterflies, or ſuch like trifles, their pains are loſt; and ſo are our thoughts loſt, while they are not terminate upon Chriſt.

7. This queſtion is put, *What think ye of Chriſt?* becauſe there are ſo many *miſtaken thoughts of Chriſt* in the world: *He is deſpiſed and rejected of men:* the world is filled with prejudice againſt him, ſaying, *Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?* Therefore we ought to come and ſee, and conſider what he is, and whoſe ſon he is, that we may not run into the ſame common miſtake with the reſt of the world, and that we may not take him for a *root out of a dry ground, having no form or comelineſs*, Iſa. liii. 2.

8. This queſtion is put to us, *What think ye of Chriſt?* becauſe we have *miſtaken thoughts of other things*, while we have not *right thoughts of Chriſt.* The Phariſees had miſtaken thoughts of God and his law, becauſe they had not right thoughts of Chriſt; therefore Chriſt propoſes the queſtion. And indeed, Sirs, we miſtake God, we miſtake the law, we miſtake the goſpel, we miſtake ourſelves, we miſtake our duty, we miſtake every thing, as long as we have wrong notions of Chriſt. A man may miſtake ſo far, as to think that he is about his duty to God, and yet may be fighting againſt God, while Chriſt is not known or thought upon; Acts xxvi. 9. *I verily thought that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jeſus of Nazareth*, ſays Paul; and accordingly he was perſecuting Chriſt in his members: yet he thought he was doing God ſervice, till Chriſt diſcovered himſelf, and cried to him, ſaying, *Saul, Saul, why perſecuteſt thou me?* Then he began to think of Chriſt, ſaying, *Who art thou, Lord?* Why, *I am Jeſus whom thou perſecuteſt.* Whenever he began to think duly of Chriſt, then he ſaw he had been in a miſtake. People may think, verily they ought to do this and that againſt ſome of God's children; but, if they had other thoughts of Chriſt, they would have other thoughts of their duty, and would ſee that verily they ought not to do ſo.—Again, Paul thought his own righteouſneſs *gain*, before he knew Chriſt; but then he thought it *loſs: What things were gain to me, theſe I counted loſs for Chriſt.*

9. This queſtion, *What think ye of Chriſt?* is put, becauſe thus you may come to underſtand what are *his thoughts of you.* It is true, *His thoughts are not our thoughts, nor his ways our ways; for, as the heavens are higher than the earth, ſo are his thoughts higher than our thoughts:* and hence he may have thoughts of mercy towards a poor ſoul, that thinks there is nothing but wrath in his heart againſt it. But this I ſay, that as to your knowing and underſtanding of his thoughts towards you; as, on the one hand, a man, in a natural ſtate, cannot have high, believing, and becoming thoughts of Chriſt, and ſo cannot conclude that Chriſt hath any favourable thoughts of him, while he remains thus in unbelief and deſpiſing of Chriſt; nay, he may know and underſtand, if he remain in that ſtate thoughtleſs of Chriſt, and diſregarding him, that *Chriſt will come in flaming fire and take vengeance on him*, 2 Theſ. i. 7, 8.: So, on the other hand, the man that hath got ſuch diſcoveries of Chriſt, as to create high, ſpiritual, and elevated thoughts of Chriſt, he may, from thence underſtand, that Chriſt thinks well of him, and that his thoughts towards him are *thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give him an expected end.* It is true, Chriſt's thoughts of the believer are not of a fleeting nature, up and down, high and low, as the believer's thoughts of him are; nay, Chriſt's thoughts are unchangeably the ſame: but, when the believer's

thoughts of Christ are raised, then he is in best case to know and understand Christ's loving thoughts towards him. Why, even as a fountain may be known by the streams, so it is here; our knowledge, faith, love, and esteem of Christ, are but streams that flow from Christ's kind heart towards us; *We love him, because he first loved us:* we think of him, because he first thinks of us. And, therefore, by what we think of Christ, we may know what he thinks of us: if you think honourably of him, you may thence know he thinks favourably of you; if you think much of him, you may know he thinks much of you. O! may a believer say, I have reason to think much good of him; for, he is *fairer than the sons of men*, the spotless Lamb of God: but he hath reason to think much ill of me; for, I am all black and deformed, like hell and the devil. But I will tell you, believer, that all his thoughts of you make you to be in him, what he thinks you to be in him, however deformed you are in yourselves, and see yourselves to be; yet, I say, as his thoughts make things to be, (for he but thought there should be a world, and there was a world; whenever it was his mind that it should be, then it was; and whatever he thought to be, that it was, according to his thought:) and as his thoughts of you make you to be in him, what you are in him: so, if you think him *fair*, and *altogether lovely*, he is not behind with you, for he thinks you *fair* too; hence he says to the spouse, who was admiring his beauty, *Thou art all fair, my love, there is no spot in thee*, Song iv. 7. And he doth not say any thing, but what he thinks, his words express his thoughts; for, *he cannot lye, who is the strength of Israel.* Now, believer, if you cannot think, or believe, that you are altogether fair in him, because you see yourself altogether filthy in yourself; know, that if you saw yourself to be altogether fair in yourself, there would be no need of, or room for believing that you are all fair in him. Hence he hath left deformities about you, that there may be room for faith: therefore, let the feeling of your deformity make you humble; but let it not hinder your faith, which must not stand upon feeling, but must act contrary to it upon Christ's word: for, if you ground your faith upon what you feel in yourself, you will never believe what Christ says concerning your being *all fair*, and your being *made the righteousness of God in him*, 2 Cor. v. 21. If your faith then can act so as to raise your thoughts of Christ as altogether lovely, fair, and spotless, you have ground to conclude, by the same act of faith, that he hath high thoughts of you, as being all fair and spotless in him, whatever deformity you feel in yourself. Christ is infinitely more to you, believer, than you believe him to be: but, whatever you believe him to be, you may be sure he is that to you; for, faith's seeing, and having, is all one, even as believing is explained by receiving, and receiving by believing; *As many as received him, to them gave he power* [or PRIVILEGE] *to become the sons of God, even to them who believe on his name*, John i. 12. What you believe then, you receive; and what you receive, you have; and what you have in him, you are in him: having beauty, and riches, and righteousness in him; you are beautiful, rich, and righteous: and, consequently, when you believingly think he is all fair and glorious, you may know he thinks you all fair and glorious in him: and he thinks no more of you than what you really are in him.—The question then is put, because you may know, by what you think of Christ, what Christ thinks of you.

10. This question, *What think ye of Christ?* is put, because we can never think *too much of him*, who is the God-man, David's Son, and David's Lord; being God as well as man. O what a glorious object of our contemplation is here! You may think too much of yourselves, and your own righteousness; but you cannot think too much of Christ, and his righteousness: yea, when you think any thing of yourself, and your righteousness, you think too much of it; but when you think as much as you can of Christ, and his righteousness, you think too little of him.—You may think too much of creatures, but you cannot think too much of Christ. Yea, you may think too much of angels, as the apostle John did, when he *fell down to worship towards the feet of the angel*, Rev. xxii. 8. To think of the nature of angels, with that inward reverence and adoration which we are to have when we think of Christ, would be idolatry; and to think of Christ, with the same frame of heart as we do of angels, would be profaneness. Thus we may think too highly and reverently of angels; but we cannot think of Christ too highly, too reverently; nor can we think too much of him, who is *the Lord of angels*, and whom we are to *honour even as we honour the Father.*——These are the reasons of the question.

IV. The *fourth* general head proposed, was, To make *Application* of the whole. And it may be applied for the following uses. 1. For *Information.* 2. For *Conviction.* 3. For *Trial.* 4. For *Lamentation.* 5. For *Exhortation.* And, 6. For *Direction.*

First, It may be applied for *Information*, in these and the like lessons following.

1. Hence we may learn, seeing the great question in the Christian Catechism is, *What think ye of Christ?* then the sum of Christian knowledge lies in this one word, *viz.* CHRIST. It is not in Christ absolutely considered, by what he is in himself; but in God relatively considered, by what he is to us, namely, in Christ: therefore, I observe, the question is not, *What think ye of* GOD? but, *What think ye of* CHRIST? For, as God out of Christ stands in no relation to us sinners, but that of an *enemy*, and a *consuming fire*; so the nature, essence, and immensity of God, and what he is in himself, is not the great Christian question; but rather, what he is to us, and so what he is in Christ. All the saving manifestations of God to his people in scripture were still, not of God, absolutely and essentially, in what he was in himself, and in his nature; but relatively, in what he was to them: and so it was always in Christ. Thus, when he came to Abraham, he said, *I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward*, Gen. xv. 1. *I am thy God, and the God of thy seed; which seed was Christ*, Gal. iii. 16. in whom that covenant and promise was established to Abraham and his offspring. And when God manifested himself to the patriarchs that came of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, his ordinary way was to make himself known upon that ground of the new covenant established in Christ, *Abraham's seed:*

hence

hence when he came to them, he uſed to ſay to them, *I am the God of Abraham, the God of Iſaac, and the God of Jacob*; that is, he manifeſted himſelf to them, not abſolutely, by what he was in his nature; but relatively, by what he was to them in Chriſt the promiſed ſeed.

If we begin to dive into that queſtion, *What think ye of God?* we may ſoon loſe ourſelves, and come to the philoſopher's demand of a day to anſwer that queſtion, and then a week, and then a month, and then tell it is impoſſible to anſwer it: nay, we ought not to be curious in ſearching into the nature of God, leſt we get a daſh; for, human philoſophy cannot reach it; yea, I doubt if angelical wiſdom can. It is the only pleaſant, ſaving, and profitable enquiry, to ſtudy this queſtion, *What think ye of Chriſt?* Here we find what God is to us. To enquire what God is in himſelf, abſolutely and eſſentially, is no ſaving or profitable enquiry. What profit is it for a man, who lives under the north-pole, and ſees not the ſun for one half of the year, though he ſhould count the courſe of the ſun all that time that he ſees it not? Or, what profit were it for a man to go and count what rent the king of Morroco or emperor of China draws every year, and he gets none of it? As fooliſh is it for us to begin and ſtudy what God is abſolutely in himſelf, and not what he is relatively to us; therefore the queſtion is not, *What think ye of* GOD? but, *What think ye of* CHRIST? And this, by the bye, ſhews the difference that there is between learned fools and wiſe Chriſtians; why, the learned fools ſeek to know and comprehend what God is; what is this myſtery of the Trinity, and the like; and there he loſes himſelf: he ſeeks to know what God is himſelf, and not what he is to him. But the poor Chriſtian is herein wiſer than that learned clerk, for all his wit; for the Chriſtian ſtudies Chriſt, and ſo knows what God is to him, better than all the learned Rabbies with their curious ſpeculations: though yet the poor ſoul may otherwiſe be very ignorant and illiterate, yet it is *wiſe unto ſalvation*, becauſe he knows Chriſt, and *Chriſt is made of God to him wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification and redemption*: and when he knows Chriſt, he is upon the ſureſt and ſafeſt way to know God; for he ſees God in Chriſt, and God related to him in Chriſt; for Chriſt is our relation as God-man, Mediator. And indeed, Sirs, to believe in Chriſt, is to believe God's relation to us, and God reconciled to us: for, when we look to Chriſt, we ſee God in him; and when we ſee God in him, we ſee that he is reconciled in him to us, and well-pleaſed in him with us; 2 Cor. v. 19. *God is in Chriſt reconciling the world to himſelf.* Mat. iii. 17. *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleaſed.* I own, indeed, a man may be a believer, and yet apprehend God to be his enemy; but then he is not believing, he is not thinking of Chriſt by faith: it is an unbelieving thought he hath then of God; for a believing thought of Chriſt would give him another thought of God, even as a Friend and Father in him. This then, I hope, is an uſeful inference, That the ſum of Chriſtian knowledge is Chriſt.

2. Hence ſee what is the *beſt matter for meditation*, and the *beſt rule for ſelf-examination*. Here is the moſt noble ſubject of meditation, namely, to think of Chriſt; and here is the moſt excellent rule for examination, namely, to aſk our ſouls that queſtion, *What think we of Chriſt?* Meditation and ſelf-examination are duties much neglected among us; they are ſpiritual exerciſes, directly croſs and oppoſite to our vain, wandering, idle, and unfixed hearts. A man will rather go betwixt the ſtilts of a plough from morning to evening, than travel betwixt theſe two duties for one half hour, though yet they are like the ſtilts of that plough by which the fallow-ground of the heart muſt be plowed up; but when the thoughts begin to come in betwixt theſe two ſtilts of meditation and ſelf-examination, behold on a ſudden (to ſpeak it in broad Scots) they *quit the plough, and run away with the harrows.* No doubt, you will know this from ſad experience, that your thoughts are in this matter like wild vitious horſes, running mad here and there through the fields, without keeping any road, or obſerving any rule; but here is the beſt matter and rule, both for regulating our thoughts in meditation and ſelf-examination.—As for *meditation*, the beſt way is to think of Chriſt: why, you may think upon a promiſe, but out of Chriſt you will find no comfort in it; for, *all the promiſes are Yea and Amen in him*; and ſo you will not find it your own, but by looking to Chriſt: yea, you may think upon God, but out of Chriſt you will find no comfort in him; *I remembered God, and was troubled*, Pſal. lxxvii. 3.: but the antidote againſt that trouble is believing thoughts of Chriſt; therefore ſays Chriſt to his diſciples, *Let not your hearts be troubled; ye believe in God, believe alſo in me*, John xiv. 1. If you think upon the law, you will find there you are drowned in debt, both to the command and curſe, till once ye look to Chriſt, the *end of the law for righteouſneſs*. If you think upon your duties that God calls you to, you will find them a heavy taſk, till once you look to Chriſt, and then you will find his *yoke is eaſy*, and his *commands are not grievous*.—Again, as to *ſelf-examination*, the beſt rule here is to ſay to your ſouls, *What think ye of Chriſt?* They are but proud ſelf-conceited perſons that do not think highly of Chriſt, and God approves them not; 2 Cor. x. 17, 18. *He that glories*, ſays the apoſtle, *let him glory in the Lord: for not he that commends himſelf is approved, but whom the Lord commends*; intimating, that they that glory only in the Lord, they diſcommend themſelves, and are commended and approved of God; but they that do not glory in the Lord, nor think highly of him, they commend themſelves, but are diſcommended and diſapproved of God; yea, they deceive themſelves; *If any man think himſelf to be ſomething, when he is nothing, he deceives himſelf*, Gal. vi. 3. Self-conceit is ſelf-deceit: and as they are ſelf-deceivers who are ſelf-exalters: they think not much of Chriſt, who think much of themſelves; and ſo, to enquire what you think of Chriſt, is the beſt way to find yourſelf out, what you are in ſtate or frame. You may, by this rule, know how to judge of your own thoughts: you may think of a thouſand good things; you may think of ſermons, you may think of death, judgment, and eternity; but though you may think ſeriouſly on theſe ſubjects, yet the rule whereby to judge of the rectitude of your thoughts about them is here: do they lead you to high thoughts of Chriſt, in whom alone we can think of death, without horror; judgment, without terror; and eternity, without fear or dread?

3. Hence we may ſee, that Chriſt himſelf is the

the *beſt Judge of mens ſtate*; for he can look in to the heart and thoughts of men, and ſay, *What think ye of Chriſt?* All judgment is committed to the Son of God, and he will caſt many whom the world approves; becauſe, whatever men think of them, yet he knows that they think little of him and his Father. Alſo, he will approve of ſome whom the world caſts; becauſe, however the world thinks little of them, yet he knows that they think much of him and his Father; for they know him, and whoſe ſon he is. Chriſt's queſtion ſhews, that he knows our thoughts; for, to whom ſhall we give an account of our anſwer to this queſtion? None in all the world knows what we think, but God himſelf; and *Chriſt is God*. Chriſt diſcovers the ignorance of the Phariſees here alſo, and ſhews that he knew their thoughts were amiſs: *If he be David's ſon*, ſays he, *how does David in ſpirit call him Lord?* Here they were confounded, and might have been convicted that their thoughts were naught. Indeed, this was one of theſe things that old Simeon declared concerning Chriſt, that *he ſhould be a ſign that ſhould be ſpoken againſt, that the thoughts of many hearts might be revealed*, Luke ii. 35. Thus, when Chriſt met with the woman of Samaria, he revealed many thoughts of her heart to her, and gave her a view of all her lewd tricks: *Come and ſee a man*, ſays ſhe, *that told me all things that ever I did; is not this the Chriſt?* As Satan preſented to our Lord Jeſus the whole body of the world at a glance; ſo Chriſt can let us ſee a black ſight of all our ſins at once, ſo as to force us to acknowledge that he is the Chriſt, that knows our hearts and thoughts. But,

4. Hence we may ſee, what is the *great end and deſign of a goſpel-miniſtry*, namely, to diſcover Chriſt, and remove the prejudices of people's minds againſt him; to rectify their miſtakes about him; and to fill them with a high opinion of him. The ſum of a goſpel miniſter's buſineſs, is, to commend his Maſter, ſaying, *What think ye of Chriſt?* and that both in his preaching, and praying, and catechiſing, and viſiting. The whole of their doctrine and practice is, as it were, a voice preaching Chriſt. If they preach the *law*, and its curſes and threatenings againſt Chriſtleſs and impenitent ſinners, it is to *lead them to Chriſt*, and to drive them to the *city of refuge*. If they preach *faith*, they make Chriſt the *author and finiſher*, as well as the *object* of it. If they preach *repentance*, they make Chriſt, as exalted by the right-hand of God *to be a Prince and Saviour to give repentance*, the fountain of it; and Chriſt crucified, viewed by faith, to be the immediate root of it. If they preach *duties* and *new obedience*, they make Chriſt the ALPHA and OMEGA of it.——Miniſters may indeed ſpeak much of Chriſt in their ſermons, and yet not preach Chriſt: As for example, If one ſhould preach of Chriſt mainly as a Law-giver, to be obeyed, and little or nothing of Chriſt as a Law-fulfiller, to be believed in, and ſerved from love, becauſe of his having ſaved us from the yoke of the law: for, a covenant of life and death, upon doing or not doing, may be preached, and called the goſpel of Chriſt, in a miſtake, while it is only the law that is preached, and not *Chriſt, the end of the law for righteouſneſs*: and you may know it by this among other things, the tendency of ſuch old-covenant doctrine, is to lead men to this queſtion, not, *What think ye of Chriſt?* but, *What think ye of yourſelves?* and, *What are you doing, that you may have eternal life?* Why, the man begins to think, God is ſtanding upon ſome doing terms yet with him; and therefore, in order to life, he muſt do ſo and ſo: thus he is led to himſelf, and not to Chriſt. But goſpel-doctrine tends to lead a man wholly out of himſelf, and wholly in to Chriſt; for, whatever be the text, the ſtrain of goſpel-doctrine is, *What think ye of Chriſt?* It is not the deſign of goſpel-miniſters to commend themſelves, but Chriſt. There is a ſett of miniſters, ſay ſome, that ſet up themſelves above others, and ſtudy only to commend themſelves, to the diſparagement of all others, as if none but they were goſpel-miniſters; but, my friends, if any man's concern for Chriſt's cauſe and intereſt, or for his Maſter's glory, ſhall commend him, he needs not think ſtrange though the world of Phariſees envy him, as they did Chriſt himſelf, when his doctrine and life commended him. I will tell you what commendation a goſpel-miniſter hunts moſt after; it is that of Paul, 2 Cor. iii. 1, 2, 3. to have an *epiſtle commendatory in the hearts of hearers*, by the power of the Spirit of God accompanying the word, and leaving an impreſſion there, that it is indeed the word of God, and not of men, and that God is in it of a truth; he would deſire, with the ſame apoſtle, 2 Cor. iv. 2. to *commend himſelf, by the manifeſtation of the truth, to every man's conſcience in the ſight of God*. Let truth be nick-named and reproached, as it will, the evidence of truth will commend itſelf to the conſciences of all the lovers thereof. Mean time, it is poſſible that a man may commend Chriſt, in order to commend himſelf as an evangelical preacher; for ſuch a good work he is indeed commendable, but for ſuch a bad end, it is to God only that he is accountable. But it is poſſible alſo to know if a man intend not himſelf by preaching Chriſt; for ſometimes there is ſuch a power and virtue attending the word, and ſuch a ſmell and ſavour of heaven with the preacher, as carries a ſecret demonſtration of his ſpirituality and purity of intention into the heart even of the carnal byſtanders, let be theſe whom he hath enlightened with the ſpirit of diſcerning, to know the voice of *Chriſt* from a *ſtranger*. However, Sirs, think of miniſters what ye will, the great queſtion is, *What think ye of Chriſt?* Wo to us, if our only deſign be to bring people to ſay, *What think ye of ſuch a miniſter, and what think ye of ſuch a ſermon?* If we make Chriſt a covert for raiſing our own applauſe, he can inſtantly command an angel to ſmite us, as he did Herod, and order us to be eaten up of worms, for not giving God the glory. Oh! what ſhould ye think of us? though we magnify our office as ambaſſadors of Chriſt, yet, in ourſelves, ſome of us are as frail, feeble, ſinful pieces of duſt as any of you; we are among the chief of ſinners, as well as you; we need the blood and Spirit of Chriſt to juſtify and ſanctify us, as well as you: let us decreaſe, but let Chriſt increaſe. If any of us be made inſtruments of good to your ſouls, let it engage you to think the more of Chriſt, that could work ſuch a work by ſuch weak and unlikely inſtruments: He puts the treaſure in earthen veſſels, that the *excellency of the power may be of God*, and not of us. Whatever honour God calls you to put upon them for their work's ſake, yet if your eſteem centre upon the miniſter, or his work, ſaying, *O I*

think

think much of such a minister, and I think much of such a sermon, you need to begin to think better; for the grand question is, *What think ye of Christ?* It is indeed the best sermon that works the highest thoughts of Christ.

Secondly, The *second use* is for *conviction* and *reproof* to all those that are filled with unworthy and unbecoming thoughts of Christ, with ignorant and erroneous thoughts of him. Some have no thoughts of Christ at all; some that think of him, yet think nothing of him; some think little of him; some think hardly and harshly of him; some think meanly and basely of him: to speak of all the base and mean thoughts of Christ that the world is filled with, would be impossible. Oh! how basely do the Arians think of Christ, and his supreme Godhead! If I had not found it necessary to confine myself to the first branch of Christ's question here, *What think ye of Christ?* The other branch, namely, *Whose Son is he?* might have led me particularly to have treated the doctrine of Christ's Sonship, and eternal Godhead, and coequality with the Father, in opposition to the damnable heresy, which some tell us is creeping in to Scotland, as well as it is raging in England and Ireland: I shall only say, that the question concerns them, as well as the Pharisees of old, *What think ye of Christ?* and, *Whose Son is he?* Oh! can they say no more than, with the Pharisees, that he is *the Son of David?* Then, *How does David in spirit call him Lord?* And if he be David's Lord and God, how can he be so, and yet not co-equal with the Father? For we have not two Lords, or two Gods; *The Lord our God is one Lord*; therefore Christ, being Lord, must be One with the Father essentially: *Christ is the true God, and eternal life.* But I cannot now enlarge on this subject. Oh! may Arian doctors begin to read over the Christian catechism again, and learn to answer this question, *What think ye of Christ?*—Again, as Arians think nothing of his Godhead, but, as if it were, an inferior deity; so some, that pretend a greater respect to him, yet think but basely of him: Papists think nothing of *the imputation of his righteousness*; Socinians think nothing of the *sacrifice of his death*; Arminians think nothing of the *power of his grace*; Quakers think nothing of his *word*; Atheists think nothing of his *Spirit*; Deists think nothing of his *revelations*.—If we look out to the *world*, the Pagans have no thoughts of him at all: the Mahometans think him nothing but a great prophet at best, and inferior to Mahomet; the Jews think him nothing but an impostor, and that he is not the Christ, but only the *carpenter's son*; or, it may be, a *blasphemer*, that had a *devil*.—And, again, if we look in to the *church*, even the purest churches in this world, among which I would fain hope the poor church of Scotland hath not yet lost the vogue; yet, Oh! how many dark and confused notions; yea, unwarrantable and unworthy thoughts of Christ may be there discovered, even among these churches that are supposed to be pure, Christian, protestant, and reformed churches! It were endless, to speak of doctrinal and practical errors that swarm in the churches, whereby contempt is poured upon Christ and his doctrine, his truth, his gospel, and his yoke; his loving yoke of gospel-obedience. What low thoughts of Christ appear in the strain of doctrine, that tends to confound the old and new covenant, law and gospel, faith and works, without ridding marches duly betwixt Christ, and all his rivals and competitors, that seek to share with him in the glory of salvation-work! What low thoughts of Christ appear in that sort of practice, that consists either in a life of legal righteousness, or a life of open wickedness! What low thoughts of Christ, as our righteousness, appear from every thing that tends to lead sinners back to the law as a covenant of works! And what low thoughts of Christ, as our sanctification, appear from every thing that tends to lead sinners off from the law, as a rule of holiness! How is Christ, and his merit, and righteousness disesteemed, to the encouragement of self and self-righteousness! And, how is Christ, and his Spirit and grace disesteemed, to the encouragement of sin and licentiousness*! It is not my business to expose the nakedness of any: they are singular persons, that are helped to guard against all right-hand and left-hand extremes, so as to think no less of Christ as a Lord, than Christ as a Saviour; and to esteem a whole Christ, without setting up one part of Christ against another: but my work especially is, to strike at the root of all that disesteem of Christ, that takes place in the world, especially in the visible church. Whence is it, that the world thinks so little of Christ, and so naughtily of him? Why,

1. *Ignorance* is a cause of it, *Ignoti nulla cupido*; as it is impossible for them to undervalue Christ, who have the saving knowledge of him; so it is not possible that any can prize him, whom they do not know. Many are like Festus, Acts xxv. 19. who told Agrippa, that Paul's enemies had questions against him, concerning one JESUS; Christ is to them a certain man, one *Jesus*, but for their part they know little of him, and are indifferent about him: as a blind man, what he does not see, he cares not for, though he be told of it as never so fair and beautiful; so natural men are *blind*, 2 Cor. iv. 4.; they can see no beauty or comeliness in Christ, for which they should desire him. Therefore, though they may hear of his glory and comeliness, and be a little moved therewith, yet they care not so much for him, as to give him the highest room in their thoughts and esteem.

2. *Unbelief* is another cause why people think little of Christ; if they would believe, they would see the glory of God in him, and see him a glorious and lovely object: but, through unbelief, Christ is lothsome instead of lovely; hence his doctrine is lothsome, his righteousness, his holiness, his cross. Unbelief makes people think Christ is a cheat, and God is a liar, and that he says what he hath no mind to do; it makes them think that he is not able to save, or that he is not willing to save. Oh! how basely does unbelief think of Christ! Unbelief also will make a man think God like unto himself, and an approver of his sin, Psal. l. 21. *Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself*; and so it makes them to think of Christ but very basely.

3. *Pride* and *self-righteousness* is another cause why people think little of Christ, Rom. x 3.

* The above topics are all touched at, and many of them treated at considerable length, in Serm. IV. VIII. X.

While people think much of themſelves, and their doing, they cannot think much of Chriſt, and his righteouſneſs. This is that legal righteouſneſs that makes men to do with the garment of Chriſt's righteouſneſs, as the Ammonites did with the garments of David's meſſengers, they clipt them ſo ſhort, that they were not able to hide their ſhame: but if it was a terror and ſmiting to David's heart, to cut off but a little of the lap of Saul's garment, ought it not to be a terror to us, to cut off a lap of Chriſt's garment, or to clip it ſo ſhort, as to think that it cannot cover us completely, without ſome of our own rotten righteouſneſs ſewed to it?—Again, it is this legal principle that makes believers themſelves think it cannot be that they are accepted as righteous, perfectly righteous in the ſight of God, through the righteouſneſs of Chriſt imputed; why, becauſe they want a feeling of that righteouſneſs in themſelves, which the legal heart is ready to make the foundation of pardon and acceptance: but, as Luther ſaid, "We muſt not feel, but "believe, that we are thus righteous;" yea, it is this hidden principle of ſelf-righteouſneſs, that will make a miniſter preach Chriſt alone for righteouſneſs, as if he were as much for exalting Chriſt, as any that ever preached; and yet, before ever you know well where you are, you will find him bringing in ſome legal duty or qualification, in order to your being juſtified, that will ſpoil all; juſt like an untoward milk-cow, that will let down a good deal of milk very well, but then, with an unhappy kick of her foot, ſhe will tumble all down to the ground, when ſhe hath done: even ſo, the ſincere milk of the word of life, and juſtification through Chriſt's righteouſneſs alone, may be let down abundantly, that you would think the man as evangelical as Paul himſelf, or any body that ever preached the goſpel: but, behold, of a ſudden, the legal foot gives it a kick, and ſpills all when he hath done, or elſe the law ſets her foot among the midſt of the milk; I mean, mixes ſome dirty righteouſneſs, and qualification of our own, with the fair and clean milk of Chriſt's righteouſneſs, ſo as the poor ſoul loaths to take a drink of it. Why, I thought this milk was for me, and this righteouſneſs of Chriſt was for me; but there came in a qualification, that, before ever I could be juſtified, I behoved to do ſo and ſo, and be ſo and ſo humbled, and penitent; and ſure I am, I want ſuch a qualification, and therefore all is loſt to me. But, poor ſoul, whatever come in this way, tending to make you look in to yourſelf, and ſtand off from Chriſt, you may know it is but a ſwitch of the law of works; ſlight it, and ſet it of, if it hinder you from thinking of Chriſt as your ALL, and from *buying and drinking his wine and milk, without money and without price.*

4. *Carnal reaſon* is another cauſe, why people think little of Chriſt; for, *the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God, they are fooliſhneſs to him,* 1 Cor. ii. 14. There is natural reaſon, which is ſo much cried up at this day, when man goes about to meaſure God's truths, and ſpiritual myſteries, with this ſhort line of human reaſon; and finding, that reaſon agrees with theſe myſteries, no more than the ſound of ram-horns, in the view of carnal reaſon, was like to bring down the walls of Jericho; behold, no fault muſt be found with lady *Reaſon,* but Chriſt's goſpel, and the myſteries thereof, muſt bear the blame, namely, That they are fooliſh and abſurd; and therefore not to be received or eſteemed by ſuch wiſe heads as they are, who little remember the apoſtle's admonition, 1 Cor. iii. 18. *If any man will be wiſe, let him become a fool, that he may be wiſe.* Hence Luther gave it as an infallible mark that the goſpel was not truly preached, and was not the goſpel indeed, namely, "If it was ſo brewed, "fitted, and adapted unto reaſon, that all ap-"proved of it, and yielded to it peaceably; "for, how then ſhould Chriſt be a *ſign that* "*ſhould be ſpoken againſt,* Luke ii. 34. and a *ſtone* "*of ſtumbling, and a rock of offence?*" This leads me to a

5. Cauſe, why people think ſo little of Chriſt, namely, the *calumny* caſt upon the goſpel of Chriſt, and the diſpenſers of it. Is it poſſible for the wiſdom of the world to hold her peace from ſpeaking againſt that which ſhe judges to be fooliſhneſs? How then ſhall Chriſt be not only for *the riſing,* but *the falling of many in Iſrael?* "Mark, ſays Luther, where this fall is, even "in Iſrael, in that people that ſeemed to be "Chriſt's only people, and upon Chriſt's ſide." It is even in Iſrael that many fall, and in Iſrael that Chriſt is ſpoken againſt. Thus, when he came to be a miniſter of the old and antient truths of God, to confirm the promiſes made unto the fathers, Rom. xv. 8. when he began to preach the ſame, the greateſt part of the multitude cried out, *What new doctrine is this?* Mark i. 27. Whence we may ſee, that when a church hath gone off from any antient truth, or old way of expreſſing it, no ſooner are theſe old truths revived, or ſet in their antient frame, than preſently it is called a *new ſcheme of doctrine* †. However, by this means, Satan gets much of his will; for it tends to make people think little of Chriſt, and his goſpel.

6. *Diviſion* is another cauſe, why people think ſo little of Chriſt. There is a twofold *diviſion* that I mean; there is not only an outward church-diviſion, but an inward heart-diviſion. No doubt the former hath a great hand in making many to ſlight Chriſt; for, when a church is divided, the generality of people are apt to be ſtumbled: Why, ſay they, we know not whom to believe, and what ſide to turn to; every party ſays they are for Chriſt, and therefore the indifferent ſort of people think we will even let Chriſt and them both alone. But it is eſpecially inward *heart-diviſion* that I mean: when the heart is divided betwixt Chriſt and the world, betwixt Chriſt and idols or luſts: the world, and the luſts thereof, will be ſure to carry away the heart, that it cannot think highly of Chriſt, while it thinks ſo much of other things. A man may as ſoon, with one eye, obſerve the ſtars, and with the other, meaſure the earth at the ſame time, as he can think highly of Chriſt, and his idols too: therefore, when Satan, like the pretended mother, ſays, *Let it be neither thine nor mine, but divide it;* God, who is the Lord of the heart, ſays, Let the devil rather have all; for God will either have all, or none. Now, when men have any approved idol in the heart, Chriſt is deſpiſed, his rival gets all: the divided heart, then, is a heart ſeparate, and joined to idols; and this diviſion cauſes diſeſteem of Chriſt, ſo as the man cannot think of Chriſt, he muſt, of neceſſity, think of

† See the reaſon of this aſſigned above, p. 70, 149, 150, 178, 198.

ſome

ſome other thing. See how they that were invited to the great ſupper, the goſpel-banquet, put it off with excuſes; Luke xiv. 18. *I have bought a piece of ground, and I muſt needs go and ſee it*, ſays one: mark the phraſe, *I muſt needs go*; he pleads neceſſity, and neceſſity hath no law. When the heart is not wholly for Chriſt, of neceſſity it will be for the world, and the luſts thereof: and he that is not for Chriſt, Satan will conſtantly find him enough of buſineſs to take up his thoughts, and which the man will reckon ſo neceſſary, that he will have no leiſure to think of Chriſt. Now, when this queſtion is propoſed, *What think ye of Chriſt?* or, when Chriſt is offered, there are two ſorts of perſons that ſhew very little eſteem of him; yea, that ſhew they do nothing but deſpiſe him in their heart: the apoſtle compares them to dogs and ſwine, 2 Pet. ii. 22.

(1.) There are ſome like *ſwine*, namely, the *profane worldly people*; for, as ſwine think more of the mire, than any thing elſe; ſo, if one go to drive him away from the mire, he only gives a grunt, and away he goes to the mire again, or elſe rooting his ſnout in the earth: ſo profane and worldly people love to wallow in the mire of ſin, and to be rooting and rotting in the earth; and if any go about to drive them from ſin, and to pull their noſes out of the earth, they go away grunting and grumbling in their heart, that they cannot be allowed their neceſſary pleaſure and profit; and they return to the wallowing in the mire, and rooting in the earth, as eagerly as ever. All the anſwer they give to the queſtion, *What think ye of Chriſt?* is a grunt; they are a little diſturbed about it, and moved a little to mutter ſome words, according as they are affected; but away they go grunting, with their mouth towards the duſt: it is not Chriſt they are thinking of.

(2.) There are others like *dogs*, namely, *legaliſts*, and *ſelf-juſticiaries*, that are worſe enemies to the goſpel of Chriſt, than the worldling, or openly profane; for, as a dog thinks more of a ſtinking carcaſe than any thing elſe; ſo, if you go about to drive the dog from his vomit, or ſtinking carrion, he will be ready either to bark or bite, or flee in your face: even ſo, legaliſts and ſelf-juſticiaries, think more of the ſtinking carcaſe of their own righteouſneſs, and legal duties, than any thing elſe; and when any goes about to draw them away from the high eſteem of the filthy rags of their own righteouſneſs, ſhewing the lothſomneſs and vileneſs thereof, the abſolute neceſſity of being wholly denied thereto, and adorned with nothing but Chriſt's perfect righteouſneſs for juſtification before God; if we ſhow them how God juſtifies the ungodly, and how the righteouſneſs of God, without the works of the law, is manifeſted in the goſpel; why, then they go away from ordinances, barking and biting, ſlandering, and calumniating the goſpel, which they do not underſtand or eſteem, as if it were a doctrine of licentiouſneſs, and an encouragement of ſin; and they return to their vomit, their ſtinking carrion, neglecting the heavenly carcaſe, to which the believing eagles gather together, that they may live by faith upon the Son of God.——Now, both theſe ſorts of perſons, however differently affected, yet agree in their ſlighting of Chriſt, upon different grounds. What do they think of Chriſt? Nothing at all. The Lord convince and awaken ſuch!

Thirdly, The *third uſe* may be for *examination* and *trial*. Let this great queſtion of the Chriſtian catechiſm be a touchſtone, to try what metal you are of, and to underſtand what is your ſtate now, and what will be your lot for ever: it is, and will be, according as you anſwer this queſtion, *What think ye of Chriſt?* For helping you into this enquiry, I would direct you to try it, 1. By the quality of your thoughts. 2. By the object thereof.

1. Try yourſelves upon this queſtion, by the *quality* of your thoughts; for it is not a ſimple thought, like a flying vapour, that is here intended, but a qualified thought, that you are to try yourſelves by; for example,

1. Right and becoming thoughts of Chriſt are *preferring* and *ſuperlative* thoughts; Chriſt is beyond compariſon to the man: the language of ſuch a thought of Chriſt is this, O what can he be compared unto! If you compare him to a *roſe*; he is the *Roſe of Sharon*: If you compare him to a *lily*; he is *the Lily of the valley*: If you compare him to a *ſun*; he is the *Sun of righteouſneſs*: If you compare him to a *ſtar*; he is the *bright and Morning-ſtar*: If you compare him to a *chief* and *honourable worthy*; he is the *Chief among ten thouſand*: If you compare him to a *head*; he is the *Head of principalities and powers*: If you compare him to a *flower*; he is the *Flower of the ſtem of Jeſſe*: If you compare him to a *branch*; he is the *Branch of righteouſneſs*: If you compare him to an *advocate*; he is an *Advocate with the Father*: If you compare him to a *counſellor*; he is the *wonderful Counſellor*: If you compare him to a *king*; he is the *King of kings and Lord of lords*: If you compare him to a *prince*; he is the *Prince of peace*; *the Prince of the kings of the earth*: If you compare him with *men*; he is *fairer than the ſons of men*: If you compare him with *angels*; he is the *Lord of angels*; *let all the angels of God worſhip him*.—The man does in his thoughts prefer Chriſt to all things in heaven and earth; *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon the earth that I deſire beſides thee*, Pſal. lxxiii. 25. *In all things he gives him the pre-eminence*, Col. i. 18. Then again,

2. Right and becoming thoughts of Chriſt are *admiring* and *adoring* thoughts; *exalting* and *extolling* thoughts: if you have due thoughts of him in your heart, you will find in your heart to bleſs him, ſaying, as Pſal. cxviii. 26.

Bleſſed is he, in God's great name,
That cometh us to ſave:
We, from the houſe which to the Lord
Pertains, you bleſſed have.

And, *O magnify the Lord with me*: you would wiſh that all the world would fall a bleſſing, and praiſing, and extolling him. They are glorying and glorifying thoughts: the man's heart glories in the Lord, and glorifies the Lord, and would deſire his glory may be advanced above the heavens. Why, becauſe,

3. Right and becoming thoughts of Chriſt are *ſpiritual* and *ſublimating* thoughts; natural thoughts can riſe no higher than nature, 1 Cor. ii. 14.; but ſpiritual thoughts, being managed by the conduct and influence of the Spirit of God; *The Spirit ſearcheth all things, even the deep things of God*. Indeed, the Spirit of God is the *all in all* of theſe thoughts; for he comes, according to the promiſe, and *glorifies Chriſt*, by *receiving the things of Chriſt, and ſhewing them unto the ſoul*, John xvi. 14. *They that are after the fleſh, do*

do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit, Rom. viii. 5. Indeed, the things of Christ, and the things of the Spirit, are the same; no human natural wisdom can reach to them: wise naturalists may indeed dream of them, and speak of them like a man speaking in his dream of the light of the sun, while yet it is dark night with him, and he was never awakened, convinced, and savingly illuminated.

4. Right and becoming thoughts of Christ are *applying* and *appropriating* thoughts; insomuch that the man takes Christ into his soul, as he takes meat and drink into his body; *Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life*, John vi. 54. This is that believing thought, without which a man receives no benefit, any more than a man that wants meat can have benefit by thinking upon meat, without eating thereof. The man takes in Christ to himself for his own good. To think of Christ, without applying him, is like a man thinking of meat and drink, without taking it; which does no good.

QUEST. *But can there be no right thinking of Christ, without applying?* Indeed, man, the thought is but a vain thought, an unbelieving thought, an unprofitable thought, if it be not either an applying thought of Christ, or a thought of Christ in order to application; like a sick man receiving a cordial out of his physician's hand, he takes it from him, not to hold it in his hand, and no more, but in order to make it his own, by drinking it down for his refreshment, healing, and strengthening. The man's taking the cordial in his hand, is not properly the taking that the physician means, but his taking it in to himself, or down into his stomach, is the proper taking of it: yet the former taking of it in his hand is right, in so far as it is in order to the other; so here, a bare thinking of Christ is of no avail, unless it be an applying thought, or a thought in order to application: and though the thoughts of Christ, in order to application, be not application itself properly; yet it is good, in so far as it is a taking Christ into your hand, in order to take him into your heart, and that for your own soul's refreshment, life, health, and everlasting salvation.

5. Right thoughts of Christ are *sinking* and *serious* thoughts, in opposition to swimming, roving, and indifferent thoughts. Some have a wild thought about Christ, that if he be good for any thing, they shall have a share of him, as well as others: but what he is, and how they shall come by him, they never deeply pondered; for they were never touched with a sense of their sin, misery, and undone state without him. A swimming thought of Christ is like that of some ignorant creatures, crying out in a surprise, *Christ, have mercy on us*; but the thought that sinks deep is like that of the publican smiting on his breast, and crying, *Lord, have mercy on me a sinner.* But there are learned fools in the world, as well as ignorant ones, that have nothing but swimming thoughts, roving speculations; and yet, it may be, they can speak of Christ to better purpose, you would think, than one that is exercised to godliness: but yet these two sorts differ as far as the pleading of an orator differs from the pleading of a malefactor; the one vents his great wit, but the other his heart-concern. Again,

6. Right thoughts of Christ are *trading* and *trafficking* thoughts; the man hath it for his constant trade, to think highly of Christ, and give him the chief room in his heart and esteem. In this respect, his *heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord. The desire of our soul is to thy name*, says the church, *and to the remembrance of thee. With my soul have I desired thee in the night, and with my spirit within me will I seek thee early*, Isa. xxvi. 8, 9. There was a trading with heaven late at night, and early in the morning. Yea, David makes it *morning*, and *evening*, and *mid-time of the day*; yea more, *seven times a day*; and yet most of all, when he says, *My soul breaks for the longing that it hath to thy righteous judgments at* ALL TIMES. It is a constant trading. True, indeed, there are innumerable intermissions in the believer's Christian thoughts and desires: but as we say, It is such a man's trade to buy and sell, while he follows that employment, though it is not every moment he is thus occupied; but though there be several intermissions in the exercise of his employment, yet the bent of his mind goes that way: so here, we may call this the believer's constant trade; because, whatever intermissions there are in this, his mental trading with heaven, yet the bent of his soul is towards Christ: yea, it is not only his business, but his pleasure; and that makes him go on. If a man thrive at his trade, he takes pleasure in it; and if not, he is in danger of giving it over. We go sometimes upon business to these we never saw, nor care for seeing again, and whom we take little pleasure to converse with: they that never go to Christ but merely upon business, and never find any pleasure in conversing with him, surely they are too great strangers to him. Certainly, believer, there is too much strangeness betwixt Christ and you, if your business you have ado with Christ be seldom your pleasure, or if it be merely business that takes you to him, saying, "I want "a pardon, I want a promise, I want this and "that." But, is there never a love-visit you make to him, saying, "Lord, I have got a par- "don, and I am come to bless thee for it; I "have got a promise, and I am come to praise "thee for it; thy company is sweet, and I am "come to get thee in my arms, that I may have "more of thy embraces?" O sweet trading! *My meditation of him shall be sweet.* Indeed, these thoughts of Christ that are right, are glad, joyful, satisfying thoughts.

7. Right thoughts of Christ are *humbling* thoughts, and yet emboldening thoughts. O but these that think highly of Christ, cannot but think meanly of themselves, saying with Job, *Now mine eye seeth thee; wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.* The believer, that thinks duly of Christ, hath both the highest and lowest thoughts in the world; the highest thoughts of Christ, and the lowest thoughts of himself: and yet this humility doth not hinder his boldness; for, he hath *boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus*, Heb. x. 19. The more he thinks of Christ, the more humble thoughts he has of himself; and yet, the more he thinks of Christ, the more bold he is towards God. It is a bold humility, and a humble boldness; hence, when he is *worshipping God in the Spirit*, two other things concur, namely, a *rejoicing in Christ Jesus*, and a *having no confidence in the flesh*, Phil. iii. 3. Oh! says the soul, I have no ground of confidence in myself, but I have

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all ground of confidence in Chriſt! Unworthy wretch am I, as ever was out of hell; but behold, there is the worthy blood, the worthy righteouſneſs of Chriſt, *the Lord our righteouſneſs*; therefore, unworthy as I am, I am warranted to be bold in claiming all through Chriſt. I ſee the holy of holies is open to me through this blood of Chriſt.

8. Right thoughts of Chriſt are *aſſimulating* thoughts, *ſanctifying* and *transforming* thoughts; 2 Cor. iii. 18. *But we all with open face, beholding as in a glaſs the glory of the Lord, are changed into the ſame image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.* They that ſee Chriſt, cannot but love him, and deſire to be like him; for there is a ſmitting favour in his face. They that are in heaven are *like him*, becauſe they *ſee him as he is*: the beatifical viſion brings in full conformity to him. Now, a ſpiritual thought, and a believing thought, is a mental ſight; a fiducial viſion of him: and the more of this, the more conformity to him in holineſs. The thought that endears Chriſt, imbitters ſin: a man cannot think duly of the lovelineſs of Chriſt, without thinking of the lothſomneſs of ſin. O! when the Sun of righteouſneſs ariſeth, there is a heat that accompanies the light, and warms the heart. And, indeed high thoughts of Chriſt do warm the heart, and make it burn within him; and heart-warming thoughts tend to burn up corruption; for, as Chriſt comes in to the heart, ſin muſt go out, according to the meaſure and degree of his coming. As a talent of gold, or ſome weighty metal, falling into a veſſel of water, daſhes out all that is in the veſſel, to make room for itſelf; ſo, Chriſt coming in to the heart, daſhes out ſin to make room for himſelf. And, indeed, they that have honourable thoughts of Chriſt in their hearts, cannot have favourable thoughts of ſin; becauſe, whenever Chriſt comes into the thoughts, if he do not daſh out the life, yet he daſhes out the love of ſin. What, man! will you ſay that *Chriſt is in you*, and that you have faith, and yet the love of ſin as great as ever, and you can indulge yourſelf in whoredom, and drunkenneſs, and lying, and ſwearing, and Sabbath-breaking, or any other piece of wickedneſs and profanity. You will never make a good man believe that Chriſt is in you, or that you have faith, even though you ſhould ſwear by your faith, as ſome do, who even thereby teſtify to the world, that they have no faith at all; being ſo prodigal of it, as to ſwear away the faith which they ſay or think they have. So far as Chriſt comes in, ſin goes out. It is poſſible indeed, that a believer that hath Chriſt in him, may think that he hath more ſin than ever, and that ſin is on the growing hand, inſtead of the decaying; but he is miſtaken: it is in this caſe as it is with a cup of water; put ſilver and gold in a cup, and the water ſwells up; and the more you put in, the more will the water ſwell and run over, that you would think there is ſtill more water than before, the more gold is put in: Chriſt is the tried gold; and the more the veſſel of the believer's heart is filled with it, the more may ſin appear to riſe and ſwell, and run over all its banks: this frightens and terrifies the poor ſoul, becauſe now he ſees that which, it may be, was hid in the veſſel of his heart before, and out of his ſight. But it is not that there is more ſin, more water than before, but more gold caſt in; only every daſh perhaps makes the water flee about, that he thinks he was never ſo full of ſin and corruption as now: yet ſtill it holds good, Chriſt's coming in makes ſin flee out; and the more it ſeems to riſe and ſwell, the more does the ſoul's indignation riſe and ſwell againſt it. All right thoughts of Chriſt are ſanctifying thoughts.

9. High thoughts of Chriſt are *new* thoughts: they that ſuppoſe they have thought well enough of Chriſt all their days, and have no better thoughts, no higher thoughts, no weightier thoughts, no clearer thoughts of him than ever they had, ſurely they are ſtrangers to this eſteem of Chriſt that we are enquiring into: *If any man be in Chriſt, he is a new creature; old things are done away, and all things are become new*; and new thoughts among the reſt. Where grace comes, there the *wicked man forſakes his way*, and the *unrighteous man his thoughts*; his carnal thoughts, his legal thoughts: they are changed into ſpiritual thoughts, evangelical thoughts, ſuch as he never had before. And,

10. New thoughts of Chriſt will bring in *new words* and *new actions*; the words follow the thoughts. You may then turn the queſtion, *What think ye of Chriſt?* to another, *What ſpeak ye of him?* for, *Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth ſpeaketh.* If you think it ill breeding, or ungenteel manners, as many do, to ſpeak of Chriſt and ſpiritual things, and cannot drop a word for him from Sabbath to Sabbath, who can believe that you think highly of Chriſt. Nay, that which is moſt in the heart and thoughts, will be moſt in your lips.—The actions alſo follow the thoughts: can you think highly of Chriſt, and yet do nothing for him? Nay, new and precious thoughts of Chriſt will bring in new goſpel-obedience from a principle of love to him.——Thus you may try yourſelves now on this queſtion, *What think ye of Chriſt?* by the *quality* of your thoughts. Examination is the very deſign of the queſtion, namely, to diſcover what our thoughts of Chriſt are; and therefore I inſiſt mainly upon this.—— But, having tried yourſelves by the quality of your thoughts,

2*dly*, Try yourſelves by the *object* thereof, namely, CHRIST: *What think ye of* CHRIST? And here ſuch a large field preſents itſelf, that it is impoſſible I can go through it all. Beſides what was ſaid on the doctrinal part, I would aſk ſome further queſtions concerning Chriſt, not only for examination, but for raiſing your eſteem of him.

1. What think ye of his *eminient ſtation* he is in as Mediator betwixt God and you, and his relation to God and you; his relation to God by nature, as his eternal Son; and by office, as his righteous Servant? God calls you to wonder at him in this ſtation; Iſa. xlii. 1. *Behold my Servant, whom I uphold; mine Elect, in whom my ſoul delighteth.* His Father called him forth to ſerve him and you, and to ſerve him for your ſake; to ſerve him as a Redeemer, to ranſom you; to ſerve him as a Surety, to pay your debt; to ſerve him as a Phyſician, to heal your ſouls; to ſerve him in all the offices that your need requires: and what think ye of him?

2. What think ye of his *travels*, in order to accompliſh the work that belongs to that ſtation and relation wherein he ſtands to God and you? The travel of his eternal mind before time, when *his delights were with the ſons of men*; the travel of his ſoul, and the travel of his body

body in time; his travel from heaven to earth, and from earth to heaven again; in all his mediatory actings; his incarnation, birth, life, death, reſurrection, aſcenſion, and interceſſion! O but the Lord can give a glance of his glory in the very naming of theſe things! How did he travel as in birth, when he went about his *Father's buſineſs!* Luke ii. 49.

3. What think ye of his *treaſures;* his unſearchable riches that are ſtored up in him for the benefit of poor ſinners, having received theſe gifts for men? *All the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge are hid in him*; all, and infinitely more than we loſt in the firſt Adam, is treaſured up in the ſecond Adam. O what may a poor, ignorant, witleſs ſinner think of a treaſure of wiſdom, for his illumination! What may a guilty ſinner think of a treaſure of righteouſneſs, for his juſtification! What may a filthy ſinner think of a treaſure of grace, for his ſanctification! And what may a miſerable ſinner think of a treaſure of mercy, for his complete redemption! Yet all theſe treaſures, and infinitely more than we can name, are in Chriſt; *Who of God is made unto us wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification, and redemption,* 1 Cor. i. 30. O the fulneſs of grace that is in him, that *out of his fulneſs we may receive grace for grace!* He is the ſtore-houſe of all God's treaſures; for all is treaſured up in him, that we may be complete in him, who will by faith make uſe of him. And what think ye of him!

4. What think ye of his *thoughts?* Pſal. cxxxix. 17. *How precious are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the ſum of them! if I count them,* ſays he, *they are moe in number than the ſand: when I awake, I am ſtill with thee.* O his thoughts! dwell with wonder and admiration upon God's thoughts. Is it nothing to you, that ever he had thoughts of love towards the like of you; thoughts of pardon, thoughts of peace; *thoughts of good and not of evil, to give you an expected end!* O believer, his thoughts are not precious to the reſt of the world; but what are they to you? Think you nothing that his thought and care ſhould have been about you from eternity, and now manifeſted in time? Having loved you with an everlaſting love, how is he drawing you with loving-kindneſs? Beſides all his providential care in bringing things about for your good, and that in a way beyond your contrivance and foreſight; yea, in ſuch a manner as never entered into your thoughts. You little thought what was his deſign in ordering your lot in ſuch a part of the world, and ſuch a ſpot of his vineyard, and bringing you to ſuch a ſermon, or under ſuch a miniſtry. O how innumerable are his precious thoughts! And what think ye of him?

5. What think ye of his *words*, as well as his thoughts? Surely, if you think duly, you will think them ſweet words; *How ſweet are thy words unto my taſte! yea, ſweeter than honey to my mouth*, Pſal. cxix. 103. Does the Spirit never take ſome of his words, and put a ſpiritual majeſty thereupon? Though many times, like Samuel, you miſtake the Lord's voice, believer, and think it is Eli that ſpeaks, and cannot diſcern the voice of Chriſt from the voice of Moſes; the voice of grace from the voice of the law; yet, when the Spirit comes, and whiſpers in a word from Chriſt ſometimes, what think ye of it? *It is the voice of my Beloved, behold he cometh, ſkipping upon the mountains, and leaping upon the hills!* — What think ye of his *inviting* words, ſaying, *Come to me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden?* — What think ye of his *expoſtulating* words, ſaying, *Why will ye die, O houſe of Iſrael?* — What think ye of his *intreating* words, and his *promiſing* words, his *I wills*, and *ye ſhalls*; *I will be your God, and ye ſhall be my people?* Do you think ſo much of them, that your hearts ſay AMEN to them? — What think ye of his *may-be's?* Believers will think right much of a *may-be* from him ſometimes. *It* MAY BE *he will be gracious*; *It* MAY BE *ye ſhall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger.* — What think ye of his *ſhall be's?* There are *ſhall be's* for the church in general: *Upon all the glory there* SHALL BE *a defence: In the mount of the Lord it* SHALL BE *ſeen:* What think ye of theſe? There are *ſhall be's* for yourſelf in particular: There is a *ſhall be* for your protection; *A man* SHALL BE *a hiding-place from the ſtorm, This man* SHALL BE *the peace, when the Aſſyrian ſhall come into our land.* There is a *ſhall be* for your proviſion; *Bread* SHALL BE *given thee, and thy water* SHALL BE *ſure.* There is a *ſhall be* for your inſtruction; *They* SHALL BE *all taught of God.* There is a *ſhall be* for your juſtification; *His name* SHALL BE *called,* THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. There is a *ſhall be* for your ſalvation from ſin and wrath; *His name* SHALL BE *called* JESUS, *becauſe he ſaves his people from their ſins; even Jeſus, which delivers from the wrath to come.* There is a *ſhall be* for a happy death; *Death* SHALL BE *ſwallowed up in victory.* There is a *ſhall be* for a happy welcome at the day of judgment; *They* SHALL BE *mine, in the day that I make up my jewels.* There is a *ſhall be* for a happy eternity; *And ſo we* SHALL BE *ever with the Lord.* What think ye of all theſe words and *ſhall be's?* Is there any faith here, ſaying, AMEN; *ſo let it be; ſo ſhall it be?* — What think ye of his *verily's?* We cannot go through theſe, to tell you how oft he hath confirmed his words with a *Verily, verily, I ſay unto you:* Many a WRATHFUL *verily* againſt his enemies, that think nothing of him; many a LOVING *verily* towards his people, that think much of him. O Sirs, do you eſteem them all to be the truth, and that *verily* it is, and ſhall be as he hath ſaid? — What think ye of his *dying* words, as when he ſaid upon the croſs, *It is finiſhed?* — What think ye of his *living* words; *I am he that was dead, and am alive, and behold I live for evermore?* —— O! what think ye of his words? Cannot your heart ſay, *Lord, to whom ſhall I go? thou haſt the words of eternal life?* O what think ye of him?

6. What think ye of his *works?* even his works of creation; what think ye of theſe? For *by him all things were made that were made, and without him was nothing made*, John i. 3. O when you behold the *heavens, the works of his hands, the moon and the ſtars, which he hath ordained*, may you not ſay, *What is man that thou art mindful of him? and the ſon of man that thou viſiteſt him?* —— What think ye of his works of *providence?* For *he upholds all things by the word of his power*, Heb. i. 3. If you wonder how he can raiſe your dead bodies at the great day, and ſever your duſt from other duſt; may you not as well wonder, how he every day raiſes up in your view innumerable ſtalks of corn out of the duſt, and gives to every pickle of ſeed his own body? as the apoſtle argues, 1 Cor. xv. 35. and downward. How will he raiſe the *believer's vile body*, out of the filthy duſt, where it rots, and make

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it *like to his own glorious body? O fools that we are, and slow of heart to believe*, how does he raiſe the beautiful lilies out of the dung? *Solomon, in all his glory, is not comparable to one of theſe*; and all the world cannot make one of them to riſe, without his powerful providence. Theſe miracles of providence are common every day in your view, and ſo we think nothing of them; but we might ſee the power of Chriſt in them. If you wonder how it was poſſible for Chriſt to turn the water into wine, or multiply a few loaves, and a few fiſhes, ſo as to feed ſo many thouſands; we needed not wonder ſo much, if we but thought how his providence is doing that every year: the water falls from the clouds, and the vine by his order turns it unto wine; and by the ſpawn of ſuch fiſhes, and the grain of ſuch loaves, he is feeding millions every day. Wo is us, that we cannot think of him, and his works as we ought!——Above all, what think ye of his works of *grace*, and *redeeming love?* All his other works are as the drop of a bucket, in compariſon of this ocean; for herein we may ſee him appear in his own, and Father's pomp and ſplendor, manifeſting all the glorious perfections of God; even his infinite power, and wiſdom, holineſs, juſtice, mercy, truth, faithfulneſs, and all God's attributes. I might here mention his works of grace *for us* and his works of grace *in us*; but it were endleſs to ſpeak of the thouſandth part. —His work of grace *for us* lies in his *bringing in everlaſting righteouſneſs*, eſpecially if we ſpeak of his good works; ſurely it is a good work, that can fulfil the holy precepts of that good law which we have broken, and can anſwer the righteous threatening of the juſt law which we have incurred. Well, here is the doing and dying of the Son of God, for both theſe ends, that divine holineſs may be vindicate, and juſtice ſatisfied, in the way and manner of our ſalvation through him. The *law of God* is a *perfect law*, and *exceeding broad*; but here is a righteouſneſs as broad as it can be, ſo as to *magnify the law and make it honourable.* O! what think ye of that good work?—His work of grace *in us* is alſo much to be thought of; and that lies mainly, I think, in imputing his perfect righteouſneſs to us for our juſtification, (which is indeed properly an act of grace upon us, Rom. iii. 22.) and implanting another righteouſneſs beſide it for our ſanctification, which he carries on to perfection. This internal work of grace may be begun with ſighs and groans, advanced in battles and conflicts; but it will be completed in victory and glory.—— Well, then, in this ſhort glance of his works, what think ye of them? May ye not ſay, as Pſal. cxi. 3. *His work is honourable and glorious, and his righteouſneſs endures for ever?* And when you notice his works, what think you of himſelf?

7. What think ye of his *goſpel*, and the *terms* of it? That goſpel, which we preach in his name, wherein his *righteouſneſs is revealed from faith to faith*: if you think highly of him, you will think highly of it, as the beſt news, and glad tidings that ever you heard; *How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of thoſe that preach the goſpel of peace, that bring glad tidings of good things, that publiſheth ſalvation!* Iſa. lv. 7. Rom. x. 15. Some are ready to think the goſpel of grace, and ſalvation through Chriſt, is too good news to be true with reſpect to them, as if it were not to be ſuppoſed that God will beſtow ſo great ſalvation ſo freely upon ſo great ſinners; not conſidering, that God in the goſpel aims not at our glory chiefly, but at the declaration of his own glory, and the magnifying of his own free grace; and that therefore we ought to take freely what he gives freely. It is a manifeſtation of free grace, ſovereign grace, which is neither hindered by our evil, nor furthered by our good, Rom. iii. 24.; and regards neither our worthineſs to deſerve it, nor our unworthineſs to impede it, Rom. ix. 15. Hence Luther alledged, that "mens minds were ſo oc-"cupied with fantaſtical imaginations of their "own works, that the glad tidings of the goſ-"pel will ſeem ſtrange matters to them." Men will be aſtoniſhed at the greatneſs of his grace, as it is, Jer. xxxiii. 9. Many think of the goſpel, as if it were a *new law*, wherein God ſtands upon ſome eaſier terms with us than in the covenant of works; thus confounding law and goſpel, and making a hotch-potch of both. Indeed, if we ſpeak of law-terms, upon which our ſalvation ſtands, they are no eaſier than ever they were: a perfect righteouſneſs is the only condition of ſalvation; and we not having that in ourſelves, the goſpel offers it in Chriſt, and there is the ground of our eternal ſalvation: but if we ſpeak of the goſpel-terms, we need not ſay, you muſt come up to them; but rather, *Come down, Zacheus; for this day is ſalvation come to thy houſe*: ſalvation is come to you, and offered freely to you, *Without money, and without price*; come down and take it. And indeed faith, which belongs to the order and method of God's applying the goſpel, is a coming down from all our legal hopes of ſalvation for ſomething to be done by us, in order to our being obliged to another, even to Chriſt for all, Iſa. lv. 1, 2. Rev. xxii. 17. Come down from the ſycomore-tree of your vain hopes, and get all freely: that is the goſpel. What think ye of it? This is indeed a hard ſaying to proud fleſh and blood, which thinks rather they ſhould go up, and do more for their juſtification and ſalvation, than come down, and be obliged to another to pay all their law-debt completely. He will do all for you, or nothing: and, O man, what think ye of him and his goſpel? But then,

8. What think ye of his *ſervice*, and his *wages?* When a man is once brought in to the goſpel-terms, and underſtands them, then, and not till then, does he come up to the goſpel-rule; for, *Faith works by love*, and love is the fulfilling of the law as a rule, from thankfulneſs to him that hath delivered from the law as a covenant. If you think his ſervice hard and uneaſy, it ſeems you are not thinking much of Chriſt, but rather of the law, which is a heavy yoke, that neither we nor our fathers were able to bear; but Chriſt's *yoke is eaſy, and his burden is light*, Mat. xi. 29, 30. becauſe in this ſervice the man hath no law-debt to pay, for Chriſt hath done that to his hand, but only a love-debt; *If you love me, keep my commandments*: and thus, *his commandments are not grievous.* Here grace is all and all, both of the ſervice and wages. Grace ſays, "Up and "be doing, man, in my ſtrength; for the great-"eſt work is done to your hand, and now my "grace ſhall be ſufficient for thee." Grace ſays alſo, "Behold a crown of glory, a reward of "grace awaiting you, after ye have fought "the good fight of faith; therefore have an eye

" to this recompence of reward." Death is the proper wages of ſin, and it is juſt debt; but grace's wages is free; *The gift of God is eternal life, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord;* that is, there is here no promiſe of life upon our doing, but a promiſe of grace to do, and of glory to crown our doing, and of both grace and glory as the reward of Chriſt's doing all; and therefore, what think ye of him and his ſervice?

9. What think ye of his *livery?* If you would anſwer this queſtion, *What think ye of Chriſt?* I would aſk, what wear ye of Chriſt? The raiment of his righteouſneſs, and the garment of his grace, ſo as to be all glorious within and without, like the king's daughter, will be precious to you. If you be clothed with the ſcarlet robe of his blood and righteouſneſs, by which you are perfectly righteous before God, then, to be ſure, you will think it very indecent for you to be clothed with naſty apparel before men. If a poor maid be married to a rich king, and yet go abroad like a beggar in filthy rags, would not every body cry, It is a ſhame for her, that, having ſuch a huſband, ſhe ſhould diſcredit him and herſelf? If you be married to Chriſt, and think much of your huſband and his righteouſneſs, ſurely you will think it becoming to wear his livery, and not go abroad with unclean mouths and filthy hands, like the reſt of the world, to the diſhonour of your Lord.

10. What think ye of his *love*, and the *reaſon* of it? Who can underſtand the height, and breadth, and depth, and length of his love? It is without all dimenſion. And why does he love any of the loſt poſterity of Adam? He tells us the reaſon, Deut. vii. 7, 8. *He loved you, becauſe he loved you.* Do you think he loves you for your beauty, O black and ugly ſinner! Nay, he profers his love and kindneſs upon you in the goſpel freely, not for your own beauty's ſake, but for his own name's ſake: and his grace, love, and good-will, as revealed in the goſpel, is to be believed with application to yourſelf, for no other reaſon but becauſe it is his will and pleaſure. His love muſt make you beautiful, but cannot find you ſo. And if you cannot believe his grace and good-will to you, becauſe you have no beauty, you are but rejecting the reaſon of his love, deſpiſing the freedom of his grace, and ſtanding upon the terms of the old covenant of works, ſlighting the grace of the new covenant. This is ſuch a diſeaſe to mankind, that even believers in Chriſt, when they are helped to perform duty, with any lively frame, they are ready to ſay, with Leah, Jacob's wife, when ſhe brought forth ſeveral children to him, *Now my husband will love me, becauſe of my fruitfulneſs;* ſo ſays the believer, when he is helped to bring forth fruit unto God, and finds his Spirit revived in duty, his ſoul ſtrengthened, his heart enlarged, and a great deal of comfort there, *O now*, ſays he, *my Husband will love me, becauſe of my fruitfulneſs.* But what comes of it? the perſon having ſuch a legal ſett, the Lord, to correct it, takes away all fruitfulneſs out of his view, in a manner, and leaves him barren; " O, ſays " the believer then, where is my former ſweet " hearing, and ſweet praying and praiſing, " and ſweet meditation?" Why, the Lord has cut off theſe, that he may cut off your legal pride of being loved for your beauty and fruitfulneſs, and that you may *return to your firſt Huſband, for then it was better with you than now.* You muſt begin, believer, where you began at firſt, and think of his loving you merely becauſe he loves you. They that build their conjugal comfort only, or mainly, upon their righteouſneſs of ſanctification, and ſo ſecretly incline to follow after the law, will find their ſouls very unſettled, even up and down with their changeable frame. But again,

11. I may aſk, what think ye of his *lovelineſs?* O! is he *white and ruddy* in your view? O! ſee how the ſpouſe deſcribes him, Song v. 10. and downward, in the beauty of his head, his locks, his eyes, and all and every part of him; his belly, or bowels of mercy: *His mouth is moſt ſweet*, ſays ſhe. O the words, the ſmiles, the kiſſes of his mouth, his kindly embraces! I have read of one Agatho, that was a man ſo holy, that with a kiſs he cured one of his leproſy; whether that be true or falſe, yet what I intend by telling it, is true, that ſuch is the virtue of Chriſt, that a kiſs of his mouth, a ſmile of his countenance, will cure the ſoul of ſpiritual leproſy; yea, a word of his mouth will do it; *Now are you clean through the word that I have ſpoken*, John xv. 3. Again,

12. What think ye of his *favour* and his *bleſſing?* Surely if you eſteem him duly, you will think *his favour is life, and his loving-kindneſs better than life*, and that *his bleſſing only makes rich.* Eſpecially, what think ye of his bleſſings and benefits that cannot be enjoyed by feeling, but by faith; nor by ſight of ſenſe, but by the ſight of faith? *We walk by faith, and not by ſight*, ſays the apoſtle. But it is the fault even of believers, that they can hardly believe they have any more than they feel: and hence, when they are in the darkneſs of deſertion, they think they have nothing; they have loſt his favour, becauſe they do not feel it; they have loſt his righteouſneſs, becauſe they do not feel it: but remember, that when Aſaph ſaid, *Hath the Lord forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger ſhut up his tender mercies?* he added, *This was my infirmity*, You know, in a houſe where it is dark, all things are there that were before, though you ſee them not; ſo it is with you, believer, though you be in darkneſs, all things are as they were before: do you think all is gone, becauſe you cannot ſee it? Well, you never walk by faith, but by feeling; nay, *He that walks in darkneſs, and hath no light, let him truſt in the name of the Lord, and ſtay himſelf upon his God.* The name of the Lord is to the fore; his God is to the fore; the object of faith is to the fore, as much as ever; and *the juſt ſhall live by faith.* Will you not believe the ſun is in the firmament where it was, becauſe a cloud hath come and intercepted the light of its beams? " Why, " ſays one, but my miſery is, when I am in " the dark night, I fear it was all but deluſi- " on that ever I met with, and that there was " nothing real or ſaving in it." This I find is a common thought among ſerious ſouls; but all that I ſhall ſay to it, is by enlarging the former ſimilitude; aſk a man when it is dark night, how do you know that ever you ſaw the natural ſun? it may be you was but dreaming, and deluding yourſelf; it was nothing but a ſtrong imagination. Why, ſays the man, I am ſure I ſaw it, becauſe my eyes were dazzled with the light of it, and I was warmed with the heat of it, and I ſaw to work by it,

and

and by the light of it I saw every thing about me. So may you say, believer; when a dark night of desertion or temptation comes on, the tempter suggests, *It may be all was but a delusion.* Why, man, were not your eyes enlightened? was not your heart warmed? did you not see to work, and went on in your work joyfully, *the joy of the Lord being your strength?* and did you not see every thing about you? You saw God in his glory; you saw sin in its vileness; you saw holiness in its beauty; you saw the world in its vanity; you saw the creature in its emptiness; Christ in his fulness; you saw yourself in your lothsomness: but now, when the light is withdrawn, *What think ye of Christ?* Is there no sun, because it is set to your view? Do you think it never shone upon you, because it is not now shining? What think ye of an absent Christ? do you think nothing of him because he is absent? Surely, believer, that is not thought like a believer: sense is many times denied you, that you may learn to believe more than you do.

"But, say you, when he is not present with "me, I cannot believe." I shall tell you my mind here. There is a *powerful* presence necessary to believing: but there is a *sensible* presence that is not necessary to it, but rather usually comes upon the back of faith. Now, that powerful presence of God, that is necessary to believing, does open up the object of faith, namely, Christ's righteousness, God's promise, the truth of God, the blood of Christ; power is sometimes insensibly exerted, not by an outward open violence upon the man, but by an inward, secret, and sweet inchantment, as it were: ere he is aware, and before ever he knows that it is divine power that is doing the work, he finds the object of faith, that he is thinking upon, making room for itself in his heart, and drawing out his soul, as it were, insensibly to it: and thereupon comes in sensible presence upon the back of that; *After ye believed, ye were sealed*, Eph. i. 13. Now, if you say, You cannot believe without his powerful presence, that is true; divine power must be exerted to every act of faith, but then this power does ordinarily put forth itself insensibly and unawares, while we are thinking on, or viewing the object of faith; *While I was musing, the fire burned*, Psal. xxxix. 3. The Spirit of God clears the object of faith, that being viewed and applied, the heart is set on fire with it; there is his powerful presence ushering in the sensible presence. But if you say, You cannot believe till you have his sensible presence; that is to make sense the foundation of your faith, and not the word of God, or the Christ of God: therefore, in order to believe, let not your question be first, What find you in yourself? but rather, *What think ye of Christ?* You will find none of the sweet effects of faith, till you think on Christ the object of it. Again,

13. What think ye of his *invisible glories? Faith is the evidence of things not seen.* Faith sees not the things that are seen and felt; sensible enjoyments, for example, are not the object of faith, but sense: but faith sees the things that can neither be seen nor felt: it believes contrary to sense; yea, things impossible to nature, and incredible to carnal reason, considering only the power of God, that speaks in the word, as you see in the faith of Abraham. The greatest glory of Christ is invisible and incredible to nature; therefore we do not think much of him, if our faith does not terminate on things not seen. Again,

14. What think ye of his *tabernacles* and *ordinances?* Surely, if you think much of Christ, his tabernacles will be *amiable* to you. The slighter of his ordinances, is a slighter of Christ; a slighter of prayer, is a slighter of Christ; a slighter of the word, is a slighter of Christ: *He that despises you, despises me; and he that despises me, despises him that sent me.* Again,

15. What think of his *cause* and *interest*, such as the much forgotten Reformation-work in Scotland, which our forefathers established by solemn National Covenants? If, the more it is forgotten among ministers and people, the more nearly it lies to your heart, and the more you long for its reviving, it were an evidence you think something of Christ, when others think little of him. But, alas! How little is this thought of in the age we live in! If the generation thought more of Christ, there would be more zeal for his interest, honour, and public Reformation-work. And, perhaps, the confusions of our day, the heavy bondage we are complaining of through the land, will never cease to grow to a height of terrible wrath, till we be brought to a sense of our defection, and a humble confession and reformation. Further,

16. What think ye of his *cross* and *crown?* Is his cross your crown? Surely they think much of Christ, that can say with Paul, *God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.* Moses thought his cross better than a crown, *esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt.* They that think much of Christ, must resolve upon it, that the world will not think much of them, but that they will be crossed, reproached, and nicknamed; but if Christ was nicknamed for us, and *endured the contradiction of sinners against himself*, we may well bear a reproach for him, especially when he hath said, *If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth on you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified;* his cross makes way for his crown, and in the mean time his sweetness swallows up all the bitterness thereof.

17. What think ye of his *friends?* If you think highly of him, surely his friends and followers will be esteemed as *the excellent ones of the earth, in whom is all your delight;* and consequently his foes will be disesteemed by you: and therefore,

18. What think ye of his *enemies?* Though they were appearing in never so much worldly pomp, you will think very little of them, if you know them to be his enemies: *O my soul, come not thou into their secret; to their assembly, mine honour, be thou not united.*—What think ye of his enemies *within* you? When you find these like *thorns in the flesh*, like splinters run into the flesh, does it not make you, with Paul, *to beseech the Lord thrice;* yea, to pray thrice, and thrice, and a hundred times thrice, with sighs and groans, to be freed from them?—What think ye of his enemies *about* you? I mean, the world, and the lusts thereof; *the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eye, and the pride of life.* I have read a pretty story, which I reckon useful no other way than for the moral of it, how an angel and an hermit should have been travelling together: when first they went by a dead carcase, the

the hermit ſtopt his noſe, and the angel ſmiled; and, after that, they went by a wanton ſtrumpet proudly dreſſed, at which the hermit ſmiled, and the angel ſtopt his noſe. The moral ſhews us, that in the ſight of God and angels, no carrion is ſo noiſom as pride is. But the more highly that any think of Chriſt, ſurely the more humble they are; and pride will accordingly be hid from their eyes. Again,

19. What think ye of the *world's thoughts* of Chriſt? If you think highly of him yourſelf, you will be mightily ſurprized, and look upon it as a great wonder why the world think ſo little of him. O ſtrange! that all the world are not taken up with him!

20. What think ye of your *own thoughts* of him? Surely, if you think duly of him, you will think you have but very poor, mean, low, contemptible, and unworthy thoughts of him; you will think that you cannot think enough of him, *who is fairer than the ſons of men; the Prince of the kings of the earth; altogether lovely.* ——Theſe are ſome probationary queſtions, by which you may take your own hearts to taſk before the Lord.

But I cannot ſtand to enlarge theſe things; and I muſt own the thouſandth part is not ſaid that might be ſpoken from this text; for, as the whole ſcripture does *teſtify of Chriſt*, either directly or indirectly; ſo I might go through all the ſcriptures, and aſk what ye think of Chriſt, in a ſuitableneſs to what is ſaid of him, in this or that place of ſcripture.

Fourthly, This doctrine might again be applied by way of *lamentation* over all Chriſt-deſpiſers, who either ſtand upon a legal bottom, truſting in themſelves, and their own righteouſneſs; or who ſlight Chriſt and his ordinances, not loving the place where his honour dwells; who delay and poſtpone their cloſing with him, giving away the prime and virginity of their affections to the world, proſtituting their precious ſouls to their luſts and the ignoble things of time; who ſit down ſatisfied and content without Chriſt, never miſs him, nor feel a want of him, nor ſeek after union and communion with him. Oh! whence is it that you deſpiſe Chriſt at this rate! Alas! it is through ignorance and unbelief, that you *ſee no form or comelineſs in Chriſt, why he ſhould be deſired;* and the *god of this world hath blinded your minds who believe not, leſt the light of the glorious goſpel of Chriſt, who is the image of God, ſhould ſhine into them.* Do you conſider what a miſerable caſe you are in, while you deſpiſe and think ſo little of Chriſt?—You are in imminent danger of *temporal* judgments; for God, in his holy providence, may reſent the injuries done to his Son; he may *leave your houſe deſolate.*—You are expoſed to *ſpiritual* judgments, ſuch as that, Iſa. vi. 10. of having your *heart made fat*, your *ears heavy*, and your *eyes ſhut;* and to *eternal* wrath, even everlaſting deſtruction from his preſence; *He that believes not ſhall be damned.* Now,

Fifthly, Let me offer a word of *exhortation.* O Sirs, ſeek that the Spirit of wiſdom and revelation in the knowledge of Chriſt may be ſent, that, beholding his glory, your thoughts concerning Chriſt may be changed; and you may be brought to eſteem him, and to go home with the *Roſe of Sharon* in your boſom; Chriſt in your heart. O ſinner, will you tell me, do you think it worth your while to take Chriſt, and embrace him before you go? If you ſay you cannot believe, you cannot repent, you cannot mourn for ſin, you cannot pray, you cannot obey; and ſo, becauſe you have no grace, no ſtrength to do any thing, you are diſcouraged: I muſt tell you, ſinner, when you conceive religion to be ſome great difficulty above your power, and thereupon are diſcouraged and damped, you do not think of Chriſt as you ought, but of yourſelf, forſooth, as if you were the fountain from whence theſe good things ſhould flow. The law may and does diſcourage ſinners; yea, curſes every Chriſtleſs ſinner unto hell; but the goſpel offers no diſcouragement to ſinners, but all encouragement. Perhaps you will find us that are miniſters, ſometimes going off from our moſt goſpel-texts that we can chooſe; and when we explain faith, we will tell you how many things it includes; ſuch as, the forſaking of all ſin, and the performing of all duty, and ſtudying univerſal holineſs: but whatever be the fruits of faith, which the Lord makes to grow out of it, yet faith itſelf is a great myſtery; and whatever you hear us ſay, that leads you off from this queſtion, *What think ye of Chriſt?* ſuſpect it. I will tell you, in the Lord's name, that to believe imports no more than to take Chriſt for all; it is to think you have nothing, and can do nothing; but that he hath all, and can do all; and therefore you will take him for all.—You think you cannot *believe:* well ſaid, but, *What think ye of Chriſt?* If you think to bring faith out of your own bowels, you think unworthily of Chriſt, who is the *author of faith;* and of his Father, who is the giver of it.—You think you cannot *repent:* true, but, *What think ye of Chriſt?* If you think to bring repentance out of yourſelves, you think unworthily of him, who is *exalted by the right-hand of God, to give repentance.*—You think you cannot do this, or that *duty* you are called to; but, *What think ye of Chriſt?* If you ſit poring on yourſelf, and your own abilities, never a good turn will you do: nay, you think unworthily of Chriſt, who hath ſaid, *Without me ye can do nothing*, but by me ſtrengthening you, ye can do all things. You are diſcouraged, becauſe you think you have not this thing in yourſelf, or that thing in yourſelf: but that is unbelief, man; for, faith lies in thinking, what am I in Chriſt? Iſa. xlv. 24. *Surely ſhall one ſay*, [and they ſhall not only ſay it with their mouth verbally, but think it in their heart believingly] *In the Lord have I righteouſneſs and ſtrength.* And becauſe, by the mouth of two or three witneſſes, every word is confirmed, there are three *in the Lords* in that one chapter, ver. 17. *Iſrael ſhall be ſaved* IN THE LORD, *with an everlaſting ſalvation;* ver. 25. IN THE LORD *ſhall all the ſeed of Iſrael be juſtified, and ſhall glory;* and in this 24th ver. IN THE LORD *have I righteouſneſs and ſtrength.* And if you be once brought to this believing thought, *In the Lord have I righteouſneſs; in the Lord have I ſtrength;* in the Lord I have ſalvation; in the Lord I have all; then you will find your work eaſy, and all going right.

Now, you that cannot be brought to think much of Chriſt: O pray God, if perhaps the thoughts of your heart may be forgiven you! and whereas you think nothing of him now, O conſider what you will think of him in a day of challenges, when conſcience awakens! in a day of deſolation, Iſa. x. in the day of death, in the day of judgment! What will you think of

of him, when you see him mounting the tribunal, and when pronouncing the fearful sentence, *Depart from me, ye cursed?* Surely you must have dreadful thoughts of him then, if you cannot be brought to think highly of him now; now, when he is not come to destroy mens lives, but to save. But you, believer, that now think highly of him, whatever great thoughts you have of Christ now, yet what will you think of him in that day, when *he who is your life shall appear*, and *ye shall appear with him in glory?* O believer, what will ye think of him, when he pronounces the sentence of absolution, *Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you?* O! what will ye think of his palace, his attendants, his throne, crown, and glory?

Sixthly, I would offer an *advice* to you that think much of Christ, and have a high esteem of him.

1*st*, That you would evidence your hearty *esteem* of him; and that,

1. By the *degrees* of it; so as to esteem him above all things else, above all your relations; *He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me*, Mat. x. 37. Our love to them must be hatred, when it comes to compete with Christ; *If any man come after me, and hate not father and mother, he is not worthy of me.* Above all worldly advantages; yea, above life; Rev. xxi. 11. *They loved not their lives to the death;* their pangs of love were stronger than the pangs of death.

2. By the *effects* of it; such as,

(1.) Desire of *converse:* if you think much of Christ, you will desire his company in all ordinances; you will seek him in the temple, you will seek him in the closet; in every ordinance, public or private, you will earnestly seek and desire him.

(2.) Entertaining no *rival* that comes in competition with him, but saying, *What have I to do any more with idols?* giving chearfully up with all other lords and lovers.

(3.) *Sympathy;* grieving at these things that are grievous to him.

(4.) Preserving his *memory*, living upon him: like the woman that drank the powder of her dead husband's body, mingled with her daily drink; so should ye, by faith, daily eat the flesh, and drink the blood of the Son of God.

2*dly*, A *second* advice is, that you would do all that you can, to make *others think as much of him as you do;* and that,

1. By *commending* him, and telling others of his beauty, that they may admire him. See the practice of the spouse for this, Song v.; and what influence it had upon the daughters of Jerusalem their beginning to think much of him, and seek after him also, Song vi. 1. O then, commend him to your families, your children, and your neighbours.

2. By *adorning the gospel*, and *walking worthy of him*, and *wearing his livery.* It is a master's honour and credit to have a good servant, and well arrayed; they think much of the master that hath such a servant. And how does it proclaim the praises of Christ, when they that profess him are eminent for piety, 1 Pet. ii. 9.

3. In a word, *Let your light so shine before men, that others, seeing your good works, may glorify God*, and think much of Christ. O let your hearts be still thinking of him, your life praising, and your tongue speaking of him! Here is a fountain for spiritual discourse: if you have an opportunity of conversing with any, concerning the great solemnity you have been witnesses to here; or if any ask you, Where was such or such a minister's text? here is a fair occasion for spiritual converse; for, you cannot, in a manner tell them this text, without asking them a question, *What think ye of Christ?*

SERMON XXXII.–XXXVIII.

The PREGNANT PROMISE with her Issue; or, the *Children of Promise* brought forth, and described *.

GAL. iv. 28. *Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.*

THIS text presents a subject that concerns all here present, and particularly believing communicants. The sacrament of the Lord's supper is a seal of the covenant of grace; the covenant of grace is a covenant of promise; the promise of the covenant is the prolific womb that bears and brings forth all God's children, and so the children of God are the children of promise. As it concerns us all therefore to enquire to what family we belong, and whose children we are; so believers in particular, or believing communicants, upon this subject may, in order to the increase of their faith, love, and holy evangelical obedience, find themselves distinguished from the rest of the world, by that sovereign grace that is manifested in the covenant of promise. And upon the back of such a great solemnity, it may not be unsuitable to point them out with a *now*, or give them their proper name and character in the words of our text; *Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.*

As the law and the gospel differ especially in this, as well as in other things, that whereas in short the law is a word of precept, the gospel is a word of promise; so the covenant of works and of grace differ in this, that whereas, in the covenant of works, all the benefits thereof

* This subject was discussed in seven sermons, mostly preached on sacramental occasions. The first two were delivered at the sacrament of the Lord's supper at Torphichen, on the Sabbath evening and Monday, June 19th and 20th. The third at the sacrament at Portmoak, on Monday July 17th. The fourth probably at Dunfermline, July 23. The three last at the sacramental solemnity of Glendovan July 31st, all in the year 1726. This piece hath undergone four editions.

depend

depend upon man's fulfilling of a precept; in the covenant of grace, all depends upon God's fulfilling of a promiſe in Chriſt. Hence the covenant of works is called the *law*, and the covenant of grace the *promiſe*, particularly in this epiſtle, chap. iii. 18. Hence alſo, in oppoſition to all theſe that are under the covenant of works, believers in Chriſt, who are brought within the bond of the covenant of grace, are called the children of promiſe; *Now we, brethren, as Iſaac was, are the children of promiſe.* Concerning theſe two covenants of works and grace, the apoſtle elegantly diſcourſes in the preceding verſes, particularly from ver. 21. and downward; where having upbraided the Galatians for deſiring to be under the law, and ſo for diſcovering their folly and weakneſs in ſuffering themſelves to be drawn away from the goſpel-doctrine of juſtification, and to be deprived of their freedom from the bondage of the law, he aſks them a queſtion, *Do you not hear the law?* q. d. How ignorantly do you hold yourſelves bound to fulfil the law, and look for eternal life thereby; while, though you hear, you do not underſtand the law, but miſtake the end and deſign of it, not conſidering Chriſt to be the *end of the law*, but ſuppoſing that the very obſervance of it, even ſince the fall of Adam, does give life, and juſtify? This ignorance was, to the Jews, as a *vail before their eyes in the reading of the law*, 2 Cor. iii. 14.; yea, this ignorance is the vail by which thouſands, that are called Chriſtians, are blinded. Now, from ver. 22. the apoſtle ſhews how their liberty from the law was prefigured in the family of Abraham; where notice the narration, the explication, the confirmation, and the application.

1. The *narration* of the hiſtory, ver. 22, 23. Here Iſhmael is ſaid to be *born after the fleſh*; that is, by the ſtrength of nature, and according to the fleſhly counſel of Sarah, when ſhe ſubſtitute Hagar into her own room: but Iſaac was *by promiſe*; that is, though according to the order of nature, yet not by the ſtrength of nature, but by virtue of the promiſe of God.

2. The *explication* of this hiſtory, ver. 24,—27. *Which things are an allegory*, ſays the apoſtle, *for theſe are the two covenants*; that is, not merely the two different diſpenſations of the covenant of grace, the old legal, and the new evangelical diſpenſation; but the two covenants themſelves, namely, that of works made with the firſt Adam, and all his ſeed in him, promiſing life upon condition of man's own perfect obedience to the will of God, Gen. ii. 17. and that of grace, made with the ſecond Adam, and with his ſeed in him, promiſing eternal life, and all ſpiritual bleſſings, upon condition and conſideration of his undergoing the curſe, and yielding perfect obedience to the law in their room, Iſa. liii. 10, 11. Rom. v. 6, 21.—Hence the apoſtle expreſly calls them the *two covenants*. Though Iſrael, even at Sinai, was under a diſpenſation of the covenant of grace, however dark, as is evident from the preface to the ten commands, and many other arguments; yet, that there was alſo an addition, repetition, and promulgation of the covenant of works at Sinai, is not only plain from the concurring teſtimony of many orthodox writers, but from manifold ſcriptural accounts thereof. The apoſtle here tells us, Gal. iii. 18, 19. that the law, or covenant of works, *was added becauſe of tranſgreſſion, till the ſeed ſhould come, to whom the promiſe was made*; it was added to be ſubſervient to the other, and for furthering the ends thereof. This is plain alſo from the context here, where the apoſtle is ſhewing, that the children of the Sinai covenant are excluded from the eternal inheritance, as Iſhmael was from Canaan, the type of it, ver. 30. *Caſt out the bond-woman, and her ſon; for the ſon of the bond-woman ſhall not be heir with the ſon of the free-woman.* But this could never be ſaid of the children of the covenant of grace, whether under the old or new diſpenſation thereof; whereas the children of the legal covenant, or covenant of works, whereof there was a repetition at Sinai, have been always under a ſentence of excluſion ever ſince Adam fell, and under bondage to death and the curſe: therefore it is the two covenants, that of *works* and of *grace*, that the apoſtle is here ſetting in oppoſition to one another; the one is prefigured by Hagar, and the other by Sarah. The covenant of works is here compared to Iſhmael, that was *born after the fleſh*; the covenant of grace to Iſaac, who was a *child of promiſe*, produced by the Spirit of God working mightily in Abraham and Sarah, and breathing in the promiſe. Here is an allegory, a great myſtery, that people think not of, when they read of Iſhmael and Iſaac. Now Hagar, which is the law, or covenant of works, is ſaid to *gender into bondage*; becauſe it makes them bond-men that look to be ſaved and juſtified thereby; and ſo it is called *the miniſtration of death*, 2 Cor. iii. 6.: whereas the goſpel, and the new covenant, is a diſpenſation of life and liberty, being the channel in which the Spirit of life does run, chap. iii. 2. And while *Jeruſalem that now is*, is ſaid to *be in bondage with her children*; it ſhews the miſery of the Jewiſh church, by refuſing Chriſt, and eſtabliſhing their own righteouſneſs, ſeeking to be ſaved by the deeds of the law, and ſo being in bondage, and depriving herſelf of the heavenly inheritance. As Hagar then ſignifies the law, ſo does Iſhmael all legaliſts, and ſelf-juſticiaries, who look to be ſaved by the law: they that have not fled to Chriſt for refuge and righteouſneſs, but remain under the law, they are Iſhmaelites, and in ſpiritual bondage to ſin, and legal bondage unto death and wrath, according to the tenor of the law they are under. But now, *Jeruſalem, which is above*, ſays the apoſtle, *is free, which is the mother of us all*, ver. 26. Here Paul ſhews what was figured by Sarah, namely, the *new Jeruſalem*; that is, the catholic church, Heb. xii. 22, 23. and Rev. xxi. 2. By the *new Jeruſalem*, then underſtand all the inviſible church, whereof Jeruſalem was a type in many reſpects: hence ſaid to be *above*; becauſe all that are within the bond of the new covenant are from above; their election, redemption, effectual vocation, juſtification, ſanctification, and all is from above; and they dwell above in heaven by faith, according to the meaſure of the Spirit of faith. This Jeruſalem that is above is *free*, ſays the apoſtle, in oppoſition to the bondage that the Iſhmaelites and unbelievers are under; they are freed from the bondage of ſin, death, and the curſe of the law. Now, this Jeruſalem, or the church, is ſaid to be *the mother of us all*; becauſe the miniſtry of the word, which is committed to the church's keeping, and which is compared to *ſeed* and *milk*, 1 Pet. i. 23. and ii. 2. is that by which children are brought forth to God in her:

her: hence of Zion it is said, *This man and that man was born there*, Psal. lxxxvii. 4, 5, 6.

3. The *confirmation* is next, by the apostle's adducing the testimony of the prophets; *Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate, than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord*, Isa. liv. 1. The Christian church is called *barren;* because, by the virtue and strength of nature, it bears no children to God, no more than Sarah did to Abraham: but when the Spirit of Christ comes to impregnate the word and ordinances with almighty efficacy, then a numerous seed is brought forth to the Lord Jesus, by virtue of the new-covenant promise. And so,

4. The *application* of it follows in the words of the text; where the apostle shews, that as Sarah was a figure of the church catholic, so Isaac was a figure of all true believers, and children of God; *Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.*

In which words you may notice the *transition*, the *compellation*, and the *description.*

1. A *transition*, in the particle *now*, or therefore; importing, the apostle's proceeding next to make an application of what he had been saying to the case in hand, and adapting of it to their present circumstances. *Now*, q. d. After what hath been said, let it be considered, that this is a matter that concerns you, and me, therefore let us bring it home to ourselves.

2. A *compellation*, BRETHREN; intimating, that there is a spiritual fraternity and brotherhood betwixt all true believers: they are all brethren by the Father's side; for, they have all one Father, even *the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.* They are also all brethren by the mother's side; for, they all ly in the same womb of the church. And they are all brethren by Christ's side; for they have all the self-same elder Brother, Jesus Christ; begotten with the same incorruptible seed of the word; and fed at the same table, with the same spiritual food. This spiritual brotherhood far exceeds the natural, even as far as God's Fatherhood, towards us, exceeds the natural fatherhood among men.

3. A *description*, particularly of believers, in a suitableness to the former doctrine; *We, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.* Here they are described in relation to the promise, and in allusion unto Isaac.

(1.) In *relation* to the *promise; We are the children of promise.* By the promise here you may understand the covenant of grace, called the *covenant of promise;* and so you may take it either for the promise made to Christ, such as that, *He shall see his seed;* or the promise made to Abraham, *I will be thy God, and the God of thy seed;* or the promise made to the church, that *being barren, she should bear many children*, as it is in the preceding verse. Now, believers are called the children of promise, not only because they believe the promise, but because they are made the children of God by virtue of God's promise.

(2.) In *allusion* to ISAAC; or they are described to be the children of the promise in the manner that Isaac was, in that he was born to Abraham, not by the strength of nature, but by the virtue of God's promise: as Isaac was not born by natural power, but by the mere promise and power of God; so believers are children of the promise, being born, as Isaac, not by the power of flesh and blood, but by the power of God putting virtue in the promise. The further explication I refer to the prosecution of the following doctrine.

OBSERV. *That all the children of God, or true believers, are, like Isaac, the children of promise.*

I shall not enlarge the proof of so clear a point. You may read what our apostle says, to this same purpose, Rom. ix. 7, 8. where the children of the promise, such as Isaac was, are opposed to the children of the flesh. The promise is the believer's parent, by which he is *begotten to a lively hope*, and *made a partaker of the divine nature*, 2 Pet. i. 4. When a poor soul is converted, it is the promise that does the business; the power and efficacy of the promise, in its performance, does change and renew the heart; James i. 18. *Of his own will begat he us, by the word of truth;* that is, by the word of promise.

The method we lay down, for illustrating this doctrinal observation, through divine assistance, shall be the following.

I. I would open up the *promise*, whereof believers are the children.

II. Open up this *character* of their being the children of promise; and enquire how they are so.

III. I would state the *comparison*, or run the *parallel* betwixt them and Isaac; and so shew, that as Isaac was, so they are the children of promise.

IV. I would offer some *grounds* of the doctrine, both with reference to the prolific virtue of the promise for begetting children to God, and also with reference to the blest will and pleasure of the Promiser, why he will have all his children to be the children of promise.

V. Deduce *inferences* for application.

I. The *first* head proposed, is, to open up the *promise* whereof believers are the children. Before I proceed to this, there are two things I would mention, which this doctrine doth presuppose,

1. In that some are the children of promise by grace, it supposes that all are *children of wrath by nature*, Eph. ii. 3. Because of the breach and violation of the law of works in Adam, we forfeited the promise of life, and incurred the threatening of death, according to the tenor of the covenant, *Do and live;* and, *if thou do not, thou shalt die:* and being children of disobedience, we are children of the curse, and not of the promise; for, *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things, written in the book of the law to do them*, Gal. iii. 10. There is the sad state wherein all Adam's natural off-spring are since the fall: we are Ishmaelites; *children of the bondwoman; born after the flesh; under the curse;* and in bondage to sin, Satan, death, and hell; *aliens to the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise*, Eph. ii. 12. It is true, there was a promise of life in the covenant of works, under which we are by nature; but it being upon the condition of our perfect and personal obedience, now impossible, it can give no relief to the awakened conscience, but leaves all, whose eyes are open, to everlasting despair, if they get not a view of the covenant, and better promise. Therefore,

2. In that some are the children of promise, it supposes that surely there is *another promise*, according to which God proposes to deal with some

ſome of the children of men; a promiſe, not built upon the ſilly foundation of any mere man's perſonal obedience, but a promiſe eſtabliſhed on a better foundation, and ſtanding faſt in another Head; and it is called a *promiſe of life in Chriſt Jeſus*, 2 Tim. i. 1. And that *not according to our works, but according to his own purpoſe and grace, which was given us in Chriſt Jeſus before the world began*, ver. 9. compared with Tit. i. 2. Not according to the tenor of the covenant of works; for, while ſinners look to that covenant, nothing is to be ſeen there but conſuming fire; nothing to be heard but thunder and threatenings; nothing to be expected but death and vengeance; therefore man is under no diſpenſation but that of a terrible threatening, till the promiſe in Chriſt appear. There is a fourfold capacity wherein man hath had to do with God,

(1.) As a *commanding* God; men, even as creatures, being obliged to yield obedience to the great Creator's law and commandment, which was engraven on their hearts, in the original make and conſtitution of our firſt parents, when they dropt out of his creating hand.

(2.) As a *covenanting* God; I mean, in the covenant of works, which God entered into with man, as a covenant of life and death, upon his doing or not doing what God commanded.

(3.) As a *threatening* God, upon the violation of that covenant; and this is the capacity wherein all mankind have to do with God; they that ſee God out of Chriſt with their eyes open, while they are in a natural ſtate, can ſee him no other ways than arrayed with threatenings and wrath, until he pleaſe to diſcover himſelf.

(4.) As a *promiſing* God, upon a better foundation than the firſt covenant, even his promiſe in Jeſus Chriſt before the world began. Now, there is no dealing with God for eternal life and ſalvation, unleſs he ſhew himſelf to be God in a promiſe.

Having premiſed theſe things, I come now to ſpeak a little concerning the promiſe, whereof believers are the children. And, in general, the promiſe is the ſame with the covenant of grace, in oppoſition to the covenant of works: or, the promiſe is the ſame with the goſpel, in oppoſition to the law; hence the promiſe and the goſpel are made one and the ſame thing in this epiſtle, Gal. iii. 8.; and hence the promiſe and the law are ſet in oppoſition to one another, ver. 18. But, more particularly, for opening up the promiſe, whereof believers are children; we may conſider, concerning the promiſe, 1. The *Subject*, or *Author* of it. 2. The *matter* of it. 3. The *nature* of it. 4. The *object* of it.

1ſt, The *Subject* of this promiſe, or whoſe promiſe it is. And,

1. It is the promiſe of GOD, even God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt; therefore called *the promiſe of God*, Gal. iii. 21. Indeed all the divine perfections are engaged for the accompliſhment thereof, that our faith and hope might be in God. God the Father is the great author, the grand contriver, and original fountain of the covenant; *In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promiſed before the world began*, Tit. i. 2. And the great promiſe of the covenant is called *the promiſe of the Father*, Acts i. 4. And hence *the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt* is ſaid to *bleſs us with all ſpiritual bleſſings*, Eph. i. 3.

2. It is the promiſe of CHRIST; he alſo is the promiſer; and therefore, when he left his people, and went out of this world, he opened his mouth to them in manifold promiſes, John xv, xvi, xvii chapters. And hence alſo he invites ſinners to himſelf, by the encouragement of a promiſe; *Come to me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you reſt*, Mat. xi. 28.

3. It is the promiſe of the SPIRIT; hence he is called the *Spirit of promiſe*, Eph. i. 13. both becauſe he is promiſed, and becauſe he is the promiſer: and what are all the promiſes of the new covenant, but the language of the Holy Ghoſt, the voice of the Spirit, the Spirit of the Father, and of the Son, whoſe voice we are called to hear? And hence in the epilogue of all the epiſtles to the ſeven churches of Aſia, Rev. ii, and iii. chapters. the concluſory promiſes are all backed with this advertiſement, *He that hath ears to hear, let him hear what the Spirit ſaith to the churches.* And again,

4. It is the promiſe of GOD *in* CHRIST, *by* the HOLY GHOST. That it is the promiſe of God in Chriſt, is plain from Gal. iii. 17. where it is called the *covenant confirmed of God in Chriſt*; and, 2 Tim. i. 1. *The promiſe of life which is in Chriſt Jeſus*; and *given us in Chriſt*, ver. 9.; yea, 2 Cor. i. 20. *All the promiſes of God are in him Yea, and in him Amen*; they have all their eſtabliſhment and ratification in his blood: hence that joyful ſound and glad tidings, 2 Cor. v. 19. *God was in Chriſt reconciling the world to himſelf, and not imputing their treſpaſſes to them; and hath committed to us the word of reconciliation*, bearing that *he hath made him to be ſin for us, that we might be made the righteouſneſs of God in him.* Again, that it is the promiſe of God in Chriſt, by the Holy Ghoſt, is plain, not only from his being the third perſon exiſting in the Godhead, and proceeding from the Father and the Son; but alſo from his office in the work of redemption, which is to make the powerful application thereof, as the great Teacher and Remembrancer, for bringing home the promiſe to the hearts of his people appointed unto life; *The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghoſt, whom the Father will ſend in my name; he ſhall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatſoever I have ſaid unto you*, John xiv. 26. Again, *He ſhall convince the world of ſin, righteouſneſs, and judgment; He ſhall glorify me, for he ſhall receive of mine, and ſhew it unto you*, John xvi. 8, 14.——So much for the ſubject, the Author of the promiſe, or whoſe promiſe it is.

2dly, Let us conſider a little the *matter* of the promiſe, whereof believers are the children; what is the good contained in God's promiſe. And,

1. GOD himſelf is the great matter of the promiſe, as well as the author of it; as he is the promiſer, ſo he is the thing promiſed, Ezek. xxxvi. 28. compared with Jer. xxxi. 33. and Heb. viii. 10. *I will be to them a God, and they ſhall be to me a people: I will be your God, and you ſhall be my people.* It is the greateſt promiſe in all the Bible, and contains the moſt ineſtimable and invaluable treaſure in heaven and earth. O what a great matter is here! God himſelf giving over himſelf, and a true propriety in himſelf, to every ſoul that will receive him, and ſay AMEN, by a faith of divine operation: even as the huſband gives himſelf up to his

wife

wife in marriage, so does God to the believer; *I will betrothe thee to me for ever, in truth, in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness.* Wherever the covenant of grace, the covenant of promise is repeated in scripture, that is always the burden of the song, *I will be their God, and they shall be my people.* O what excellent matter is here! Eternity diving into this deep, will never reach the bottom of it. Again,

2. CHRIST himself is the great matter of the promise: as God promises himself, so he promises his Son; Christ is the great promise, the great sum, centre, and substance of the covenant; yea, the all, the sum total of it: *I will give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation to the end of the earth*, Isa. xlii. 6. and xlix. 9. It is he, that is *made of God to us, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption*, 1 Cor. i. 30. He is called *the mercy promised*, Luke i. 72. The gospel-promises are nothing else but that opening up of the unsearchable riches of Christ, where there is more precious treasure than ever can be told by all the arithmetic of men and angels to eternity. The first promise that ever was made after the fall, was a promise of Christ, *The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent*; and all the rest of the promises of the new covenant are streams flowing from that spring. God never designed to save any man by a covenant of works, but he designed to take occasion by man's fall to glorify his grace; therefore, no sooner does sin come, and a curse with it, than grace comes in, and a promise with it: so soon as Adam is arranged before God for sin, the womb of the promise is open, and it is a promise of Christ, which, in all the after-promises, is made always gradually more and more clear: and ever since God drew up the sluice of the promise, it hath been running to this day; and it is flowing to this day, while the promise of Christ, as the Lord our righteousness and strength, is set before us as the ground of our faith and hope.

3. The SPIRIT himself is also the great matter of the promise, or the good thing promised; *I will put my Spirit within you*, says God, Ezek. xxxvi. 27. *I will send the Comforter*, says Christ, John xvi. 7. So that, as God promises himself, and promises his Christ; so God and Christ promise the Spirit: the Spirit in his mission and motions is here promised, in his influences and operations, graces and fruits; the Spirit of faith, the Spirit of love, the Spirit of repentance, the Spirit of grace and supplication, the Spirit of glory and sanctification, the Spirit of conviction and consolation, the Spirit of light, the Spirit of life, the Spirit of liberty, the Spirit of power and a sound mind: whatever be the hopeless and helpless, the dead, drooping, and desperate-like case that the soul can be in, there is a promise of the Spirit suitable thereto, if I might enlarge. And, indeed, the promise of the Spirit is the first promise that is accomplished in begetting children to God; all the children of promise are made so by the promise of the Spirit taking effect upon them, as a *Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ*, testifying of Christ, and giving the soul Paul's experiences, *He revealed his Son in me.* It is not the promised blessing of the Spirit, that quickens dead souls, and begets children unto God; *The wind blows where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound therof, but canst not tell whence it comes, nor whither it goes; so is every one that is born of the Spirit*, John iii. 8. *Awake, O north wind; come thou south; blow upon my garden that the spices may flow out*, Song iv. 16. It is the promised flowing of the Spirit, that alone can make happy communion-days. O for that flood promised! *I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; even my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing on thine offspring*, Isa. xliv. 3. Yea, he is promised, not only as an overflowing flood, but as an ever-flowing spring; *The water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up to everlasting life*, John iv. 14.

4. *All things* else, in and with these three, are matter of the promise; *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?* Rom. viii. 32. And, indeed, where there is a promise of God, a promise of Christ, a promise of the Spirit, there must be a promise of all things: *All things are yours, for ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's.* She that hath the husband, hath all things that are the husband's; and seeing Christ is the *Heir of all things*, his bride cannot but *inherit all things*, Rev. 21. 7. I have read of an antient deed of gift made by one of the first kings of England, giving all that is from heaven to the centre of the earth; so that, if there be minerals in the bowels of the earth, they are comprehended in the gift: so God, in promising and giving himself, and his Son, and his Spirit, does in and with him give all that he hath, and all that he is worth; all the mines in the bowels of God, all the mines in the bowels of Christ, and all the mines of the bowels of the Spirit, are promised: and, O consider with yourself, what unsearchable riches, what unfathomable treasures of grace and glory, are in these mines! and what sweet and blessed fruits grow upon this tree of the new-covenant promise! and what a blessed thing it is to be the children of promise! And here the matter of the promise might be enlarged into innumerable particulars. Why, they are the children of that promise, *A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.* They are the children of that promise, *They shall be all taught of God.* They are the children of these promises, *I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you.* Children of that promise, *I will be merciful to your unrighteousness, your sins and your iniquities will I remember no more. I will subdue your iniquities*; and, *sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under the law, but under grace. I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. Fear not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God. When thou passest through the fire, I will be with thee, that the flames kindle not upon thee: and when thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, that the floods do not overflow thee.* — There is a promise of *peace* with God, they are children of; *This man shall be the Peace.* There is a promise of *pardon* they are children of; *I, even I, am he that blotteth out thine iniquity, for mine own name's sake, and will remember thy sins no more.* There is a promise of *protection* they are children of; *A man shall be a hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the storm; as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.* There is a promise of *provision* they are children of; *Bread shall be given thee, and thy water shall be made sure.* There is a promise of *healing* they are children of; *I will heal your backslidings,*

flidings, and love you freely. There is a promiſe of *knowledge* and *illumination* they are children of; *They ſhall all know me, from the leaſt to the greateſt.* There is a promiſe of *faith* they are children of; *I will leave in the midſt of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they ſhall truſt in the name of the Lord,* Zeph. iii. 12. There is a promiſe of *love* they are children of; *I will circumciſe their heart to love.* There is a promiſe of *repentance* they are children of; *They ſhall look on him whom they have pierced, and they ſhall mourn.* There is a promiſe of *holineſs; Sanctify them through thy truth, thy Word is truth.* It is true, that it is a part of Chriſt's prayer to his Father, John xvii. 17.; but his prayer is as good as any promiſe in all the Bible. There is a promiſe of *perſeverance* that they are the children of; *I will make an everlaſting covenant with thee; I will not depart from thee to do thee good; yea, I will put my fear in thy heart, and thou ſhalt not depart from me.* In a word, there is the promiſe of *victory* over death; *Death ſhall be ſwallowed up in victory. Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* There is a promiſe of everlaſting *enjoyment* of him; *So ſhall we ever be with the Lord.*—It were endleſs to tell of all the promiſes they are the children of; not that all and every one of the promiſes are in the ſame manner clearly applied to every believer; but if they be the children of one new-covenant promiſe, they are the children of all: even as all the curſes of the law are linked together like an iron chain, inſomuch that when a man is under one curſe, he is under all the curſes of the Bible; ſo all the promiſes of the goſpel are linked together like a golden chain, inſomuch that he that gets one promiſe, gets all: though perhaps it is but one link of the chain that he finds his heart faſtened to, or one promiſe that is applied, yet the application of that infers an intereſt in all the reſt.——Thus you ſee what is the matter of the promiſe, and ſurely you may ſee much matter here for faith to feed and work upon.

3dly, Let us conſider the *nature* and *quality* of the promiſe. And,

1. It is a *great* and *precious* promiſe; *Whereby are given to us exceeding great and precious promiſes, that by theſe you might be partakers of the divine nature,* 2 Pet. i. 4. And, indeed, the matter of the promiſe, as already deſcribed, declares that it is exceeding great and precious; and the effect of it, as here deſcribed, making the believer a partaker of the divine nature, O how does it diſcover the greatneſs and precioufneſs thereof! And the relation of the promiſe to God as the author, to Chriſt as the purchaſer, and to the Spirit as the applier thereof; the relation of it, I ſay, to this great God, ſhews what a great promiſe it is: beſides that, it is the price of precious blood, and the object of precious faith, and the channel of the communication of great and precious bleſſings. But of theſe, perhaps, more afterwards.

2. It is a *new* promiſe; hence ſo frequently called the *new covenant,* as Heb. viii. 8. It is a new promiſe, in oppoſition to the old promiſe of life to man's perfect perſonal obedience in the covenant of works. The old promiſe was a promiſe of life, upon condition of perfect obedience of our own; but there was no promiſe of grace to do: but the new promiſe is a promiſe upon the perfect obedience of another, and of grace to do alſo; not to obtain life and ſalvation again by our doing, but to glorify the God of our life, by whom we have *obtained ſalvation,* 1 Theſſ. v. 9. The old promiſe of life ſtood upon the changeable righteouſneſs of man; and ſo was forfeited: the new promiſe ſtands upon the unchangeable righteouſneſs of a God-man; and ſo cannot be forfeited by theſe that, through grace, take hold of it; or rather on whom it takes hold. Therefore,

3. It is a *ſure* promiſe, ſure to all the ſeed; *Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace, to the end the promiſe might be ſure to all the ſeed,* Rom. iv. 16. Hence it is called, *The ſure mercies of David,* Iſa. lv. 3. *Heaven and earth ſhall paſs away, but not one jot nor title of God's word,* nor of God's promiſe. See Iſa. liv. 18. *For the mountains ſhall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindneſs ſhall not depart from thee, neither ſhall the covenant of my peace be removed, ſaith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee.* It is *an everlaſting covenant, well ordered in all things, and ſure,* 2 Sam. xxxiii. 5. Indeed, the better ordered it is, the more ſure and unchangeable it is: and ſo well is it ordered of infinite wiſdom, that there is nothing in it, that ſhould be out; and nothing out of it, that ſhould be in; nothing wanting for God's glory, and the ſinner's welfare. What can be wanting therein, when he, who is *All in all,* is in it? And ſo well is it ordered, that both the firſt grace, the laſt grace, and all grace, is promiſed therein; beginning grace, advancing grace, and crowning grace, is promiſed in it; therefore it muſt be ſure. O may faith be ſet a-work, when we are ſpeaking of theſe things!

4. It was a *dear-bought* and *conditional* promiſe to Chriſt; to Chriſt, I ſay, the Mediator of the covenant, it was a dear-bought and conditional promiſe; it was upon the condition of his obedience unto death: and here is the great ground and foundation of the promiſe, next to the ſovereign grace and good-will of God to poor miſerable ſinners; it is Chriſt coming *under the law, to redeem them that were under it,* Gal. iv. 4, 5. Hence the covenant of promiſe is called *the new teſtament in his blood;* his blood is called *the blood of the covenant:* this is what makes all ſure, that Chriſt's obedience and ſatisfaction was the condition of the promiſe; and the condition is fulfilled by his bringing in everlaſting righteouſneſs, and giving his life a ranſom for many. All the promiſes here are dipt in his blood; and the great condition of all the promiſes of the goſpel, is, Chriſt fulfilling, in our room and ſtead, the condition of the violated covenant of works; that is, perfect obedience to the precept of it, which we had broken; and compleat ſatisfaction to the penalty, threatening, and curſe of it, which we had incurred. Though Chriſt, indeed, hath not believed, repented, and performed the law for us, as a law ſimply, or a rule of holineſs and righteouſneſs, as if theſe were not duties incumbent upon us; no doubt they are our duty, as well as there are promiſes of them in the goſpel to bring them forth. I know none that can aſſert any ſuch Antinomian poſitions, as thus diſſolve the obligation of the moral law; yet I aſſert, that Chriſt hath even freed us from theſe, as the proper pleadable condition for juſtification and eternal life before God*; and that his ſanctification, righteouſneſs, and merit is the only proper plead-

* This ſubject is largely treated of, and ſet in a clear light, in Serm. VIII.

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able condition, and ground of all that grace and ſalvation that lies in the promiſe, and upon which it is made ſure and faſt to his people the children of promiſe; *My covenant ſhall ſtand faſt with him*, Pſal. lxxxix. 28. This is that foundation of faith laid in Zion, as ſufficient for all the hearers of the goſpel to build their hope and confidence upon for ſalvation, Iſa. xxviii. 16. Rom. ix. 33. 1 Pet. ii. 6. 1 Cor. iii. 11. *Other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jeſus Chriſt.* Hence, as Chriſt is promiſed for a *covenant of the people*, ſo the promiſes are ſaid to be made *to him*. Gal. iii. 16.; and to be *all yea and amen in him*, 2 Cor. i. 20: and the whole covenant of grace is called a *promiſe of grace in Chriſt*, 2 Tim. i. 1.; and thus given to us. Hence, of conſequence.

5. It is a *free* and *abſolute* promiſe to us, and unconditional: it is freely given; *Whereby are given to us exceeding great and precious promiſes*, 2 Pet. i. 4. All the great things of the promiſe are freely given, and theſe are, Chriſt, and *all things with him freely*, Rom. 8. 32. Though the uſe of means is required both of ſinners and ſaints, and though we be under a command and obligation to faith, repentance, and all other duties and graces; yet the covenant of grace is ſuch a free, abſolute, and unconditional promiſe, wherein the Spirit of grace is promiſed ſo freely, that no act or deed of ours is the condition thereof. There is a condition of order and connexion betwixt one covenant-bleſſing and another, they being like ſo many links of a chain cloſed within each other: and hence many promiſes are expreſt, as it were, in a conditional way, in the diſpenſation of the goſpel; whereupon many miſtake this matter, while they diſtinguiſh not betwixt the diſpenſation of the covenant, and the tenor of the covenant itſelf, wherein grace and glory, and all, is promiſed freely. The covenant of promiſe cannot be properly conditional to us; otherwiſe, wo would be to us, whoſe condition is nothing but ſin and miſery by nature: this covenant ſtands upon abſolute foundations; ſuch as the electing grace of the Father, the redeeming grace of the Son, and the applying grace of the Holy Ghoſt. They are all abſolutely free and unconditional; there is no ſpiritual act of ours previous to the application of the covenant of promiſe. The Spirit coming to work faith, by his creating power, is promiſed abſolutely in the covenant; *Thy people ſhall be willing in the day of thy power*; *They ſhall look to him whom they have pierced*: faith is caſt out of the womb of the abſolute promiſe, and begotten by it. And, indeed, there is not a conditional promiſe in all the Bible, but what is reductively abſolute; becauſe both the thing promiſed, and the condition of it, is contained in the womb of the abſolute promiſe. Some worthy divines make *faith* the condition of the covenant; but their ſound explication of what they mean, ſhews they dare not make it the proper condition. If any that pretend to ſoundneſs do ſo, they but expoſe their darkneſs, and diſcover their miſtake concerning the covenant of grace, which is a free promiſe in Chriſt Jeſus: faith itſelf, and all the bleſſings that attend and follow it, being free and abſolutely promiſed. Indeed, conditions on our part, properly ſo called, would deſtroy the nature of the goſpel, which is a free promiſe. Where is the freedom of grace, if conditional? It would turn the goſpel to the law, and the free covenant of grace to the conditional covenant of works: yea, it would thus deſtroy the peace of the poor humbled ſinner; for when he thinks there is ſuch and ſuch a condition that muſt be fulfilled by him before he hath a right to meddle with the promiſe, then he ſtands aback, he dares not believe, becauſe he ſuppoſes he wants this and that condition and qualification; and ſo his legal dream hardens his heart againſt the goſpel, and foſters his unbelief, to the diſhonour of God, and to his own ruin. But if he could ſee the promiſe free and abſolute, *Without money and without price*, and that there is no condition in this covenant, but Chriſt's obedience unto death, which is performed to God's ſatisfaction, then a door is open to him to plead for all upon this ground, ſaying, Lord, give me faith, for Chriſt's ſake; give me repentance, for Chriſt's ſake; give me grace, for Chriſt's ſake; who hath performed the condition of all the grace of the new covenant, and through whom all the promiſes run out freely. He that clogs the goſpel-offer with ſo many terms and conditions, is like a man, as I noticed in a former occaſion, offering a cup of wine to a friend, but he makes it ſcalding hot upon the fire, that his friend dare not touch it with his lip, leſt he be burnt. It is the ſpecial property of the promiſe, that it is free, and abſolute, and unconditional to us: and if it were not ſo, none would believe at all; for, if faith itſelf were a proper condition, then the grand objection is, Oh! but I cannot believe: why, if faith be not abſolutely promiſed, there is no relief in that ſtrait, the goſpel could not be a joyful ſound to ſinners that are humbled to ſee their want of faith, but only to them that are believers, and have faith already; and ſo it were needleſs to preach the goſpel to any but believers: but faith, as well as other bleſſings, being freely promiſed, unbelievers may put in for a ſhare of this free-grace; *Whoſoever will, let him come, and take of the water of life freely.* And it is this free offer and promiſe that uſes to create faith; *Faith comes by hearing* of it. Therefore,

6. It is a *powerful* and *prolific* promiſe; hence the goſpel, which is the promiſe of Chriſt, as the Lord our righteouſneſs, is called *the power of God to ſalvation*; becauſe *therein is revealed the righteouſneſs of God, from faith to faith*, Rom. i. 16, 17. It is the goſpel-promiſe that is the *miniſtration of the Spirit* and ſo the organ of almighty power and ſovereign efficacy for converting ſouls, and ſo for ſaving of ſinners: When God comes, he comes in the promiſe. But here it may be aſked, May not the Lord convey himſelf in a *command*, as well as a *promiſe*? To which we reply, As the Lord can convey himſelf graciouſly to us, in a threatening to the devil, ſuch as that was, Gen. iii. 15.; yet there was a ſweet promiſe to our firſt parents wrapt up in it, *The ſeed of the woman ſhall bruiſe the head of the ſerpent*: So the Lord can, and many times does, convey himſelf powerfully into the ſoul by a command; ſuch as that, *Look to me and be ſaved*; or ſuch as that, *Fear not, for I am with thee*: but ſtill it is ſuch a command, as hath the goſpel mixed with it, and a promiſe wrapt up in the boſom of it, and wherein the Lord undertakes to work what he commands, according to his promiſe in Chriſt: and no command, without a relation to the goſpel, or

the promiſe, is the channel of ſaving power; for there is no ſalvation to a ſinner but in the virtue thereof: ſo that ſtill it is the promiſe that is powerful and efficacious for begetting children unto God, who are therefore called *the children of promiſe.* But more of this afterwards. —In a word, it is an *extenſive* promiſe; and this leads me to the laſt thing propoſed upon this firſt general head, and that was,

4*thly*, To conſider the *object* of the promiſe, or to whom it belongs. And here three things belong to this purpoſe concerning the promiſe. 1. For whom it is *deſigned.* 2. By whom it is *poſſeſt.* 3. To whom it is *preſented.*

1. Who are the *objects* of the promiſe, for whom it is *deſigned;* I mean, for whom it is appointed of God from eternity, ſo as they ſhall reap the ſaving benefit, and obtain all the good that is in it? I anſwer, *The election ſhall obtain,* though the *reſt be blinded,* Rom. xi. 7. Eph. i. 11. And hence all the elect and choſen of God, ſuch of them, I mean, as are ſubjects capable of actual believing, they, and they only, are brought, by the power of divine grace, to believe the promiſe, to the ſaving of their ſouls; *As many as were ordained to eternal life, believed,* Acts xiii. 48.; and, *All that the Father hath given me, ſhall come to me,* John vi. 37. If any think, O! how can this doctrine of particular election agree with the univerſal offer of the goſpel, and the promiſe thereof? And how is it evident that God deals fairly with men in this matter, ſeeing ſome only are elected and deſigned of God to the good of the promiſe? Why, Sirs, does not God deal fairly, when he tells us plainly what he is doing, and that he deſigns to ſhow his mercy towards ſome, and his juſtice towards others, Rom. ix. 22, 23.; that he deſigns the revelation of Chriſt for *the falling and riſing of many in Iſrael;* and the goſpel for a ſavour of life to ſome, and of death to others? If a gardiner (as a great divine exemplifies it) watering his garden, where there are many weeds; yea, more weeds than herbs, declares that he waters the whole garden, both weeds and herbs together, that he may make both to come up above ground, and appear what they are, and, after that, that he may pull out the weeds, and foſter the herbs for ſpecial uſe; is not this very right, and fair, and reaſonable, inſomuch that none needs inquire further, why does he water the weeds? Even ſo, the church is God's garden, and many reprobate weeds are therein; and when God orders the watering of a goſpel-diſpenſation to a mixed multitude of elect and reprobate, declaring that the offer of the goſpel is to both, for the converſion of the elect from their natural enmity, and for bringing to light the hatred and enmity of the reprobate againſt him and the offer of his grace; is it not fair dealing, and a reaſonable anſwer to the cavils of men againſt the goſpel-offer, God by his word makes it manifeſt, that all men, elect and reprobate, are under ſin and unbelief, and that no man can come to Chriſt in the goſpel-promiſe, unleſs the Father draw him? And none would come, unleſs he ſhewed mercy on ſome. And this manner of proving men, and ſhewing them to be what they are, by a common offer of grace unto all, and caſting in the net of the goſpel-promiſe among them, is a part of that wonderful prudence, whereby Chriſt makes all theſe that are outwardly called to be *without excuſe,* and at the ſame time fiſhes out the elect from the ſea of ſin and miſery, when the reſt periſh: of which prudence ſpeaks God by the prophet, Iſa. lii. 13. *Behold my Servant ſhall deal prudently, and proſper, and be extolled.* O but this wiſdom of God, then, in converting the elect, for whom the promiſe is eſpecially deſigned, without giving cauſe of ſtumbling to the reſt, is rather to be admired and praiſed, than diſputed againſt! Rom. xi. 33. *O the depth of the riches both of the wiſdom and knowledge of God! How unſearchable are his judgments, and his ways paſt finding out!* God *will have mercy on whom he will have mercy; and whom he will he hardeneth. Say not you, why does he yet find fault? for, who hath reſiſted his will? nay, but, O man, who art thou that replieſt againſt God?* Rom. ix. 18, 19, 20. If you be diſputing for the devil and the reprobate againſt God's righteous decree, you muſt be left, with all ſuch proud and preſumptuous unbelieving deſpiſers of plain doctrine, to reckon with your judge, who can well anſwer for all his decrees and deſigns; mean time you cannot anſwer for your preſumption. Withal, know, that God hath diſcharged all men to meddle with his ſecret council; *Secret things belong to the Lord our God, but to us the things that are revealed,* Deut. xxix. 29. Our great inquiry, therefore, ſhould be, not what is God's ſecret will and promiſe, but rather who poſſeſſes it, and how we may be poſſeſt of it. Therefore,

2. Who are the *objects* of the promiſe, by whom it is *poſſeſt?* Why, even all believers; for, *He that believeth, hath everlaſting life,* ſays Chriſt, John vi. 47. Believers are in covenant actually, and the promiſe of the covenant is in their poſſeſſion, the begun poſſeſſion of eternal life is commenced with reſpect to them, and the charter of the promiſe is delivered to them, and eſtabliſhed in their perſon, they being actually members of the myſtical body of Chriſt; *They, as Iſaac was, are children of the promiſe.* Of which more afterwards.

3. Who are the *objects* of the promiſe, to whom it is *preſented,* that they may take poſſeſſion, and build their faith and hope thereupon? And here, as the firſt queſtion related to the object of the promiſe, with reſpect to God's eternal deſtination; and the ſecond, to the object of it with reſpect to the Spirit's internal ſaving operation; ſo this third concerns the object thereof with reſpect to the goſpel external diſpenſation: the firſt ſhews us by whom the promiſe ſhall be poſſeſt; the ſecond, by whom it is poſſeſt; and the third, by whom it may be poſſeſt. Here, I ſay, the promiſe is preſented and given in the external goſpel diſpenſation unto ſinners; particularly,

(1.) To ſinners of *mankind;* not to fallen angels, but to fallen men: theſe are the only kind of ſinners that God deſigned to ſave, and for whoſe behoof, Chriſt, the promiſed ſeed, was ſent, came, died, and ſuffered; 1 Tim. i. 15. *This is a faithful ſaying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jeſus Chriſt came to ſave ſinners:* and ſo the promiſe is made, and the call to believe the ſame is given to them; *To you, O men, do I call, and my voice is to the ſons of men:* and the miniſter's commiſſion is, *Go preach the goſpel to every creature.*

(2.) To ſinners in *Zion,* or the viſible church. As the promiſe of Canaan was made to the whole people of Iſrael; ſo the promiſe of Chriſt, and all bleſſings in him, even the everlaſting reſt

above,

above, of which Canaan was a type; that such a promise is given forth to the visible church, see Heb. iv. 1, 2, 3. And hence, whereas these that are without the church are said to be *aliens to the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenant of promise*, Eph. ii. 12.; so the members of the visible church are these to whom the promises are said to belong, as it was with the Jewish church, and much more with the Christian New-Testament church, where the privileges are not lessened, but enlarged. See Acts ii. 39. *For the promise is to you and to your children; yea, even all that are afar off, even to as many as the Lord our God shall call*, namely, externally call; for the apostle is there using this as a motive to their faith, who were yet only *pricked in their hearts*, and not believers with the heart. Compare ver. 37, 38, 41. This was the common privilege of the Jews; *To them belonged the promise*, Rom. ix. 4.; and so do they belong to us. Here is a *foundation of faith laid in Zion*, Isa. xxviii. 16.; you have all a right of access and warrant to come and take possession. Yea, I will certify you, in respect of the external gospel-dispensation, there is not a soul here but hath as good a right to the promise, as ever any believer had the moment before he believed. Yea,

(3.) It is to *great* sinners that the promise is presented and given forth; *The promise is to you*, Acts ii. 39. To whom was the apostle speaking? Even to the *crucifiers of Christ*; to the *murderers of the Lord of glory*; and to whom he had said immediately before, *Him you have taken, and by wicked hands crucified and slain*, ver. 23. It is presented as a ground of faith to enemies, rebels, fools, mockers, and scorners; Prov. i. 22, 23. *The scorners that delight in scorning, fools that hate knowledge, turn ye at my reproof.* And what is the motive? Just a promise, a glorious promise presented to them; *Behold, I will pour out my Spirit upon you; and will make known my words unto you.*

(4.) It is given not only to humbled and penitent sinners, that see their need, and are convinced of their sin and misery, but even to the *unhumbled* and *impenitent*: though none indeed will flee to the promise, or to Christ therein, except they be convinced of their need. And though the promise is given forth to such, *preaching good tidings to the meek*, for *binding up the broken-hearted*, Isa. lxi. 1.; yet, because these that are humbled are ordinarily the persons that complain, saying, Alas! I am neither humbled nor convinced; therefore I must tell you, that the promise is presented, and given out, not only to the humbled and legally penitent, but to the most unhumbled, impenitent, unconvinced, and hardened sinner that hears this gospel; even such as see nothing of their need, but think they are well enough without Christ. See Rev. iii. 17, 18. *Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched:* where their very want of conviction and knowledge of their own sad state, is made the reason of the gospel-offer by Christ; *I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be cloathed; and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see.* See also, Isa. lv. 1, 2. where these that are thirsting after vanity, are called to look to the free promise of life in Christ; *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye; buy and eat; yea, come; buy wine and milk, without money, and without price.* What sort of thirsters they were, the challenge in the second verse sheweth; *Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.* Hence the gospel-promise is given out to these whose hearts are hardened against God and all good; *Hearken unto me, ye stout-hearted, and far from righteousness; I bring near my righteousness, it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry: I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory*, Isa. xlvi. 12, 13.

Thus you see the promise is given forth to all sinners in the visible church, in a general indefinite way and manner, in the external dispensation of the word, which names no particular person of any sinner, but speaks to all, without distinction of nation, state, or condition, and under such names and characters as are applicable to all alike, in their natural, lost, dead, and undone circumstances. Thus run all the promises of the new covenant, both in the Old and New Testament, Gen. iii. 15. and xxii. 18. Gal. iii. 8. Jer. xxxvi. 25, 26. and xxxi. 31, 33, 34. compared with Heb. viii. 9, 10, 11, 12.; where you see the promises come directed to all nations that shall hear of them, and to all persons indefinitely, and supposes them to be in a cursed, condemned, dead, and wretched state, to whom they are thus directed, presented, and offered; and this makes it indeed to be the *joyful sound of glad news to all people*, Luke ii. 10. But here several questions may be propounded, and a solution of them attempted.

QUEST. 1. You will perhaps say, *If the free and absolute promise be thus given forth to all in a gospel-dispensation, then, what need the use of means?*

I *answer*, 1. In favour of the *sovereign grace* of God, which is a thing that is neither furthered, by our good, not hindered by our evil, that God will have his elect saved and brought within the covenant, though they were even living in the contempt and neglect of good means: and therefore, I ask, What was Manasses doing, when God apprehended him in the briars and thorns of Babylon? And what was Paul doing, when God first took hold of him by his converting grace; I suppose he was furiously persecuting all that were using any good means; yea, breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the church of God, and persecuting the Son of God: yea, no mean will be used rightly by any, till God begin the work, and pour some grace out of the absolute promise, which is indefinitely dispensed; and therefore, not knowing but this same sovereign grace may take hold of some gospel-despisers, who are yet slighting all the means of grace, this doctrine of grace, absolutely free grace, must be preached, though reprobates should break their neck upon it. Yet,

2. In favour of the *holiness* of God, who hath appointed the use of means as the ordinary channel wherein his grace runs. I must tell you, that this doctrine carries no prejudice against the use of means, but rather fortifies the same; for the promises are absolute, in opposition to all conditionality on our part, but not in opposition to the diligent use of means: even as the decree of God in election is free and absolute, and yet does not exclude, but include God's executing and accomplishing his decree by

by such and such means, and ordering our use of them; even so the promise of God is absolute, yet it does not exclude the use of means, no more than the absolute promise that Paul got, that *none in the ship should die*, did exclude the mean, which was their *abiding in the ship*, Acts xxvii. 24, 31. And therefore, though the natural use of means, which is all the use that can be made of them by natural men, is not connected with the promise necessarily; yet they that wilfully neglect the means of reading, hearing, praying, and the like, they are so far out of God's way, that they are excluding themselves from the benefits of the promise. If a man wilfully refuse to eat and drink, and use the means of natural life, will he not be accounted a self-murderer, notwithstanding of the absolute decree concerning the number of his days? And so, if a man wilfully refuse the word of life, and obstinately neglect the means of grace, will not God judge him for a self-damner, notwithstanding of the absolute promise given forth, generally and indefinitely, for the encouragement and excitement of faith, in the external dispensation of the gospel?

QUEST. 2. Why, but say you, *If the absolute promise be presented to us all, how is it true, if it be not fulfilled in us all?*

ANSW. A man may give his word, his promise, his charter to us; and yet, if we will not take his word, nor make use of his charter, we may reap no good of his word, while yet his word is true: Even so here; God in the external dispensation of the gospel, presents his promise and word of grace to us; but, if we will not take his word, this does not hinder but his word is true, though yet his truth will not be to our advantage, while we will not credit his word, believe his promise, and receive his testimony. There is a great difference betwixt the unbelief of believers, and the incredulity of unbelievers: the unbelief of believers does them much harm; though it shall not make the promise of God of no effect, yet it may breed much wo to them in the mean time: but the incredulity of unbelievers, if they live and die in it, is just the cause of their utter ruin; and yet it makes not the truth of God of no effect: his truth in the promise does not profit us but in a way of believing. It is the best charter and security for heaven and salvation: but as for these that reject this security, and will not take it, it is what will aggravate their damnation; for, *he that believeth not shall be damned:* but they that, by a faith of God's operation, embrace the promise, and take it as their only security, they shall find him faithful to make out every word of promise to them.

QUEST. 3. But, say you, *If God hath given a promise to me, will it not be accomplished whether I believe or not?*

ANSW. If he give you grace to believe, and so give you it in possession, then it infers an obligation on God to accomplish it; because, to the believer, that receives the promise, it is given definitely and particularly, saying, Thou art the man to whom it is given; but when it is given only in the gospel-offer, and external dispensation, as it is to all the hearers of the gospel, this infers no obligation upon God to make good the promise to any or every particular man, because it is made only generally and indefinitely, without defining the person in particular, but only pointing at sinners in general; and it remains only general and indefinite in the offer, till, in a way of believing, you make it your own particular good; and therefore God is faithful in denying this offered benefit, so long as you, through unbelief, reject it. If you offer a man your bond for a sum of money, and he reject it, then you are under no obligation, by that bond, to give him the contents of it: if he accept the bond, then you oblige yourself; but if he reject, then you are free, and cannot be accused of unfaithfulness to your promise, or bond. So here, if you truly and believingly take God at his word, then he is bound, by his own promise, to make out all; for then *you, believing, have everlasting life:* but if you will not take God's bond, nor receive his record, but reject it by unbelief, saying, in effect, that it is not good enough security for your salvation and eternal life; then you, through unbelief, make him a liar, and his word a lye, his promise an untruth: in which case, if you live and die there, he is so far from being bound to give you the blessing contained in that charter, that he is bound, on the contrary, to execute his threatening upon you; *He that believeth not, shall be damned.* The promise, in the external dispensation, is like a blank bond, or an indefinite obligation to blank persons, that it might be a standing claim to all sinners of mankind to whom it comes: sinners in general are named, no person's name is particularly inserted therein; but if you, by faith, fill up your name, then the bond gives right to you in particular; and that which was yours only generally and indefinitely before, becomes yours actually and particularly, upon your receiving it with particular application to yourself.

4. *Then*, say you, *after all that is said, it seems the promise is still conditional*, namely, *upon believing.*

ANSW. Faith and believing is also promised absolutely; and therefore I ask, What is the condition of that promise of faith and the Spirit of faith? If this be not free and absolute, where is the man that can tell me what is the condition upon which one may have faith, and the Spirit of faith to work it? Nay, the promise of it is free and absolute, though yet general and indefinite. And as the promise of faith is free, so justification, sanctification, glory, and all that follows faith, is freely promised; not to it, but on the back of it, in the new-covenant order. So that still the promise is absolute, free, and unconditional to us; the proper condition of them all is fulfilled by, and to be found in the glorious new-covenant Head, Christ Jesus: and upon this condition of his obedience unto death, you ought to plead them; for, though they be absolute in point of proper conditionality in us, yet not exclusively of the use of means. Therefore, O pray, pray; and cry that you may find the power of the promise upon your souls: God allows you to plead for this, Ezek. xxxvi. 37.; where, after the enumeration of many absolute promises, the Lord says, *For this will I be enquired of by the house of Israel.* O cry and wrestle in prayer, and use the means: only take care that you use not the means as a condition, thinking now you have done your part, and therefore God is obliged to do his, and to grant the promised grace: for thus you will turn the free covenant of promise

miſe to a conditional covenant of works; and ſo you turn quite off from the goſpel-way of believing, to the old legal way of doing; and conſequently you will diſappoint yourſelf, and make *Chriſt of no effect to you*, Gal. v. 4, 5. and iii. 29.

QUEST. 5. But, ſay you, *What though I cry and groan for the grace of the promiſe; yet if the abſolute promiſe be not particular to me, I can never be a partaker of it?*

ANSW. In order to clear up this point, and ſet it in a proper light, let it be conſidered,

1. That though the promiſe be *abſolute*, yet it is alſo *indefinite*: though diſpenſed in general, yet it excludes no particular man; ſo that no man in the world, living under the goſpel, can truly ſay he is not intended in this promiſe, as well as others; and ſeeing, therefore, that God hath not excluded thee by name, and that there is no clauſe that ſhuts thee out, it is a grievous ſin in thee to exclude thyſelf: theſe cavilling thoughts and diſcouragements then do ariſe from hell; it is the devil, and thy own black heart, and not this doctrine, that diſcourages thee. You think, if you had a particular promiſe bearing your name, you would believe: but, is it not all one, when there is a general promiſe to ſinners, and the chief of ſinners, with a command to you to come, and receive, and apply the promiſe particularly to yourſelf, that thus all may be your own?

2. As the general promiſe lays an argument to your hand, whereby you may plead, ſaying, Lord, thou that tenders thy grace to me, do thou powerfully apply it: thou who has left me a promiſe, O let me not come ſhort through unbelief: thou who gives the outward means, O give the inward grace. So, if thou thus groan after the Lord, it would be a ſign that the promiſe, which belongs to all in general, belongs to you in particular; and that by virtue of the promiſe, ſomething of ſpiritual life was begun in you; even as a ſigh and a groan, in a man, is a ſign of natural life. If you be acquaint with any inward heart-groaning after the grace of the promiſe, ſuch as, perhaps, you cannot put into words, *groanings that cannot be uttered*, I will tell you for your comfort, it is a ſign that the Spirit of grace is already come, Rom. viii. 26.: the foundation is laid; *Chriſt will not break the bruiſed reed, nor quench the ſmoaking flax*; he *will ſatisfy the longing ſoul, and fill the hungry with good things*. That hunger and thirſt, that groaning and longing hath a particular promiſe of being ſatisfied; *Bleſſed are they which hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs; for they ſhall be filled*, Mat. v. 6. Let this therefore turn your water into wine preſently. Take your food, poor ſoul, and feaſt upon it; and let me ſpeak to others, that are not ſo far forward as you, ſince I am opening the net of the goſpel to all.

O ſinner, the promiſe is held out to you; it is tendered to you, and Chriſt in it: or, Chriſt, and the promiſe in him, is preſented to you; for the promiſe holds out the very remedy for your malady.—Are you dead in ſins? the promiſe holds out life to you; *The hour cometh, and now is, that the dead ſhall hear the voice of the Son of man, and live*. O if power would come along with the promiſe!—Are you under wrath? the promiſe holds out Jeſus, *who delivers us from the wrath to come*.—Are you loſt and undone? the promiſe holds out *redemption through his blood, even the remiſſion of ſins*.—Are you unable to ſave yourſelf? the promiſe holds out Chriſt as *the Lord our righteouſneſs and ſtrength*; as *able to ſave to the uttermoſt*; and that *help is laid upon one that is mighty*.—Are you unwilling, as well as unable? the promiſe holds out a power for breaking that enmity and reſiſtance; *Thy people ſhall be willing in the day of thy power*.—Have you a deviliſh heart within you? the promiſe holds out renewing grace; *A new heart will I give you*.—Are you poor, blind, and naked? the promiſe holds out *tried gold*, to remedy your *poverty*; *eye-ſalve*, to heal your *blindneſs*; and *white raiment*, to cover your *nakedneſs*.—Are you a poor, fooliſh, guilty, filthy, miſerable creature? the promiſe holds out Chriſt to you, *as made of God*, for your behoof, *wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification, and redemption*.—Tell me a caſe that the promiſe does not reach; nay, it is juſt propoſed, O ſinner, as a remedy for your malady! and therefore ſay not, Ah! what ſhall I do with theſe promiſes? or, what have I ado with them? Why, man, woman; *To you is the word of this ſalvation ſent*: and I will acquaint you, in God's great name, what you are to do with it; you are juſt to take him at his word, ſaying, AMEN, Lord; even ſo do, I take thee upon thy promiſe: O let it take hold of me, for it is good news to me.

What is it to believe the goſpel? Why, it is juſt to hearken to a promiſing God, and to welcome a promiſe into the heart. Faith hath relation to the promiſe, and takes it as *a faithful ſaying, and worthy of all acceptation*, ſaying, O good news to me; for faith makes particular application of the promiſe held forth in the general diſpenſation. Take away the promiſe out of the Bible, and you take away the goſpel: all the commands and threatenings of the law will not make a ſingle ſentence of goſpel of themſelves, and yet infinite wiſdom makes a good uſe of them in a ſubſerviency to the goſpel; for, though no precept or threatening be properly any part of the goſpel, yet they may make preparation for it; they are, like John's rough ſermon, to prepare Chriſt's way: the threatening ſerves to chaſe us into God's way, like a flaming ſword; and the precept ſerves to direct us how to keep the way when we are in it. But the goſpel itſelf is God in a promiſe; it is compoſed and made up of promiſes, whereof Chriſt is the ſum total; the *Yea* and *Amen*. God in the goſpel ſays, Notify to me what is the matter with you, and I will certainly help you; tell me what you would have, and I will undoubtedly give it you; ſignify to me what you are afraid of, and I will really deliver you. I will tell you, in a word, what the law ſays, what the goſpel ſays, and what faith ſays: *By the law is the knowlege of ſin*; and accordingly the law ſays, Man, you have a lawleſs mind, there is no ordering of it, no order in it: the goſpel anſwers, *I will put my law in thy mind*, and bring it to order: and faith ſays, Welcome the promiſe; O Lord, I am glad that thou do ſo; AMEN, *Do as thou haſt ſaid*, (to uſe the words of David, 2 Sam. vii. 25.)—The law ſays, Man, woman, your mind is ill, but your heart is worſe; you have a wicked nature, a ſtubborn and rebellious heart: the goſpel anſwers, *I will take away the heart of ſtone, and give the heart of fleſh*: then faith ſays, O welcome, Lord, with ſuch a promiſe; O! *do as thou haſt ſaid*.—The law ſays, Man, woman, you have a de-

a devil within you, an evil ſpirit, inclined to every evil: the goſpel anſwers, *I will put my Spirit within you, and cauſe you to walk in my ſtatutes:* and then faith ſays, O welcome, ſweet promiſe; Lord, I take thee at thy word; *do as thou haſt ſaid.*—The law ſays, Man, woman, you have committed many grievous ſins, and hainous iniquities: the goſpel anſwers, *Your ſins and iniquities will I remember no more;* and, *I will blot out you ſins as a cloud:* and then faith ſays, O bleſſed promiſe! welcome, welcome; Lord, I take thee at thy word; I embrace thy promiſe; O! *do as thou haſt ſaid.*—Again, the law ſays, Man, woman, your backſlidings are increaſed; you are but a backſliding hiefer: the goſpel ſays, *I will heal your backſlidings, and love you freely:* then faith ſays, O welcome, Lord, with the promiſe in thy hand; *Bleſſed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord:* O! *do as thou haſt ſaid.*—Again, the law ſays, Man, woman, you are but an ignorant mortal; you know nothing of God, as you ought to know; the convinced ſoul takes with the charge of the law: and the goſpel anſwers, *You ſhall be all taught of God;* and *then ſhall you know; you ſhall follow on to know the Lord,* as that word may be read, Hoſ. vi. 3.: then ſays faith, O *good is the word of the Lord!* welcome a promiſing God; Lord, I take thee at thy word; *do as thou haſt ſaid,* for I will look to thee for the performance of it.—Further, the law ſays, Man, woman, you deſerve to be thruſt to the bottom of hell, to the darkeſt and deepeſt part of the pit of perdition; and the convinced ſoul ſubſcribes to the truth of it: but the goſpel anſwers, *Deliver his ſoul from going down to the pit, for I have found a ranſom:* then faith ſays, O welcome, welcome word of grace! Lord, I embrace thy promiſe, and *I will hope in thy word.*—The law ſays, Man, woman, thy plagues are great, and thy diſeaſe incurable: nay, but the goſpel anſwers, *I am the Lord that healeth thee; the leaves of the tree of life are for the healing of the nations:* then ſays faith, Lord, I will take thee at thy word; O! *do as thou haſt ſaid.* Yes, ſays the Lord, but I will take a day to it, and my own time of accompliſhing my promiſe; for *the viſion is for an appointed time:* then ſays faith, Lord, I will wait upon thee; *I will look to the Lord; I will wait for the God of my ſalvation; my God will hear me.* Well, *the Lord is a God of judgment,* and *bleſſed are all they that wait for him.*

Thus God is ſetting about his charter among you; who will ſign and ſet to their name? The promiſes are flying about your heads and ears; is there none of them flying into your hearts? Have you no uſe, man, woman, for any of theſe promiſes? Wo is me, if God, with a promiſe in his hand, can get no credit among you! But if you be for the promiſe, then take it, and God's bleſſing with it, and Chriſt in the boſom of it; for, the promiſe is the place where the Lord lies. Say not, *Who will aſcend to heaven to bring down Chriſt, or deſcend to the deep to bring him up?* Faith may ſee him lying in the promiſe; and if you take the promiſe into your heart, you take Chriſt in: and if you thus embrace the promiſe, then may I ſay, *as Iſaac was, you are the children of the promiſe* *. This leads to

II. The *ſecond* general head, which was, To open up the *character* of their being the *children of promiſe.* Now, to open up the nature of this filiation, I would ſhew, 1. In what *reſpects* believers, or the children of God, are the children of promiſe. 2. In what *method* and *order* they come to be actually the children of the promiſe.

1ſt, In what *reſpects* they are the children of promiſe; and, I think, they may be called ſo, in reſpect of ſpiritual conception, generation, nutrition, education, aſſimulation, and amplectation.

1. Believers are the children of promiſe in reſpect of *ſpiritual conception:* they are conceived in the womb of the promiſe, before ever they are born again, and long before they were believers; they were conceived, by the gracious purpoſe and ſovereign good pleaſure of God, in the womb of the covenant that was made betwixt the Father and the Son from eternity, which is the promiſe in its original conſtitution: the elect, ſubjects of this promiſe, are the ſeed ſown in the womb thereof; the ſeed promiſed to the Mediator, of which it is ſaid, Iſa. liii. 10. *He ſhall ſee his ſeed;* and Pſal. cx. 3. that *from the womb of the morning he ſhall have the dew of his youth.* All that come to be actually, in time, the children of the promiſe, were virtually ſo from all eternity; *According as he hath choſen us in Chriſt, before the foundation of the world,* Eph. i. 4. *According to the promiſe of life which is in Chriſt Jeſus,* 2 Tim. i. 1.; even *eternal life, which God, that cannot lye, promiſed before the world began,* Tit. i. 1. *Not according to our works, but according to his own purpoſe and grace, which was given us in Chriſt before the world began,* 2 Tim. i. 9. Here is a glorious conception, that can never prove abortive. The children of the promiſe are the *ſeed,* Rom. ix. 8.; and Chriſt will want none of the ſeed which the father gave him; *All that the Father hath given me, ſhall come to me:* Hence he is brought in ſaying, *Behold I, and the children which God hath given me,* Heb. ii. 13. *He ſhall ſee the travel of his ſoul, and be ſatisfied,* when, in the fulneſs of time, the pregnant womb of the promiſe is opened by the power of God; for, whenever the time of love comes, then the promiſe is come to its full time of bringing forth ſome child of grace, and heir of mercy, that is in the womb of it. Therefore,

2. Believers are the children of the promiſe, in reſpect of *ſpiritual generation,* and *actual production:* they are begotten and brought forth out of the womb of the promiſe; *Of his own will begat he us, by the word of truth,* Jam. i. 18. Where, as the *efficient* of the new birth is God, he *begets us;* and the *moving* cauſe is the good pleaſure of God, *Of his own* WILL *he begat us;* ſo the *inſtrumental* cauſe, and the immediate parent is the promiſe, the *word of truth,* impregnated with the power and Spirit of Chriſt: and thus believers are brought forth by the virtue of the promiſe. It is ſaid of Ephram, Hoſea xiii. 13. that *he ſhould not ſtay long in the breaking forth of children.* Why? how ſhall he be brought forth? Behold the promiſe immediately follows for that end; *I will ranſom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem from death: O death! I will be thy plagues; O grave! I will be thy deſtruction.* Which promiſe, whatever other mercy it imports, includes alſo the ſpiritual reſurrection from the grave of ſin, to a ſpiritual life, in and through Jeſus Chriſt his death and reſurrection; on which account, believers are taught to ſay, *Bleſſed be the God and Father of our*

* This is probably the end of Serm. XXXII. and the beginning of Serm. XXXIII.

our Lord Jesus Christ; who, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 1 Pet. i. 3. Christ's death and resurrection is the confirmation of all the promises, by which believers are begotten again to a lively hope: and what is a believer, but a child of hope, brought forth out of the womb of the promise, impregnate with the almighty efficacy of the Holy Ghost, causing him to hope upon that promise, by which he was begotten again to that lively hope? Hence the native cry of the new-born child of the promise, is, *Lord, remember the word on which thou hast caused me to hope*, Psalm cxix. 49. And hence his over-word, again and again, is, *I hope in thy word; I hope in thy word*, ver. 74, 81, 114. 147. What is faith, and hope, and other graces, but parts of the new creature cast out of the womb of the promise? yea, the promise, you see, is both the mother and the nurse of hope; the mother brings forth that child of hope, being the instrument of begetting us thereunto; and then hope sucks her mother's breasts, saying, *I hope in thy word.* And hence,

3. Believers are the children of promise, in respect of *spiritual nutrition*, or nourishment; as the promise hath a generative virtue, for begetting children; so it hath a nutritive virtue, for maintaining them: it hath both a fertile womb, for begetting children; and a full breast for nourishing of them. The children of God are nourished and suckled at the breast of the promise. Read to this purpose, Isa. lxvi. 8,—11. The children of God are the children of Zion, or of the church, the spiritual society, where the pure ordinances are dispensed: hence the child of God is taught to say, It is *my mother's house, and the chamber of her that conceived me*, Song iii. 4. And what are the promises, but the mother's breasts for the spiritual nourishment of her children, and of this man, or that man, that is born in her? And hence the word of grace is compared to the milk of the breasts; *As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby*, 1 Pet. ii. 2. I will tell you some properties of this milk that is in the promise.—It is very *free* milk, a very free breast; *Come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price.*—It is very *fatning* milk; it is just the *feast of fat things full of marrow*, that makes the child of promise grow.—It is very *sweet* and *delicious* milk; *Sweeter than the honey, and the honey-comb: How sweet are thy words to my taste? Sweeter than honey to my mouth.*—It is *warm* milk; the babe's heart is warmed with it when applied by the Spirit; *Did not our hearts burn within us, when he talked with us by the way?*—It is very *medicinal* milk; were the child of the promise under a spiritual decay and consumption, a new draught of this will cure the child; *He sent his word and healed them.* Hence they come to ordinances, sometimes all full of plagues and diseases, just pained to death, as it were; but a word comes, and some drop of this milk, that makes them whole and sound, and go away triumphing in the consolations of God.—And why hath it these qualities? Even because it is *pure* milk; *The words of the Lord are pure*, Psal. xii. 6. It is the *sincere milk of the word*; that is, without sophistication, without mixture; without erroneous mixture, or legal mixture. If we that are ministers should unduly mix any legal qualification with the gospel-milk of the free and absolute promise, it is enough to make the children loath the milk, and so hinder their growth in holiness and comfort: why? Oh! says the child, I dare not apply such a promise, for I want such and such a qualification that the minister speaks of. I will tell you, man, it is the law that says, Hold off, for you are not meet, you are a sinner; but the gospel says, come, and take freely, be what you will. And therefore, whatever hinders you from applying the promise, and sucking the milk of it, you may suspect it is no gospel.

4. Believers are the children of promise in respect of *education*: they are trained up and educate by the grace and virtue that flows from the divine promise. The children of the promise are but babes at best, and children, while here; therefore they are never weaned from the breast of the promise so long as they are in this world, and always till faith and hope, grounded on the promise, be turned to vision and fruition in heaven, where all the promises will have their full accomplishment. And therefore the sons and daughters of Zion, *To whom belong the covenant and the promises*, are said to be *nursed at her side*, Isa. lx. 4. And hence, as children depend upon their parents, and in an ordinary way cannot live without them; so the life of believers here is a life of dependence upon the promise; their light, life, liberty, strength, comfort, and all issuing from the promise. As Moses's own mother brought him up for the princess, namely, Pharaoh's daughter, who adopted him for a prince, her own son, and so he was a prince in Pharoah's family; thus believers are brought up by the seed of the promise, and their mother breeds them kings and princes unto their God; *Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth*, Psal. xlv. 16. Hence,

5. Believers are the children of promise in respect of *assimulation*, likeness, and conformity; 2 Cor. iii. 18. *Beholding his glory as in a glass*; [that is, in the glass of the gospel,] *we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord.* 2 Pet. i. 4. *Great and precious promises are given us, that by these we may be made partakers of the divine nature.* The law, as it is a rule of holiness, is the transcript of God's holiness in a command; the gospel is the image of his holiness in a promise: and when power accompanies the promise for begetting children unto God, what the law teaches preceptively, the gospel teaches effectively; *The grace of God, that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men, teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world*, Tit. ii. 11, 12. Indeed, holiness is a child of the promise, it is a daughter of the holy covenant; as children are like their parents, so believers, by virtue of the promise, are brought to a conformity thereunto: Rom. vi. 17. *But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered to you*; or rather, as it is in the margin and in the Greek, WHERETO YE WERE DELIVERED; delivered into it as into a mould, as the wax is cast into the impression of the seal, answering it line for line, stroke for stroke, and wholly representing the shape and figure of it. Believers are, according to their measure, transformed into the likeness and similitude of the gospel, conformed

unto

unto it; understanding, will, affections, aims, principles, actions, and conversation, all becoming the gospel, and the promises thereof: hence the promises are made the springs of gospel-holiness; 2 Cor. vii. 1. *Having these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.* The promise in Christ is the *door of hope*; and, *He that hath this hope, purifies himself, even as he is pure*, 1 John. iii. 3. The law, as a covenant, makes a man hopeless, and consequently heartless in every duty; it never purified a sinner to this day: it is the gospel that is the *ministration of the Spirit*, even the Spirit of holiness. I imagine, you will know it even to your experience, believer. Let the law, or the legal preaching, press upon you with a hundred commands, and a hundred moral arguments to back it; yet all it does is but to make you dead, till life come out of a promise; and whenever a word of grace or promise is let into the heart, it joyfully conceives there, and brings forth the child, whose name is *Holiness to the Lord*. When are you most holy, but when the promise is most sweetly and powerfully applied, and when the grace of the promise comes and takes you in its arms? Therefore,

6. Believers are the children of promise, in respect of *amplectation* (I only use that word, Sirs, as comprehensive of what I have a mind to say upon it; I do not love to express myself in words that you cannot all understand, but what I mean by it is this;) they are children of promise, in respect of the promise's coming to embrace, and hug, and dandle them, as a mother does her child. Do you understand that? Yea, perhaps, you know the meaning of the word; but happy you, that know the thing itself to your experience, namely, the promise coming and embracing you in its arms. The promise is the joyful mother of all the children she brings forth; and therefore they are *born upon her sides, and dandled upon her knees*, as the expression is, Isa. lxvi. 12. There are some rare folk in the world, Sirs, that are Christ's favourites; all his children are so, but there are some of them in a more special manner that are his darlings: and how does he caress and dandle them? Why, there comes a promise, and in the bosom of it Christ the first-born child of the promise; and Christ by his Spirit, as the Spirit of promise, embraces the soul, and takes hold of it, and hugs it in his arms, and intimates the love and good-will of God, saying, perhaps such a word as that, *I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with everlasting kindness have I drawn thee. Son, daughter, be of good chear, thy sins are forgiven thee.* O how sweet is it to be thus within the arms and embraces of a promise! Then is the soul in the very arms of a God in Christ. Believers are said to *embrace* the promise, Heb. xi. 13. But though this be the duty of all, when the question is about the ground and warrant to believe; yet, when the question is about God's method of working faith, none will embrace the promise, till first the promise embrace them: never a soul took hold of the promise, with his whole heart, till first the promise, took hold of his heart. God comes, by his powerful grace, breaking the natural enmity of the man, and killing him with his kindness. This is both the first and the last thing in the import of this designation, *the children of promise*; for still the promise is the mother and maintainer of faith, repentance, love, and all the graces; they have no being, till they be brought forth out of the womb of the promise: and still the believer is at a loss to believe and embrace the promise, till the promise take a new grip of him, and give him a new embracement.—Thus you see in what respect they are the children of promise.

I have not yet said that believers are the children of promise in an *active sense*, as they are believers of the promise, or improvers of the promise, and the like; for though that be true, and may come in in its own proper place, yet it would not be suitable to the scope or meaning of the text, where they are considered as passively, and without their own concurrence, as Isaac was, when born to Abraham by the mere virtue of the promise. The promise is of the mere grace of God in Christ; and to be a child of the promise, is to be a child of God, by the grace of God in Christ. The question here is not, how believers act as believers? but, how the grace of God makes them believers? and that is by virtue of their being the children of promise, in the respects that I have already named.

2*dly*, In what *method* and *manner* they become actually the children of promise; *actually*, I say, because there are many, even all the elect of God, not yet converted, who are *virtually* the children of promise; but the womb of the promise is not yet open to bring them forth. Therefore the question is about the method of their being the actual children of promise, and so actually believers. And here you would notice, I am not speaking of the *ground* and *object* of faith, namely, the promise, of which formerly; but the way and method of God's working it; for these two ought not to be confounded, but distinctly considered in their own place. The word of God is the warrant, the Spirit of God is the worker of faith. Now, what hath been said already, may give some light to this inquiry; but there are these four things that I would further say concerning the method, speaking only of God's ordinary way of begetting children to himself.

1. The Lord brings home the *threatening* of the law, and applies it to their conscience, in a work of *conviction*. The conscience is naturally *seared as with a hot iron*; like these that have a part of their flesh burnt with an iron, though it be touched, yet they do not feel: this hard skin must be pierced; and therefore God makes the knife of conviction go to the quick; makes the man see that he is a child of the devil, a child of wrath, puts him in fear of hell, and shews him that there is a standing quarrel betwixt God and him, and that this must be removed; hence a concern will be raised in the heart, *What shall I do to be saved?* Acts xvi. 30. They that are actual children of the promise, have found themselves actually under the dispensation of threatenings from Sinai; for the *law is the schoolmaster*, to awaken the sinner, and let him see his need of Christ.

2. The Lord *imbitters* sin, which gave force to the threatening, in a work of compunction. Both the spirituality of the law, in its command; and the severity of the law, in its threatening, are set before the man; in the consideration whereof, the soul not only cries out, *Oh! unclean, unclean!* but, *Oh! undone, undone!* The infinite

infinite majesty of God appears; the infinite malignity of sin appears; and the man *is pricked in his heart*, Acts ii. 37. The *commandment comes, sin revives*, and *he dies*, who before was *alive without the law*, Rom. vii. 9. Hence,

3. He discovers the absolute need of the promise of the gospel in a work of *humiliation*, and his undone state without it. A holy God stares the man in the face; the unholy soul sees this holy God, and is afraid, and ashamed, and humbled; humbled so far, as to take with the whole charge of God and his law against him. When ministers charge people with sins, they will either deny them, or cast a cloak over them, by manifold excuses; and perhaps say, I was mistaken, or in a passion, or under such and such temptation: but that is a plain evidence they are not humbled before God; for, when God humbles the man, he is more exercised in condemning himself, than any minister can be capable to do: he takes with the law-charge, saying, as Nathan to David, *I am the man*, I am the devil, I am the monster. Indeed, this and other steps of humiliation may, perhaps, run along with him in his whole Christian course, after his first believing, as well as before; but I speak now of the common and natural order.—He is humbled, likewise, to a clearing of God's *equity* and *righteousness*, in sentencing him by the law, to the pit of perdition, and is made to clear and justify God, though he should condemn him. Some will say, We cannot think God will be so cruel, as to damn the most part of the world for their sin: why, that is an evidence your soul was never humbled under a sense of sin. But, Oh! says the humbled soul, death and damnation is the true wages of sin; and if God should send me to hell, he is just; I might preach his righteousness there, and declare that he never wronged me; yea, it is my wonder that I have been so long out of the bottomless pit. Again, he is humbled to see, that as his damnation would be an act of *justice*, infinite justice; so his salvation, if ever he share thereof, will be an act of sovereignty, glorious sovereignty, and pure *grace*. He is humbled to see, that he cannot save himself; that he is neither able to save himself, nor worthy that God should save him; and that he is so far from having any righteousness of his own to plead, that his best righteousness is filthy rags; and that God may justly damn him for his duties, as well as for his sins.

4. He discovers to the man, in this case, the *excellency* of the promise, and of the new-covenant way of salvation; the excellency of Christ, and the glory of his righteousness in a work of saving illumination: and now the good work, the saving work begins, when the *Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ is given*, Eph. i. 17.; and Christ is *revealed in the man*, Gal. i. 16.: and this light is the light of life, whereby the soul is quickened to embrace the promise, to believe in Christ and hope in his word.

The promise is opened up and applied to the begetting of faith. As Christ *manifested for thhis glory, and his disciples believed in him*, John ii. 11.; so, when he manifests his glory in a word of grace or promise, then the soul believes; for then *the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith*, Rom. i. 16. Power accompanies the revelation for the working of faith; for the faith of God's elect is the *faith of God's operation*, Col. ii. 12. Then the man believes, now he credits the truth and goodness of the promise, 1 Tim. i. 15. He cordially accepts, and receives, appropriates, and applies the great and good things promised to himself, with a confident persuasion of the accomplishment of the promise, resting upon the faithfulness, power, and grace of the promiser for the same, according to the measure of the communication of the Spirit of faith, Rom. x. 10. Heb. xi. 13. Rom. iv. 20, 21. Heb. xi. 11. And now, the man is actually a child of the promise; for the promise hath taken hold of him; and he hath, through grace, taken hold of it: the promise hath embraced him, and he hath embraced it; the embracement is mutual: now he is graciously inclined and engaged.

Let me tell you, in order to the further clearing of this method or manner of their becoming actually the children of promise, the ministry of the gospel is a kind of fishery; ministers are called *fishers of men*, and so men and women are the fish. Now, God hath hung a bundle of promises together, as so many hooks upon a line, for taking all sort of fishes to bring them ashore to himself: here are large hooks for taking large fishes, were they as large as a leviathan; here are little hooks for taking little fishes, were they as little as a mennon.—Oh! says one, I am a great sinner, and my sins are mountaneous: well, there is a hook for you; *Who art thou, O great mountain, before our Zerubbabel? Thou shalt become a plain: and he shall bring forth the head-stone thereof with shooting, crying, Grace, grace unto it*, Zech. iv. 7.—Oh! says another, I am a poor insignificant worm, a worthless, mean, impotent creature: well, there is a hook for you; *Fear not, worm Jacob, I will help thee*, Isa. xiv. 14.—Are you poor and needy? There is a hook for you; *When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongues fail for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Jacob will not forsake them*, Isa. xli. 17, 18.—Are you a poor blind creature, that knows not what way to go? There is a hook for you, Isa. xlii. 16. *I will bring the blind by a way they know not, I will lead them in paths that they have not known.*—Are you a piece of parched ground, like a parched wilderness? There is a hook for you, Isa. xliv. iii. *I will pour water on him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground.*—Are you troubled that you cannot get a heart to pray? Well, there is a hook for taking you, Zech. xii. 10. *I will pour out upon the house of David, the Spirit of grace and supplication.*—Are you unable to believe and repent? Well, there is a hook for catching you, in the following words, *They shall look on him whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him*; where both faith and repentance are promised.—Are you a lost and undone creature? There is a hook for you; *Jesus Christ came to seek and save that which was lost*, Luke xix. 10.—Are you a plagued wretch, oppress with the plague of atheism and unbelief, with the plague of blasphemy and enmity, saying, Oh! there are deviliſh plagues, and helliſh diseases in my heart? Well, there is a hook for you, Rev. xxii. 2. *The leaves of the tree of life are for the healing of all nations*; and Mal. iv. 2. *To you that fear my name, shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing under his wings.*—Oh! but say you, there is a conditional promise, it is to them *that fear his name*: I will tell you, man, there is no conditional

ditional form put upon any promiſe in the Bible, to keep back a ſoul from applying and taking hold of the promiſe, but to draw it in to embrace the condition, either by taking Chriſt for the condition, or running to an abſolute promiſe, where that condition is promiſed: for inſtance, are you apprehenſive that you are deſtitute of that fear of God? Then there is a hook for you to ſwallow down, that you may be taken by it, Jer. xxxii. 40. *I will put my fear in your hearts, that you ſhall not depart from me.* And thus you are to do with all the promiſes that ſeem to run in a conditional form. Let not the condition fright you from opening your mouth wide to catch the hook of the promiſe; or, if ſtill you dare not meddle with it, then run to the abſolute promiſe, where the condition itſelf is promiſed; if you cannot find out that, then run to Chriſt himſelf, in whom all fulneſs is, and *in whom all the promiſes are yea and amen;* having him, you will have the condition of all the promiſes. If you ſtand aback from the promiſe, and will not open your mouth to receive it, or if you, reject it for want of this condition or qualification, you miſtake the nature of the goſpel, and are ignorant of the free covenant of promiſe. There is no evil you would have removed, no want you would have ſupplied, but you may get a promiſe for it; and if one cannot make for you (as none of them but will, if rightly underſtood) go to another: if one hook be too large for you to ſwallow down, you may get another, more meet for you; therefore, go about, and ſeek thy meat, and take faſt hold of the promiſe that makes beſt for thee. And, O happy ſoul, if you be taken! For the hook will not hurt you, but only hale you to the ſame happy ſhore with all the children of promiſe.

Perhaps there is a ſecret thought in ſome body's breaſt, Alas! Sir, but I do not find the promiſe taking hold of me; and therefore, how ſhall I take hold of it? You have been ſaying, none embraces the promiſe, till the promiſe embrace them; now, I do not find, I do not feel the promiſe taking hold of me.

ANSW. I fear, by this way of ſpeaking, you are making ſenſe and feeling the ground of your faith, and not the promiſe: this is not believing, but feeling; like Thomas, that would not believe till he felt and ſaw Chriſt: but, *Bleſſed is he that believeth, and hath not ſeen.*

QUEST. *But,* ſay you, *Muſt I not feel the power of God making me believe, before I can believe?*

ANSW. Yea, it is the power of God only that can make you believe: but make not your feeling of that power to be your warrant to believe; for the word of promiſe is your warrant, and alſo the immediate object and ground of faith: therefore, when there is a promiſe meet for you, and ſuited of God to your caſe, ſtretch out the withered hand to receive it at his call, never ſtopping for fear that the power of God be not enabling you; for, no ſooner will you eſſay to ſtretch out your hand, than the power of God will be before-hand with you, though, perhaps, in an inſenſible manner: whereas, if you wait for a ſenſible feeling of his power, you are not believing, nor truſting in his word. If you would believe, it muſt be when you feel him not: for, believing is not feeling; and feeling is not believing.

OBJECT. But, if I believe his word without feeling his power, I fear I ſhall but preſume, and take the promiſe only in my own ſtrength; or, like the ſtony-ground hearers, *receive the word with joy,* by a temporary faith, which will fail.

ANSW. People may indeed ſay they believe, and fancy they believe, and deceive themſelves: but fancy is one thing, and faith is another; true, right, and ſolid belief, is what you need not fear can be done in your own ſtrength. What! to take the word of a God for your ſecurity; to quit the law-way of ſalvation, and flee to the goſpel-promiſe; and to truſt the faithfulneſs of a God pledged in his promiſe, for your ſalvation from ſin and corruption, as well as from hell and damnation; to ſet to your ſeal that God is true, and to receive his record with particular application to yourſelf: if you do this, never fear that you are doing it by your own ſtrength; for it is not natural, but ſupernatural power that is dealing, when you are ſo acting. If you get a heart to embrace the promiſe, you may be ſure the promiſe is embracing you; for it is only virtue coming out of it, that enables you to embrace it: before your embracing of it, the virtue may be inſenſible and inviſible; but after the embracement, you may find ſenſible virtue. When the woman touched the hem of Chriſt's garment, ſenſible virtue came out of him; but there was ſome inviſible and inſenſible virtue came firſt from him to enable her to touch him; but ſhe never wiſt of that precedent virtue, till once ſhe touched him. A man may not know, till he believe, that it is the power of God that is dealing with him to make him believe, God's power deals and works ſo wonderfully in this matter; *No man can tell whence it comes, and whither it goes,* John iii. 8. What impreſſions the ſtamp of his power hath made, and how it makes the impreſſion, cannot be ſeen till on the back of it, or afterward, in order of nature at leaſt; even as the impreſſion that the ſeal makes upon the melted wax is not ſeen till the ſeal be lifted, and there the impreſſion remains. You cannot ſee yourſelf in a glaſs, till you look to it; but, look to it when you will, your image in the glaſs is before-hand with you: ſo, look to God in the promiſe; but lo, his looking to you therein prevents you. Your embracing the promiſe will flow from the promiſe embracing you; therefore, when the promiſe is ſet before you, and held out to you to be believed, take it in God's name, without any more ado; and then ſay with yourſelf, now there is a word for me, and it is the word of the God of truth; therefore that word and I ſhall never part: welcome, O bleſſed word, death ſhall not ſeparate you and me; I will hing by this hook, I will rely upon his word, till all be made good to me. And thus you will *receive the ingrafted word, that is able to ſave your ſoul.*

III. The *third* head of the method was, To ſtate the *compariſon,* and run the *parallel* betwixt believers and Iſaac; and ſo to ſhew more particularly, how they are, as Iſaac, the children of promiſe. And here the parallel may be ſtated in theſe following particulars.

1. As Iſaac was the *child* of Abraham; ſo are believers children of Abraham; *Know ye, therefore, that they which are of faith, the ſame are the children of Abraham,* Gal. iii. 17. See alſo ver. 29. *And if ye be Chriſt's, then are ye Abraham's ſeed, and heirs according to the promiſe.* As Iſaac was a child

child of Abraham, not by natural power, for both his body and Sarah's were dead; but by a gracious promiſe, Gen. xvii. 19.; even ſo, believers are the children of Abraham, not by natural deſcent, ſuch as the Jews boaſted of, when they ſaid, *We have Abraham for our father*; but by virtue of the gracious promiſe made to Abraham, that *in his ſeed*, [*i. e.* in Chriſt,] *all nations of the earth ſhall be bleſſed*, Gal. iii. 8. compared with Gen. xviii. 18. To *Abraham and his ſeed was the promiſe made: He ſays not, unto ſeeds, as of many; but as of one; and to thy ſeed, which is Chriſt*, Gal. iii. 16. Thus, as Iſaac was a child of the promiſe made to Abraham; ſo believers are not only children of the promiſe made to Abraham, but alſo the children of the promiſe made to Chriſt, the ſeed of Abraham; *In thy ſeed*, [that is, in Chriſt,] *ſhall they be bleſſed.* To *Abraham and his ſeed were the promiſes made*; and as Abraham truſted God for the accompliſhment of the promiſe of Iſaac, Rom. iv. 19, 20, 31.; even ſo, Chriſt truſted his Father for the accompliſhment of the promiſe made to him concerning his elect children, Heb. ii. 13.; there he is brought in ſaying, *I will put my truſt in him*; and then, *Behold I, and the children which God hath given me.* Abraham's confidence was ſtrong, but Chriſt's confidence in his Father was perfect; it was not poſſible that the Mediator could diſtruſt his Father.

2. As Iſaac was the *ſpecial ſeed* of Abraham, of whom it was ſaid, *In Iſaac ſhall thy ſeed be called*, Heb. xi. 18. Gen. xxi. 12. Rom. ix. 7.: even ſo, believers are God's *peculiar people, a choſen generation; To you that believe he is precious:* —You are *a choſen generation, a royal prieſthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, that you ſhould ſhew forth the praiſes of him who hath called us out of darkneſs to his marvellous light*, 1 Pet. ii. 7, 8. Abraham had another ſon, namely, Iſhmael; but the promiſe was not to Iſhmael, but to Iſaac: ſo God hath other people that are his children, not only by creation, but by general adoption, and church-membership, and whoſe right to the promiſes is but general in point of acceſs and warrant to believe, ſealed in the ſacrament of baptiſm; which yet is ſuch as renders them inexcuſable, when they do not improve that right of acceſs they have: but believers are the children of God by a ſpecial adoption, having a ſpecial intereſt in, and poſſeſſion of the promiſe.

3. Iſaac was, *the fruit of prayer*, as well as the child of promiſe to Abraham. You may ſee the prayer of Abraham concerning a ſeed, Gen. xv. 3. *Lord God, what wilt thou give me, ſeeing I go childleſs?* May we not allude to this here? The children of God are not only the children of the promiſe made to the Mediator, but alſo the children of prayer made by him; they are the fruit of Chriſt's prayer, mediation, and interceſſion, John xvii. 20. He prayed not only for all that are believers, but for *all that ſhould believe on him*; and he prays them all to heaven, ver. 24. *Father, I will, that they alſo whom thou haſt given me, may be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou haſt given me; for thou loved me before the foundation of the world.*

4. Iſaac was the child of a promiſe, whereof the accompliſhment was *long delayed*; though yet the delay did carry no prejudice to the certainty of the promiſe as to its accompliſhment, which took place in the fulneſs of time appointed of God, Gen. xvii. 21. and xxi. 2. Thus it is with believers, the children of the promiſe; there is a ſet time of their birth, or their being brought forth out of the womb of the promiſe; and the Lord waits, as it were, for that time which he hath ſet; *He waits to be gracious*, Iſa. xxx. 18. And after they are actually the children of the promiſe by converting grace, there is a ſet time for accompliſhing particular promiſes to them, for which they are to wait; *The viſion is for an appointed time, but at the end it ſhall ſpeak, and not lye; though it tarry, wait for it, becauſe it will ſurely come, it will not tarry*, Hab. ii. 3. It was more than twenty years after God promiſed Abraham a ſeed, that Iſaac was born. Perhaps there is a twenty year old promiſe, or a ten year old promiſe, or what you got ſo many years ago, not yet like to be accompliſhed. But, believer, the time is drawing near: as a man that is far off, every ſtep he takes in his return, he draws nearer and nearer home; ſo the fulneſs of time is coming for the promiſe to bring forth, and the viſion to ſpeak; it does not tarry in the day, nor in the night, though it ſeems to tarry, but approaches every moment: the longer you live, believer, the nearer you come to the accompliſhment of the promiſe; *Now is your ſalvation nearer than when you believed.* The promiſe of Iſaac, however long delayed, was as certain as the promiſe of Chriſt's coming; for Chriſt was to come of him: even ſo, the children of promiſe ſhall all as certainly be brought forth, and the promiſe as certainly be accompliſhed to them, as it is certain that Chriſt the promiſed ſeed is come. Indeed, the accompliſhment of that promiſe of his coming is a certain pledge of the accompliſhment of all the reſt of the promiſes; for, they are all chained to that great link: it was the leading promiſe, though about four thouſand years before it was accompliſhed; yet, *In the fulneſs of time, God ſent his Son, made of a woman*, and ſo accompliſhed that promiſe on which all the reſt depended. God will not forget to keep his day, were it never ſo long betwixt the promiſe and the day that he hath ſet, Exod. xii. 41. compared with Gen. xv. 13.

5. Iſaac was a child of the promiſe, born in a very *unlikely, unexpected*, and *wonderful* manner. Inſuperable difficulties ſtood in the way; outward means did fail; and, by the courſe of nature, no ſuch thing could be expected as the promiſed Iſaac. Abraham was an hundred years old, and his body was dead and withered; Sarah was ninety years old, and her womb was dead and barren, Rom. iv. 19. Heb. xi. 11. Even ſo it is with believers, the children of promiſe; when the promiſe comes to its full time of bringing forth its iſſue, the birth of any of the children of promiſe is always ſurprizing, wonderful, and moſt unlikely to natural ſenſe and carnal reaſon, when mountains of ſin and guilt, and inſuperable difficulties are in the way. Thus we will find the goſpel coming in with the ſweeteſt cordial, even when the law is raiſing the greateſt difficulty; as in Iſa. xliii. 22,—25. *Thou haſt not called upon me, O Jacob; thou haſt been weary of me, O Iſrael;—thou haſt made me to ſerve with thy ſins, and wearied me with thine iniquities.* Who could expect immediately after this to hear God ſaying, as it juſt follows, *I, even I am he that blotteth out thy tranſgreſſions, for mine own ſake, and will not remember thy ſins!* So Iſa. lvii. 17, 18. *For the iniquity of his covetouſneſs I was*

was wroth, and smote him; I hid me and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart. O what a wonderful and surprising birth of free grace is that which follows! *I have seen his ways and will heal him; I will lead him also, and restore comfort unto him, and to his mourners.* When one would think, now the threatning is big with child, and ready to bring forth vengeance; then, to the praise of free grace, the promise, being big with a blessing, brings forth mercy and salvation. This is what makes Abraham's faith necessary, according to its measure, in all the children of promise; because some resemblance of the difficulties that Abraham's faith had to encounter, does present to them. Why, say you, it was a thing incredible that was promised to Abraham, he being so superannuate and dead, and Sarah likewise so old and barren. Well, man, woman, but the case is yours in other respects: you have the old man of sin and corruption, and your heart is dead and barren of any spiritual good; and it is as impossible for you to bring forth any spiritual issue, as it was for Abraham and Sarah to have an Isaac, if he had not been a child of promise, brought forth, not by the power of nature, but by the virtue of the promise: Even so it is with you; you need Abraham's faith; and faith of the same nature you will have, if you be a child of Abraham. Sense and reason will oppose and say, It is incredible that spiritual life and fruit can issue out of such a dead and barren soul; but now the language of faith is, What says the promise? As *Abraham considered not the deadness of his own body, or of Sarah's womb,* nor the difficulties that stood in the way of the promise; but the truth, faithfulness, and power of the promiser: even so, faith considers not the deadness, hardness, and barrenness of the heart; but the truth and veracity of that God, who *is able, of stones, to raise up children to Abraham,* according to his promise. And thus the promise brings forth its happy issue, and the child of promise owns that it is not by the power of nature, but merely by the power of grace, and virtue of the promise, that any spiritual good is brought forth, saying, *By grace I am what I am.*—Thus *we are the children of God by faith;* and, *as Isaac, the children of the promise.*

6. Isaac's birth was the *joy* of his parents; the *comfort* of Abraham, the *laughter* of Sarah, Gen. xxi. 6.: Even so, the birth of the promise is the joy of their heavenly relations. It is a day wherein God is evidencing that he is well-pleased in Christ: it is a day of the gladness of Christ's heart; saints and angels are glad; the church militant and triumphant rejoice; *There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth,* Luke xv. 7, 10. See how, in the preceeding verse, where our text lies, the barren Christian church is called to rejoice when children are born to God within her, Gal. iv. 27. *Rejoice, thou barren, that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travellest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband.* Then is the church in joyful circumstances, when, by virtue of the gospel promise, children are brought forth in her, even *this man and that man there.* Such happy days have been in the church of Scotland, when the spirit of reformation was poured out; but when that spirit is much quenched, and reformation-light obscured, and reformation-zeal cooled, when the edge of it is blunted, when the carved work thereof is burnt, the covenanted work buried much in oblivion, and when old reformation-principles, together with the gospel-doctrine of free grace, which was the great instrument of conversion, is brought under much contempt and reproach; little wonder, when God is like to give the mother-church a bill of divorce, that she be not the joyful mother of many children to him. The gospel promise, and the free revelation of grace in Christ, is the very womb of the church, that brings forth her children: but, now-a-days, the doctrine of the gospel is brought under much disparagement, under much suspicion, as if it were some *new dangerous scheme of doctrine;* as the Athenians said of Paul's, Acts xvii. 19. Yea, it was said of Christ's, *What new doctrine is this?* Mark i. 27. Such is the natural bias towards the law, as a covenant, and so natively does a church and people fall into it, even after and under a profession of sound principles, that when evangelical doctrine comes to be revived, in any measure, it is still branded with *novelty* †. Thus it was with Christ himself; his doctrine was called *new,* when he came to be a minister of the old and antient truths of God, even to *confirm the promises made unto the fathers,* Rom. xv. 8. But it is the free promise, the free grace of God, that begets holy children to God; and therefore an unholy devil will raise up all the calumnies in the world against it, that so when it is brought under an ill report, and universal suspicion, none may receive or get good of it; for all the saving good that is gotten, is by the power of grace, by the virtue of the promise: however, *the election shall obtain;* but, if the devil could get his will, the promise should never be the joyful mother of any children.

7. Isaac was born, not *after the flesh,* but *by the promise;* not of *the bond-woman,* but of *the free.* See the context, Gal. iv. 22, 23. And how this is explained, you see in the following vers. 24, 25, 26.; and how it is applied, both in the text, and ver. 31.; where it is, in like manner, said of all believers, *So then, brethren, we are not children of the bond-woman, but of the free.* As HAGAR and SARAH here signify the *old* and *new covenant,* as I shewed in the explication; so ISHMAEL and ISAAC hold forth these that are under the *law,* and these that are under *grace.* Now, believers are thus distinguished from all unbelieving Ishmaelites, that *they are not under the law, but under grace;* and hence *sin cannot have dominion over them,* Rom. vi. 14.—There is a threefold bondage to the law that unbelievers are under, which the children of the promise and the free-woman are delivered from.

(1.) The *commanding* power of the law; that is, the *precept* of it, under this conditional form, *Do and live.* The law of works, that they are under, says, *Do and live,* Rom. x. 5. That law that they are under, says to them, *If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments;* which, no doubt, is galling to the conscience, as it was to that young man in the gospel, to whom Christ thus speaks, for his awakening and conviction. How galling must it be to them that are under the law, to understand that they are under such an impretable command, *Do perfectly, and live eternally;* considering the holiness and spirituality of that law, and also the wickedness and inability of the creature? Therefore,

(2.) They are under the bondage of the *condemning* power of the law, *Cursing every man that con-*

† See the ground of this charge accounted for, and the unjustness thereof evinced, p. 70, 149, 150, 178, 198.

continues not in all things written in the book of the law to do them, Gal. iii. 10. The law not only curſes its tranſgreſſors from heaven, which they have forfeited, but curſes them to hell, which they have incurred; for, *all have ſinned, and come ſhort of the glory of God*, Rom. iii. 23.; yea, *the wages of ſin is death*; and, *the wrath of God is revealed from heaven againſt all ungodlineſs and unrighteouſneſs of men*, Rom. i. 18.

(3.) They are under the bondage of the *irritating* power of the law; *The motions of ſin, which are by the law, work in their members to bring forth fruit unto death*, Rom. vii. 5. The ſpiritual law mightily irritates the corruption of a man in nature, ſo as he becomes angry, and chaft, and ſins more and more; for, *The carnal mind is enmity againſt God, and is not ſubject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.* The law inrages his corruption, like a mad horſe, that rages the more that he is checked with the bridle: here is a ſad bondage, that all unbelievers, Iſhmaelites, *children of the bond-woman*, are under. Now, believers, the *children of promiſe*, are, with Iſaac, the *children of the free-woman*, being delivered from that bondage: from the firſt, by Chriſt's obedience imputed, Rom. v. 19.; from the ſecond, by his ſatisfaction imputed, Gal. iii. 13.; from the third, by his grace imparted, and his Spirit implanted, according to the new covenant, Rom. viii. 2. The believer is not under the law of works, becauſe Chriſt hath done all for him: he is not under the threatening of it, becauſe Chriſt hath ſuffered all for him; he is not under the irritation of it, for *the law*, as a rule, *is written in his heart*, and Chriſt, by his Spirit, *works in him both to will and to do of his good pleaſure*. He is not under the law as a covenant of works, to be thereby either juſtified or condemned: hence he is neither under the bondage of doing duty, from hope that he ſhall be juſtified by doing it; nor from the fear that he ſhall be condemned for not doing it, ſeeing that, as *by the deeds of the law no fleſh living can be juſtified*; ſo, *there is no condemnation to them that are in Chriſt*. He is freed both from the legal hope of getting to heaven by his doing, and ſlaviſh fear of going to hell for not doing; for, as his title to heaven is founded on Chriſt's obedience only, and his ſecurity from hell upon Chriſt's death and ſatisfaction only; ſo his motives to obedience are more evangelical, and ſuited to the goſpel-liberty that he is under, ſuch as love and gratitude towards that God who hath ſaved him. I ſpeak of believers now, as ſuch, and in ſo far as freed from the law, and not in ſo far as unbelief and a legal temper, in the ſad remains thereof, may hold them under much bondage: but ſuch is their freedom, as I have expreſſed, in ſo far as they *hold faſt the liberty wherewith Chriſt hath made them free*, Gal. v. 1. — I might here alſo ſpeak of the freedom of God's children even from the ceremonial law, which may be a part of the apoſtle's intent; a bondage which the Jews, by their own conſent, are ſtill under: this is called, by that famous council, Acts xv. 10. *A yoke*, upon the neck of the diſciples, *which neither we, nor our fathers, were able to bear*. And if inſtituted ceremonies were ſuch, how much more muſt uninſtituted ones be? This is a yoke which many in our land are wreathing about their own necks, embracing the abjured Engliſh popiſh ceremonies, and new modes of divine ſervice, which have no ſtamp of divine authority. We ſhould even pity and pray for thoſe who are fond of ſuch a yoke, as cannot but, in the iſſue, gall their necks; and that this generation may not run wholly back to Rome.— Now, I ſaid, that as Iſaac was born of the free-woman, ſo are believers *free indeed*, becauſe *the Son makes them free*: they are from *Jeruſalem which is above, and is free*, ver. 26. They *are not under the law, but under grace*.

8. Iſaac was no ſooner born, than he was *mocked* and *perſecuted* by Iſhmael, the ſon of the bond-woman; *As he that was born after the fleſh perſecuted him that was born after the Spirit, ſo it is now*, ſaid the apoſtle, in his day, Gal. iv. 29.; and ſo it is now, ſay I, in our day; and ſo it will be to the end of the world. Our apoſtle here deſigns to prevent the believing Galatians their ſtumbling at the oppoſition they might meet with from the Jews, who were ſo tenacious of their law, as to be ready to perſecute theſe that would not ſubmit to it: he tells them, that this was no more than what was pointed out in the type; and, as it was betwixt Iſaac and Iſhmael, ſo will it be betwixt believers and unbelievers, theſe that *are under the law*, and theſe that *are under grace*. The ſeed of the woman, and the ſeed of the ſerpent cannot agree; *All that will live godly in Chriſt Jeſus, muſt ſuffer perſecution*, 2 Tim. iii. 12. ALL, without exception, that will live godly in Chriſt Jeſus, muſt lay their account with perſecution; and more eſpecially theſe that preach and profeſs the goſpel, muſt look to be hated and reproached; *You ſhall be hated of all men for my name's ſake*, Luke xxi. 17. Mat. x. 22. *Of all men*; that is, of all that do not embrace the goſpel, you in particular ſhall be hated; for, the devil ſhoots his arrows at the whiteſt marks. The apoſtle here ſeems to point at *ſecret enemies*, and *falſe brethren*, that pretend to religion, and are ſeemingly holy, Gal. ii. 4. compared with chap. i. 6, 7. And here it was a circumciſed Iſhmael that ſcoft at Iſaac, Gal. vi. 29. compared with Gen. xxi. 9. The moſt deadly enemies of Chriſt, were theſe who ſtiled themſelves *Abraham's ſeed*, and were ſo according to the fleſh: hence the church complains, Song i. 6. *My mother's children were angry with me*; *i. e.* my mother's children by external profeſſion. The greateſt enemies of the church, for the moſt part, are theſe vipers that ly in her own bowels: the children of the promiſe may look to be *caſt out* by their *ſeeming brethren*, Iſa. lxi. 5.; and to be counted as *monſters*, *ſigns*, and *wonders*, and that *even in Iſrael*, Iſa. viii. 18.; and *men wondered at*, Zech. iii. 8. If it be ſo to this very day, think it not ſtrange, for the world will be like itſelf. "I "would be offended, ſaid Luther, if the world "were not offended at me." There is perſecution in reproachful words; Iſhmael's mocking of Iſaac is here called perſecution. We read of fourteen or fifteen ſeveral trials that the Old-Teſtament martyrs endured, Heb. xi. 35.—38. whereof this was one, *cruel mockings*. To be *ſmitten with the tongue*, is ſometimes a very cruel thing; to be called *mad, drunk, peſtilent, turbulent fellows*, as the apoſtles were, Acts ii. 13. xvii. 18, 19. xxvii. 24. xxviii. 22.; to be *counted the offſcourings of all things*; yea, and *fire-brands of contention*, are grievous charges, and afflicting to the godly: *Wo is me, my mother, that thou haſt born me a man of ſtrife, and a man of contention to the whole earth!* Jer. xv. 10. The beſt cordial for a child of God, in that caſe, is the like of that word,

If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth on you, 1 Pet. iv. 13, 14. *On their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified*, Mat. v. 11, 12.

9. Isaac was the *heir* by promise, though thus persecuted, Gal. iv. 30. compared with Gen. xxi. 10. xv. 3, 4.; Even so, believers, the children of promise, are heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; *If children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together*, Rom. viii. 17. They are born heirs of the crown of glory; as children of the promise, they are just *begotten to a lively hope by the resurrection of Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and which fadeth not away*, 1 Pet. iii. 4, 5. They that are effectually hooked by the promise, though they may swim for a while in the sea of this sinful and troublesome world, yet the line on which the hook of the promise hings, will draw them at length to the shore of glory; *Faithful is he that promiseth, who also will do it.* Yea, the gospel-believer only is the *heir*, Rom. iv. 14.

10. The *trials* and *difficulties* that encountered Isaac in the way of the accomplishment of the promise, were very great; and so may it be with all believers, the children of promise, before they be put in full possession of the promised inheritance. We touched already the trial of Abraham's faith with respect to the birth of Isaac, and the difficulties that stood in the way of that promise, Abraham's body being dead, and Sarah also being of a barren sterile constitution naturally, and now past the prolific age.—But after Isaac was given in this extraordinary manner, and entered heir of the promise, such difficulties presented themselves, as seemed, at one blow, to cut off the intail of the promise for ever: Behold, Abraham is ordered to go and sacrifice Isaac, Gen. xxii. 2. compared with Heb. xi. 17, 18, 19. A greater trial was never put upon any creature after he had received the promise: what promise? that *in Isaac should his seed be called*; that he should be one of the progenitors of the Messias, and *all nations blessed in him*: so that, in being called to offer up his Isaac, the hope of his family, his only Son whom he loved; he seemed, at the same time, to be called to go and cut off the promises of God, to prevent the coming of Christ, and so destroy the whole world; to sacrifice his own soul, and his hopes of salvation in Christ, promised to come of Isaac; and to cut off the church of God at one blow: a very terrible trial! Isaac was the only one that he was to have by his wife Sarah, the only one that was to be the child and heir of the promise; the only son that could convey to all nations the promised blessing; a son for whom he waited so long, received in so wonderful a manner, on whom his heart was set; and to offer up his son as a sacrifice, and that by his own hand, which looked like the murder forbidden in the sixth command; it was a trial that would have overset the firmest and strongest mind that ever informed a human body: Yet he offered up Isaac by faith; he did it intentionally, and was ready to have done it actually, and went as far in it as the critical moment, and would have gone through with it, if God had not prevented him; for, the ground of his faith was, that he *accounted that God was able to raise him from the dead*; so that it would seem that Abraham had no expectation of being countermanded. Thus the trial went to the last extremity; and then, you know, how the Lord appeared.—Now, in like manner, the children of promise, believers in Christ, after they are entered heirs of the promise, extraordinary difficulties may appear, which their faith will have to struggle with; providences may run so cross to the promise, as that the fatal knife may seem to be at the very throat of the promise, to cut it off for ever from being accomplished. Isaac was given up for dead; and *Abraham received him*, as it were, *from the dead*, Heb. xi. 19.: His return to him was no less than a resurrection. The children and heirs of the promise are not then to *think strange concerning the fiery trial, that is to try them, as though some strange thing happened to them*, 1 Pet. iv. 12.; but are to believe that the promise will make its way through fire, and water, and death, and dreadful extremities; *That the trial of faith being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, may be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Christ Jesus*, 1 Pet. i. 7.—— Thus you may observe the parallel, in manifold particulars, betwixt believers and Isaac; and see how, *as Isaac was*, they *are the children of promise*.

IV. The *fourth* general head, which was, To offer the *grounds* and *reasons* of the doctrine, whence and why it is that the children of God are the children of promise. And here three distinct questions may be accounted for: 1. Whence it is that the promise hath such a *prolific virtue* for begetting children to God? 2. Why God will have his children to be *so* by the promise? 3. Why will he have *them*, and them *only*, to be the children of the promise? A word to each of these.

1st, Whence it is that the *promise* hath such a *prolific virtue* for begetting children to God? or, how is it the mean of bringing forth children? In general, it is by the divine destination and appointment made the great instrument of begetting God's children; *Of his own will begat he us, with the word of truth*, Jam. i. 18. And more particularly, it hath virtue for producing this effect, in the following respects.

1. As it is the *discovery of divine love*, the *manifestation of divine grace* in Christ; *The grace of God, that bringeth salvation, hath appeared unto all men*, Tit. ii. 11.; and this revelation is the channel of divine power; *I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek: for therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith*, Rom. i. 16, 17. The riches of God's grace and love to sinners are manifested in the gospel-promise, and the freedom thereof, namely, his *loving them because he loves them*, Deut. vii. 6, 7, 8.; and that *he will pity for his own name's sake*, as is often intimate in the promise. And when the Lord offers, in the promise, to break through all the unworthiness and deservings of the creature, this tends to melt the greatest sinner to the greatest self-abasement, and the deepest sense of his own nothingness, saying, *Lord, what am I?* It tends also to make the soul break forth into the highest admiration of God, saying, *O! who is like unto thee?* And to fall in love with that wonderful device of salvation by free grace, through Christ Jesus, as the *Lord our righteousness*; and thus to bring the soul to God, as a child of pro-

promise, conquered by the irresistible grace thereof.

2. The promise hath prolific virtue, as it is the *object of faith*, and the mean thereof; Rom. i. 16. It is *revealed to faith*; that is, to be believed: there is the immediate object of faith; and it is this revelation that is appointed of God to be the very mean of faith; therefore it is said, Rom. x. 17. *Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God:* and when faith comes this way, then persons are the children of God by faith in Christ.

3. The promise hath this prolific virtue, as it is the *ground of hope* to the poor perishing sinner; and when he begins to hope upon this ground, then regeneration begins; 1 Pet. i. 3. *He hath begotten us again to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Christ from the dead*; that is, I suppose, by the revelation of Christ as the sinner's righteousness for justification, confirmed and manifested in his resurrection from the dead: hence Christ speaks of his Spirit *convincing* men *of righteousness, because he hath ascended to his Father*, after he arose for our justification, John xvi. 10. compared with Rom. iv. 25.

4. And consequently, the promise hath this prolific virtue, as it is the *seed of regeneration*; *the incorruptible seed*, 1 Pet. i. 23, 25. When the word of grace, the promise, is sown into the heart, then the incorruptible seed is sown there, which hath a generative virtue for begetting the person to a lively hope, and making him a child of promise by regeneration; *Of his own will begat he us, by the word of truth.*

5. The promise hath this prolific virtue, as it is the *impartation* and *communication of grace*. In the new covenant there are not only promises of blessings, and of more grace to them that have grace, which may be called conditional promises; but promises of grace to them that want, which are absolute promises, and necessarily presuppose a total want: and so runs the covenant, Heb. viii. 8,—12. Every dram of grace is the fruit, result, and issue of an absolute promise, they all being so reductively; every good condition and qualification being promises therein, and no good condition or qualification takes place in the soul till that be accomplished: the instant before the promise of *quickening* be accomplished, the soul is *dead in trespasses and sins*, Eph. ii. 4.; the moment before *reconciliation*, it stands in *enmity against the Lord*, Col. i. 21.; and immediately before the promise of *sanctification* be made good, it is *under sin and pollution.* Hereupon the sinner hath encouragement to come to Christ, and the free promise, notwithstanding of the want of all good qualifications, because all gracious qualifications are derived to the sinner through the promise. The Lord is a free agent, and may work how he pleases; but hath not warranted any soul to stay one moment from closing with the Lord Jesus Christ, upon the want of any qualification, or upon any account whatsoever; otherwise he would allow their staying so long in unbelief, whereas that is hateful and abominable to him. Now, seeing grace is here dispensed, to the graceless; faith, to the faithless; repentance, to the impenitent; holiness, to the unholy; and all good things, to them that have nothing but all evil about them; thence the prolific virtue of the gospel of grace does proceed: and hence the gospel-dispensation comes with a commission to *open the eyes of the blind; to turn them from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God; that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith that is in Christ Jesus*, Acts xxvi. 18. And, indeed, if grace were not freely imparted and communicated by the gospel unto sinners, that by nature are destitute of all good, and all grace; none of Adam's sinful race could be the better of the gospel, for they are all graceless, cursed enemies to God: but it hath virtue to beget grace, because it is the channel in which grace runs out towards them freely.

6. The gospel-promise hath this prolific virtue, as it is the *chariot of the Spirit*, in which he rides; hence called the *ministration of the Spirit*, 2 Cor. iii. 8. The doctrine of the gospel is that in which the *Spirit is received*, Gal. iii. 2.: yea, the promise is so much the chariot of the Spirit, that it is called *the promise of the Spirit*, Gal. iii. 14.; and the Spirit is called *the Spirit of promise*, Eph. i. 13. This, indeed, is the great thing that is the source and spring of the prolific virtue of the promise, and what all that hath been said, is reducible unto, namely, its being the Spirit's chariot, wherein he rides prosperously, *conquering and to conquer.* The Spirit of faith, mixing in with the doctrine of faith, makes it the *rod of his strength sent out of Zion*, Psal. cx. 2.; upon which it follows, *Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.* Now, the word of grace, and the Spirit of grace, joining hand in hand, to beget children unto God, is a promise made to the God-man Mediator, to take place to the end of time; *As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord, my Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seeds seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever*, Isa. lix. 21. And thus the promise, with the Spirit in it, is productive of children to Christ. The Spirit promised was first upon Christ the head, and from the head descends to the members: and all believers are his seed; and the mean by which a seed is perpetuate and keep up for him, is the word and Spirit. The word is said to be first in Christ's mouth, he is our Prophet; and then in the mouth of this seed, the church; for there the promise shall be published: and thus, by the word and Spirit going together, the seed is maintained, and the children brought forth. O cry for the Spirit, then, to put virtue in the promise! Happy they that know the promise, given by the Father, sealed by the Son, and applied by the Holy Ghost!—So much for the question here, how the promise is a mean of begetting children to God?

2*dly*, Why will God have his children to be *so* by the promise? Believers are the children of God, by being the children of promise, for these following reasons, briefly touched at.

1. Because there is no *life* or *salvation* any other way. There are but two ways to eternal life supposable; the one is by the law, and the other by promise: by the law it is impossible, Gal. iii. 16.; therefore it must be by promise. These two ways you see set in opposition to each other, Rom. iv. 14. Gal. iii. 18. *If the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise;* and why? Even because it was not possible to have it by the law, ver. 21. *For if there had been a law given, which could have*

have given life, then verily righteousness should have been by the law: but so it is, that no law was given, which could give life to any sinner; therefore righteousness and justification must be by promise in Christ. This argument stands confirmed by the very death of Christ, Gal. ii. 21. *If righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain:* but now, to assert that Christ is dead in vain, were blasphemy; why then, righteousness and life come not by the law, but by the promise in Christ.

2. God will have his children to be so by promise, that their *salvation may be sure.* What surer than the promise of God, confirmed by the oath of God, and sealed by the blood of God? It is therefore called the *sure mercies of David*, Isa. lv. 3. This covenant of promise stands first in Christ. The promise of the covenant of works, which promised life upon our doing, is forfeited by our disobedience, insomuch that nothing remains to these that are under that covenant, but a precept that is impresstible, every way unperformable, by sinful creatures; and a penalty that is intolerable by finite creatures; a command that cannot be obeyed; and a threatening that cannot be endured: hence, as life eternal is impossible to be obtained by them, and death eternal is inevitable while they remain there out of Christ; so, even to Adam in innocence, the promise of life, by that covenant, was very unsure, as the effect shewed: but now, the children of God, being the children of promise, have eternal life insured upon a law-biding righteousness, which is everlasting and immutable; through which righteousness, *Grace reigns to eternal life*, Rom. v. 21. Therefore,

3. God will have his children to be the children of promise, that their salvation may be *free*, as well as sure. See these two joined, Rom. iv. 16. *Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace, to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed.* Indeed, if the promise were not free, salvation could not be sure: for, a properly conditional promise were a covenant of works; and if we failed in the condition of such a covenant even in a state of innocency, what would we do now in a state of sin and misery? Could that be sure? No, no; therefore, that it may be sure, it is of *grace*, Rom. 11. 6. I dare say, believer, you will put your seal to it, that your salvation could not be sure, if it were not of grace, of free grace manifested in the free promise.

4. God will have his children to be so by promise, that their salvation may be *full* and *complete*; for the children of promise are the heirs: and, what are they heirs of? Why, they *inherit all things*, Rev. xxi. 7. for they are *heirs of God*, Rom. viii. 17. Gal. iii. 29. The children of the promise in Christ, *are complete in him, in whom is all the fulness of the God-head;* and *who is made of God to them, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.* The law of works did not hold forth a full and complete salvation; for though it promised life upon doing, yet it did not promise grace to do and persevere: but here is a covenant of better promises, wherein Christ, and all grace in him, is held forth; and not only eternal life, comprehending grace and glory, salvation from sin and from hell; all upon the condition fulfilled by the Lord Jesus Christ, even his everlasting righteousness; but eternal life to the greatest advantage, both with respect to God's greater glory, and man's greater happiness; for, he came *to give life, and to give it more abundantly*, John x. 11.

5. God will have his children to be so by promise, that their salvation may be *surprising* and *wonderful.* To be saved by a free promise, is to be saved in a way that is the world's wonder. It crosses and confounds the wisdom of the world; it is *a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence* to them, Rom. ix. 33. They cannot think it possible that God will save us for nothing; that he will save us without our cost, without our charge, without our assistance, without our desert, without our desire: yet so it is, that none, by nature, have so much as a desire after Christ; nay, they say, *There is no beauty in him that we should desire him; he is despised and rejected of men*, Isa. liii. 2, 3. Men will not take with it, that they are downright enemies to Christ, and his gospel of free grace: but yet they are miserable enough, if they be but, *as it were*, enemies to it. There are two sad and ominous AS IT WERES, in scripture, to this purpose; one is, Isa. liii. 3. *We hid* AS IT WERE *our faces from him*; that is, they disesteemed Christ: another is, Rom. ix. 32. *They sought righteousness and life* AS IT WERE *by the works of the law*, and that is explained to be a stumbling at Christ. Well, these that sought life in this manner, lost it; who then found it? Even these that were not seeking it at all, were not desiring it; in consequence to this word, *I am found of them that sought me not.* This the apostle expresses, with wonder at the free grace of God, Rom. ix. 30, 31. This doctrine is so wonderful and mysterious, so opposite to the legal bias of the children of men, that the world cannot admit of it. The children of promise themselves can hardly believe the promise, it is so free. What! will God save me, upon no consideration in me, but that of sin and misery, and upon no other terms but as I am a sinner, and he a Saviour? Indeed, one of the great things that makes believing to be difficult, is, because we cannot admit it into our thoughts that salvation is to be had at such an easy rate: the old conditional covenant of works is so ingrained in our nature; *Do and live*, is so stampt on our hearts, that God will give us heaven, while yet we do nothing for it: yet so it is, that if we *seek life even* AS IT WERE *by the works of the law*, we stumble at the grace of God. O how wonderfully is this grace of God in Christ displayed in the promise!

6. God will have his children to be children of promise, that their salvation may be in a way *exclusive of boasting*; Rom. iii. 27. *Where is boasting then? It is excluded: By what law? Of works? Nay, but by the law of faith.* He will have them saved in a way that is most for his exaltation, and their humiliation; *That he that glories, may glory in the Lord; and that no flesh may glory in his presence; that the haughtiness of man may be humbled, and the Lord alone exalted*, Isa. ii. 11. The works of the law, and the faith of the promise, differ extremely; in that the former encourages boasting, and the latter excludes it. The promise of life, by the law, is to him that *works* for his life; this foasters pride and boasting, therefore it is out of doors: but the promise of life, by the gospel, is *to him that works not, but believes on him that justifies the ungodly*, Rom. iv. 5. This excludes boasting; it brings down the pride of man, and exalts the grace of

of God: therefore it is God's way. Man's way is quite contrary to God's; through their natural pride, they cannot ſubmit to the righteouſneſs of God, without their own legal righteouſneſs mixt with it, Rom. x. 3; even when, by the goſpel, *the righteouſneſs of God, without the law, is manifeſted*, Rom. iii. 21. Now, it is the property of faith to come empty-handed, without the law, or any expectation by the works thereof; and being empty-handed of its own works and righteouſneſs, it is fit for taking in the righteouſneſs of another: whereas the full-handed legaliſt hath no room, cannot take Chriſt and a promiſe in his hand; the law fills both his hands: or, if he takes the promiſe in one hand, and the law in another, Chriſt's righteouſneſs in one hand, and his own righteouſneſs in another, and think to make up a perfect righteouſneſs of both together; how does he thus bewray his proud boaſting of a perſonal righteouſneſs, to the reproach of the perſonal righteouſneſs of Chriſt, as if it were not perfect? Faith excludes boaſting, becauſe it lives on a promiſe of free grace; and whatever we have, or ſeem to have of our own, whether it be work or worthineſs, faith caſts it wholly to the ground, and itſelf alſo, that Chriſt may be *All in all*, for *wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification, and redemption.* —— Thus you ſee ſome of the reaſons why God will have his children to be the children of promiſe.

3dly, The *third* queſtion was, why will he have *them*, and them *only*, to be the actual children of promiſe? Why will he have his children thus diſtinguiſhed from the reſt of the world?

1. Becauſe they are the children of his *purpoſe*, they are the fruit of his eternal predeſtination; *Having predeſtinate us into the adoption of children by Jeſus Chriſt to himſelf, according to the good pleaſure of his will*, Eph. i. 4, 5. He had a purpoſe of grace concerning them; therefore they are effectually called according to his purpoſe. See Rom. viii. 28, 29, 30.

2. They are the children of promiſe, becauſe they are the children of his *donation*. How many times does Chriſt ſpeak of the bleſſed number that was given him of the Father? John xvii. and thereupon he gives this as a reaſon why he made known his word of grace to them, ver. 8, 14. *I have given them thy word.* And again, *Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth.* Hence alſo the connexion betwixt their being given to him from eternity, and coming to him in time, is declared, John vi. 37. *All that the Father hath given me, ſhall come to me.*

3. They are the children of promiſe, becauſe they are the children of his *affection*, and of his *everlaſting loving-kindneſs*: this follows upon the former; and this is given as a reaſon why the Lord draws them by his grace in time; *I have loved thee with an everlaſting love; therefore with loving-kindneſs will I draw thee*, Jer. xiii. 3. His love of complacence muſt be manifeſted in time to theſe whom he hath loved with a love of deſtination from eternity; *His delights were with the ſons of men.*

4. They are the children of promiſe, becauſe they are the children of his *purchaſe*. They are dearly bought; and therefore ſhall not be eaſily loſt: redeemed by the price of his blood upon the croſs; and therefore ſhall be redeemed by the power of his Spirit, in the application of the promiſe, which is *Yea* and *Amen* in Chriſt, ratified by his blood. The promiſe ſhall take hold of them, and bring them forth: hence, Iſa. liii. 10, 11. upon his *making his ſoul an offering for ſin*, it is ſaid, *He ſhall ſee his ſeed; the pleaſure of the Lord ſhall proſper in his hand: he ſhall ſee the travel of his ſoul, and ſhall be ſatisfied: by his knowledge ſhall my righteous Servant juſtify many; for he ſhall bear their iniquities.*

5. They are the children of promiſe, becauſe they are the children of his *prayers*; Iſa. liii. 21. *He made interceſſion for the tranſgreſſors.* John xvii. 8. *I pray for them, I pray not for the world, but for them which thou haſt given me, for they are thine.* And what Chriſt prays for, you ſee, John xiv. 16, 17, 26. Even *the Spirit of truth*, the Spirit of promiſe, *to teach them all things*, and make application of the promiſe in its prolific virtue.

6. They are the children of promiſe, becauſe they are the children of his *praiſe*; Iſa. xliii. 21. *This people have I formed for myſelf, they ſhall ſhew forth my praiſe*: upon which follows that free promiſe, ver. 25. *I, even I, am he that blotteth out thine iniquities, for mine own name's ſake, and will not remember thy ſins.* They are the children of promiſe, that they may ſhew forth the praiſe of a promiſing God, 1 Pet. ii. 9. God ſays of one and all his children, that are ſo by the promiſe, as it is, Iſa. lxix. 3. *Thou art my ſervant, O Iſrael, in whom I will be glorified.* I will have all my perfections glorified in thee, by virtue of thy being a child of promiſe in Chriſt, in whom, as the centre of all the promiſes, *Glory to God in the higheſt* does accrue: I will glorify my mercy, in making the promiſe; I will glorify my truth in fulfilling the promiſe; as it is ſaid, Mic. vii. 20. *Thou wilt perform the truth unto Jacob, and the mercy unto Abraham.* It is MERCY *to Abraham*, becauſe to him it was made; and TRUTH *to Jacob*, becauſe to him it was fulfilled: even ſo, God is upon a deſign of glorifying his mercy in promiſing, his truth in performing the promiſe.—How does he glorify his *wiſdom?* In ordering it to run through ſo many intricacies; and his *power*, in guarding it againſt ſo many difficulties and oppoſitions.—How does he glorify his *holineſs* and *juſtice?* Herein alſo, and that both in reſpect of the Surety, by whom it is ſealed; and the ſinner, to whom it is applied. In reſpect of the *Surety* by whom it is ſealed, how does he glorify his holineſs? Seeing Chriſt's perfect obedience makes it ſtand good, without prejudice to the precept of the law. And how does he glorify his juſtice? Seeing Chriſt's complete ſatisfaction makes it ſtand good, without prejudice to the ſanction of the law. And then, with reſpect to the *ſinner*, to whom it is applied, how does he glorify his holineſs? In making the promiſe the very means of ſanctification, 2 Pet. i 4. For thereby the ſoul is *made a partaker of the divine nature.*—And, how does he glorify his juſtice? In ſprinkling the promiſe of mercy with the juſtice-ſatisfying blood of Chriſt, that ſo the ſoul to whom it is applied may not doubt of his mercy for fear of his juſtice, and that the promiſe in Chriſt may appear *white and ruddy* like himſelf; *white*, with the marvellous mercy that it brings; and *ruddy*, with the juſtice-ſatisfying blood in which it is conveyed. And hence the child of promiſe may ſee, to his unſpeakable joy, that God is not only merciful, but juſt alſo, in giving the promiſe of grace and glory to him, however vile and unworthy in himſelf; that he

he is not only merciful, but *juſt, in forgiving of ſin*; Rom. iii. 24, 25. *He hath ſet forth Chriſt to be the propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteouſneſs for the remiſſion of ſin,—that he may be juſt, and the juſtifier of them that believe in Jeſus*: not only to declare his mercy, but to declare his juſtice. O Sirs, his great deſign is to glorify himſelf in this matter; and indeed his glorifying himſelf thus, in ſaving us by the new-covenant promiſe, is ground of everlaſting praiſe; Iſa. xliv. 23. *Sing, O ye heavens; for the Lord hath done it, ſhout, ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into ſinging, ye mountains, O foreſt, and every tree therein; for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himſelf in Iſrael.* Here will be the ſweeteſt part of the ſong of heaven to eternity, that God hath ſo redeemed and ſaved his people, as to glorify himſelf in all his glorious perfections; mercy and juſtice, and all his other attributes, glorioufly and harmonioufly embracing each other. Oh! what poor, baſe, legal, ſelfiſh, mean, pitiful, and unworthy notions and dreams have we about the goſpel, if our thoughts concerning it be not ſunk into this ocean of divine glory! A ſovereign God, who *ſhews mercy on whom he will*, hath this as his main view in creating any the children of his promiſe, even that they may be *children of his praiſe*.—So much for the grounds of the doctrine, with reference to the virtue of the promiſe, and the children thereof. I now proceed

V. To the *fifth* general head of the method, which was to make *application* of the whole. Manifold uſes may be made of this doctrine: I ſhall compriſe what I have to ſay in theſe four, *viz.* an uſe of information, examination, caution, and exhortation. I begin,

1*ſt*, With an uſe of *information*. Is it ſo, that all the children of God, or true believers, are, like Iſaac, the *children of promiſe*, in the manner that I have explained this text and doctrine? Then hence ſee,

1. What is the *nature of the goſpel* properly taken: it is a promiſe, a free promiſe of life and ſalvation, through Chriſt; as declares our apoſtle here, Gal. iii. 8. *The ſcripture foreſeeing that God would juſtify the heathen through faith, preached before the goſpel to Abraham, ſaying, In thee ſhall all nations be bleſſed.* What makes he the goſpel to be then? Even a free promiſe, ſuch as that given to Abraham, *In thy ſeed*, [that is, in Chriſt,] *ſhall all nations of the earth be bleſſed.* It is true, if we take the goſpel largely for the manner of the diſpenſation of it, we find commands and threatenings both intermixed with this diſpenſation, to be a fence to the goſpel, that people may know both their *duty* as to the improving of it; hence ſuch commands as that, *Believe in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and thou ſhalt be ſaved*: and alſo their *danger* in abuſing and miſ-improving it; hence ſuch threatenings as that, *He that believeth not, ſhall be damned.* Theſe, and the like commands and threatenings, intermixed with the goſpel-diſpenſation, are a fence to the goſpel; the law is thus ſubſervient to it: but the goſpel, ſtrictly taken, is neither the command nor the threatening, with relation to believing; but it is the thing itſelf to be believed, namely, the good news of ſalvation to ſinners through Chriſt; or, which is all one, the promiſe of life to be had in him. And the reaſon why we aſſert this, is, not only becauſe the ſcripture is plain herein, but alſo for the honour of God's law, which is perfect, containing every duty incumbent on us; which it could not be, if the goſpel taught us ſome new duty which was not contained in the law; and alſo for the ſecurity of the goſpel, that it may not be adulterated and abuſed with legal mixtures, to the ſubverſion of the glorious end and deſign thereof, which is *to manifeſt the righteouſneſs of God without the law*, Rom. iii. 21. If the goſpel were a new law, with new precepts and ſanction, beſide that law which Chriſt came under to fulfil in our room; then it behoved to be a new covenant of works, and there behoved to be a new righteouſneſs correſponding to that law, beſide the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, for our juſtification: and how dangerous and deſtructive this is to the nature of the goſpel, is evident from the deluſions of ſome, that hereupon make the act of *believing*, in obedience to the new command, to be our juſtifying righteouſneſs before God: in oppoſition to which, our excellent Standards, the Confeſſion of Faith and Catechiſms, exclude the very act of *believing*, as well as the *fruits* of faith, from the matter of our juſtification before God; and that for a good reaſon, becauſe we are not juſtified by the *works of the law*, among which faith itſelf is, as it is our act, even through grace: yea, they who make the goſpel properly a new law, cannot evite the darkening and perverting of the goſpel, even though they would ſeem to befriend it, Gal. i. 6, 7 †. This doctrine ſhews that the goſpel properly is a promiſe.

2. Hence ſee the *power* and *efficacy of the goſpel*, under the influence of the eternal Spirit accompanying it; ſeeing it, being a divine promiſe, hath virtue for bringing forth children to God, who are therefore called the *children of promiſe*: hence ſays the apoſtle, Rom. i. 16, 17. *I am not aſhamed of the goſpel of Chriſt; for it is the power of God unto ſalvation, while therein is revealed the righteouſneſs of God, from faith to faith.* They that are the children of God, are *begotten by the word of truth*, by the virtue of the promiſe, as Iſaac was. O Sirs, the goſpel ſhould be valued and prized; for, all the ſaving good that is done to the ſoul, is by the goſpel. The law, rightly uſed, is the mean of conviction, Rom. iii. 20. *By the law is the knowledge of ſin*, ſo as a man may ſee his need of Chriſt; alſo the law, as a rule, rightly applied is for the direction of our paths in the way of holineſs, when once we are got in to Chriſt: but it is the goſpel only, that converts a man, and brings him to fellowſhip with God in Chriſt; it is the preaching of Chriſt and the promiſe, the preaching of the goſpel, that hath converted all the converts that ever were to this day: for that only is the *miniſtration of the Spirit*; and it hath the ſame effect to this day, when it comes *not in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghoſt, and in much aſſurance*, 1 Theſ. i. 5. It is true, the preaching that is all goſpel, may yet do no good, if it come in word only; but yet ſo it is, that when converting power comes at all, it comes by the goſpel. It is true alſo, that a preaching that hath much droſs, a legal mixture, and but little goſpel in it, may perhaps be the inſtrument of converſion; but ſo it is, that it is only the goſpel-part of it that does the ſaving good. O Sirs, let the goſpel-promiſe

† The difference between the law and the goſpel is clearly ſtated, and largely treated of, Serm. VIII.

promiſe be prized; for it is that which hath the virtue to draw out the ſoul to Chriſt.

3. Hence ſee the *freedom of grace* in the *new covenant*. Seeing all the parts of ſalvation are the fruit and offspring of the promiſe ſealed by the blood of Chriſt, believers being children of promiſe, whatever conſtitutes their character and privilege, muſt be the offspring of the promiſe; all the graces they poſſeſs, and benefits they enjoy in time, or ſhall enjoy to eternity, are children of promiſe.——Thus all the new-covenant *graces* are children of promiſe, and free born children.—*Faith* is a child of promiſe; *Thy people ſhall be willing in the day of thy power.*—*Repentance*, as a fruit of faith, is a child of promiſe; *They ſhall look on him whom they have pierced, and mourn.*—*Love* is a child of promiſe; *I will circumciſe their hearts to love me.*—The Spirit of *prayer* is a child of promiſe; *I will pour out upon the houſe of David the Spirit of grace and ſupplication.*—Holy *fear* is a child of promiſe; *I will put my fear in your heart.*—The Spirit of *praiſe* is a child of promiſe; *They ſhall ſing in the ways of the Lord; for great is the glory of the Lord.* Tell me a grace that is not the offspring of the promiſe.——Again, all the *benefits* and *bleſſings* of the new covenant are the children of promiſe in Chriſt; of whom, in general, it is ſaid, *Men ſhall be bleſt in him, and all nations ſhall call him bleſſed.*—*Implantation* and *union* unto Chriſt, the foundation of all ſpiritual bleſſings, is a child of promiſe; *They ſhall be called trees of righteouſneſs, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified*, Iſa. lxi. 3. compared with Iſa. lxii. 21. This planting of the Lord is alſo a planting in the Lord; *Iſrael ſhall be ſaved in the Lord with an everlaſting ſalvation: ſurely ſhall one ſay, In the Lord have I righteouſneſs and ſtrength:* and again, *In the Lord ſhall all the ſeed of Iſrael be juſtified, and ſhall glory*, Iſa. xlv. 17, 24, 25.—Hence *juſtification* is a child of promiſe; *In the Lord ſhall they be juſtified; By his knowledge ſhall my righteous Servant juſtify many.*—*Pardon* is a child of promiſe; *Their ſins and iniquities will I remember no more.*—*Sanctification* is a child of promiſe; *I am the Lord that ſanctifies you; I will put my Spirit within you, and cauſe you to walk in my ſtatutes.*—*Adoption* is a child of promiſe; *I will be a Father to you, and ye ſhall be my ſons and daughters, ſaith the Lord Almighty*, 2 Cor. vi. 12.—*Peace* with God is a child of promiſe; *This man ſhall be the peace.*—*Growth in grace* and *holineſs* is a child of promiſe; *I will be as the dew unto Iſrael; he ſhall grow as the lily, and caſt forth his roots as Lebanon; his branches ſhall ſpread, and his beauty ſhall be as the olive-tree, and his ſmell as Lebanon.*—*Recovery after falls* is a child of promiſe; *I will heal their backſlidings, and love them freely.*—*Reverting after decays* is a child of promiſe; *They that dwell under his ſhadow ſhall return, they ſhall revive as the corn: I am a green fir-tree, from me is thy fruit found.*—*Renewed viſits after deſertion* is a child of promiſe; *For a ſmall moment have I forſaken thee, but with great mercy will I gather thee: in a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment, but with everlaſting kindneſs will I have mercy on thee*, Iſa. liv. 7, 8.—*Continuation of divine favour amidſt all changes* is a child of promiſe; *I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedſt the pillar, and vowedſt the vow: The mountains ſhall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindneſs ſhall not depart from thee, neither ſhall the covenant of my peace be removed*, Iſa. liv. 10. Even the mountains of myrrh and of ſenſible preſence may depart, theſe of which you are apt to ſay, *My mountain ſtands ſtrong, and I ſhall never be moved.* Mountains of myrrh, and hills of frankincenſe; mountains of ſenſible enjoyments, and hills of ſweet frames, may depart, *but my kindneſs ſhall not depart from thee, neither ſhall the covenant of my peace be removed.*—In a word, *heaven*, and *eternal life*, and *victory over death*, are all children of promiſe; *Death ſhall be ſwallowed up in victory: and ſo ſhall we be ever with the Lord.*——I might go through all the covenant of promiſe here, and tell you how every bleſſing of the covenant that can be named is a free-born child of promiſe. O ſee the freedom of the grace of the new covenant, and take faſt hold of this grace, for it is your life!

4. Hence ſee the *freedom of God's children from the law*, and their ſecurity from the power of a covenant of works, becauſe they are the children of promiſe. As to the *precept* of the law, they do not owe it a cup of cold water, as it is a covenant of works; Chriſt's obedience diſcharges them from that debt. As to the *threatening* of the law, they do not owe it a drop of warm blood; Chriſt's ſatisfaction diſcharges them from that debt: the perſon of the believer in Chriſt, is ſo far from being liable to death, and hell, and everlaſting wrath, whatever be his ſins and infirmities that in their own nature deſerve it, that he is not liable to the ſmalleſt ſtroak of vindictive wrath; that ſtroak hath gone by him, and lighted upon his Surety with a vengeance, and got all the ſatisfaction upon him that infinite juſtice can demand: *There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them that are in Chriſt;* they are diſcharged from all the law-debt; and, therefore, *Who will lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?*

5. Hence ſee the *miſerable ſtate of all unbelievers*; they are not actually children of promiſe: what then, O ye that are without Chriſt? Ye are the *children of wrath by nature*; the *children of diſobedience*, by practice; the children of the devil; the children of the bond-woman; and not of the free; under bondage to the law, as a covenant of works; curſed children; bond-men, and bond-women; in bondage, as Iſhmael; under bondage to the *mandatory* part of the law in its utmoſt rigour, Gal. v. 3. being *debtors to do the whole law*; under bondage to the *minatory* part of the law, under the curſe thereof; for, *Curſed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them*, Gal. iii. 10. Why? *For as many as are of the works of the law, are under the curſe*; that is, as many as are under the command, are under the penalty and threatening alſo: and ſo you are expoſed to everlaſting wrath and indignation. Oh! know and be concerned about this ſad ſtate that you are under, who have never yet fled for refuge to the hope ſet before you: you are not yet, *as Iſaac*, the *children of promiſe*, and of *the free-woman*; but, *as Iſhmael*, the *children of the bond-woman*: and being under the bondage of the law, you are under the bondage of death, hell, and wrath; curſed in your baſket and in your ſtore; curſed in your ſoul and in your body: and, if you continue there, you are curſed in your life and in your death; curſed in time, and will be ſo through eternity. Oh! conſider where you are, and how you ſhall eſcape the wrath you are under; otherwiſe wo to you for ever, as ſure as God lives; for your name is ANATHEMA MARAN-ATHA, *curſed here*, and *curſed at the coming of Chriſt.*—And, to provoke you to flee for

for refuge to this Jesus, and to take hold of a promise, consider the following inferences;

6. Hence, from this doctrine, see the *happy state of all believers in Christ:* they are actually, *as Isaac, the children of promise*, and so they are the children of all the grace, all the glory promised in the new covenant; being the children of promise, they are the children of God, the children of light, the children of liberty, the children of the free-woman; free from the bondage, rigour, and malediction of the law; free from the guilt and power of sin; free from the sting and horror of death; free from the tyranny and dominion of the devil; free from the wrath and displeasure of God; free from hell and eternal damnation; free-born children, and heirs of the promise; children of the kingdom, in the strictest sense, that can never be cast out; for, *it is their Father's good pleasure to give them the kingdom*, and to give them all the contents of the covenant of promise, whereof they are children, and whereof they have evidence by their being believers; that is, such as have, through grace, embraced the promise as their only security, having no hope or expectation from the law; no hope or expectation from themselves, or their own best endeavours, but all their hope and expectation from the promise of God in Christ, as revealed in the gospel freely and absolutely.

7. Hence see the *duty of all gospel-hearers in general*, namely, to plead the gospel-promise, and lay hold upon it, that they may have evidence of their being the children of promise, and so be *the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus*, Gal. iii. 26. *Let us therefore fear*, says the apostle, Heb. iv. 1. *lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it;* for, though the gospel of promises be preached to us, yet *the word preached does not profit, not being mixed with faith in them that hear it.* We do not profit by the promise, if it be not believed, or received by faith, with application to ourselves. It is true, faith itself is a child of the promise; and the mother must bring forth the child out of her prolific womb, before the child can have a breath in the gospel-air: and therefore do not dream of drawing faith out of your own bowels, or of believing in your own strength or power; for, believing includes rather a renouncing of your own power and strength, and a trusting in the Lord JEHOVAH, in whom there is *everlasting strength:* it is a laying hold of his strength exhibite to you in a free promise. Neither is it a laying hold on his strength by your own strength; but even the poor feeble soul laying hold on his strength for grace to lay hold on his strength. If the promise were only the object of faith, on which faith depends; then, where shall we look for grace to depend upon it? But it being also the mother, or prolific womb, that brings it forth under the influence of heaven; then it is not only an embracing of the promise, but a drawing power from the promise to embrace the promise. Faith, in some respect, is the weakest thing in all the world, though it *can do all things:* why? it is weak in itself, but strong in the Lord; for faith's acting on a promise, speaks to this purpose, saying, "O JEHOVAH, thou knowest that "I have no strength to make use of that word, "that promise, no more than I can make a "world: but, O there is the promise of the "God of truth, who is also a God of power, "able to give a being to his promise; there- "fore my heart says AMEN to that word; be "it to me according to thy word; and even so "I take it, through thy grace." Is that the way of your believing, man, woman? However weak in the degree of it, yet I will tell you, for your encouragement, that it is as good believing in the kind of it, as ever was in a believer in this world.

Now, I say, it is the duty of all that hear this gospel, to believe the gospel, by *setting to their seal that God is true;* and by *receiving the record of God, that he hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.* The law and the promise differ in this, that the law cannot be satisfied but by doing, but the promise cannot be profitably received but by believing; and believing in contradistinction from doing, yea, in contradiction to it: for legal doing and work, into whatever evangelical shape the world may cast it, is the very reverse of believing. Expect not the promised mercies and blessings, then, in a way of doing and working; for that is the law-way; but in a way of believing the promise. It is true, there may be abusers of the promise, and abusers of grace, that may say, "God be "thanked we have nothing ado for heaven but "believe; and therefore we will live as we list "in the pursuit of our lusts, and yet believe "all will be well." What, man! believe, and yet resolve to live in your lusts and sins! You do not know what believing is in that case, otherwise you could not speak or think a thing so contradictory to common sense; so blasphemous to our holy Jesus, as if he that were the object of faith, were the minister of sin. To believe in Christ, beside what I have said, is to employ him as a Saviour to save you from sin; and, therefore, to say you will believe in Christ, and yet live in sin, is both nonsense and blasphemy. You may fancy you believe in such a case, but that sort of believing is not believing, but blaspheming; and it is not a saving, but a damning faith: and the object of that faith is not God's word, but the devil's delusion. The true and glorious object of genuine and saving faith, is CHRIST, as *made of God to us, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption*, and so for complete salvation from sin and wrath: and the immediate object, wherein this Christ is presented to us, is the promise. God, in the law, deals with sinners merely by commands and threatenings; and if that were all the dispensation we were under, wo would be to us for ever! But God, in the gospel, strictly considered, deals with us sinners by promises; and, therefore, we are called to deal with him by believing in him, and relying on his word of grace, for all the salvation that we, as poor miserable sinners, stand in need of. The promise comes to sinners as sinners; and there would be no promise of mercy, if there were no sinners. The promise is God's letter from heaven, signed with the hand of Christ, and sealed with the blood of Christ; and if you be a sinner, the letter is backed for you, saying, *To you is the word of this salvation sent, that Jesus Christ came to save sinners.* Your duty, then, O sinner, is to open the letter, read it, and apply it as all to you; and then bless God for such a dispensation of grace.

8. Hence see the *duty of* EVERY *believer in particular.* If believers are the children of promise, then, as it is the duty of sinners to believe the promise;

promiſe; ſo it is the duty of believers to live by faith upon the promiſe: as children live upon their mother, and babes upon the breaſt, ſo ye that are the children of promiſe, live upon the promiſe, and ſuck the milk that is in the breaſt thereof; for it is your life, it is your food, it is your proviſion and maintenance, in every caſe, till you come to live at the fountain-head in glory, where the promiſing God will be enjoyed for ever, as the performing God. This was Paul's life; *I am crucified with Chriſt, nevertheleſs I live; yet not I, but Chriſt liveth in me; and the life that I live is by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himſelf for me*, Gal. ii. 20. What is it to live by the faith of the Son of God? Why, it is even to live upon Chriſt, as held forth in a promiſe; for faith's immediate object is the word. To live upon Chriſt, abſtract from the word, would be the life of viſion and fruition, which only takes place in heaven: but to live on Chriſt by faith, is to live upon him in a word of grace, a goſpel-promiſe; and ſeeing there are promiſes ſuited unto every caſe, therefore live upon the promiſe in every caſe.—In caſe of *darkneſs*, live upon the promiſe of *enlightening* grace; *I will lead the blind in a way they know not, in paths that they have not known: I will make darkneſs light before thee, and crooked things ſtraight.*—In caſe of *deadneſs*, live upon the promiſe of *life*, and reviving grace; ſuch as that, *I am the reſurrection and the life; and, becauſe I live, ye ſhall live alſo.*—In caſe of *deſertion*, live upon the promiſe of *never-leaving* nor *forſaking* grace; ſuch as that, *I will never leave thee nor forſake thee*, Heb. xiii. 5. In the Greek it is, οὐ μή σε ἀνῶ, οὐδ' οὐ μή σε ἐγκαταλίπω; that is, *I will never, never, never, never leave thee, nor forſake thee.*—In caſe of *weakneſs*, live upon the promiſe of *ſtrengthening* grace; *My grace ſhall be ſufficient for thee, and my ſtrength ſhall be perfected in thy weakneſs.*—In caſe of *deſertion*, live upon the promiſe of *comforting* grace; *I have ſeen his ways, and will heal him; I will alſo reſtore comforts to him, and to his mourners.*—In caſe of *fainting* and *affliction*, live upon the promiſe of *ſupporting* and *upholding* grace; ſuch as that, *Fear not, for I am with thee; be not diſmaid, for I am thy God: I will ſtrengthen thee; yea, I will uphold thee, with the right-hand of my righteouſneſs.*—In caſe of *temptation*, live upon the promiſe of *devil-conquering* grace; *The God of peace ſhall bruiſe Satan under your feet ſhortly.*—In caſe of the *power* and *prevalancy* of ſin, look to the promiſe of *ſin-conquering* grace; *Sin ſhall not have dominion over you; for you are not under the law, but under grace.*—In caſe of the *fear of death*, look to the promiſe of *death-conquering* grace; *O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy deſtruction.*——In whatever caſe you are, look to, and live upon the promiſe. And ſeeing you are called to glorify God before the world, by obeying him in your life, as well as to glorify him by believing with your heart; therefore, ſee that your faith be a working faith, *Faith working by love*: this will evidence to the world, and to yourſelf alſo, that your faith is unfeigned. If a man would have an evidence that the ſun is juſt riſen within our hemiſphere, though it be not within his view as yet, he will ſee it better, as I noticed on another occaſion, by looking weſt, than by looking eaſt; for, before he can ſee the body of the ſun, he may ſee the light of it ſhining upon ſome high tower or mountain; and ſo by looking weſt, he will ſee the ſun is riſen, or riſing in the eaſt: ſo, when the world would have an evidence of your being a believer, they will not look to your faith, but to your works, and the rays and beams that flow from faith: and to look towards your works, is to look a way quite contrary to your faith; for, as faith and works are contrary in the matter of juſtification, ſo faith renounces all works in point of dependence, though it produces them in point of performance. Therefore, ſeeing the world will not look to your heart, which they cannot ſee, but to your life; and will not look to your faith, which God only ſees, but to your works which the world may ſee; O take care that it be a working faith; *Shew me thy faith by thy works.* And if you would have faith work to good purpoſe, ſee that faith be fixt upon Chriſt in the promiſe, wherein he engages to *work in you both to will and to do*; otherwiſe the fruits of your faith will be very unconſtant and uneven: for faith hath two feet, as I obſerved elſewhere, the one a fixed, and the other a running foot; like the feet of a pair of compaſſes, the one is fixt in the centre, and the other turns about to make the circle; but if the foot that is in the centre do not remain fixt, but waver hither and thither, then the other foot will make a very uneven and excentrical motion. So it is here, one foot of faith is fixt upon Chriſt the centre, and the other runs a courſe of holy, ſpiritual, goſpel-obedience; but if that foot that ſhould be kept fixt upon Chriſt and the promiſe, ſhall waver hither and thither, then your motion will be very uneven in obedience. Therefore, as you would glorify God your heavenly Father, O look to him for grace to live by faith on the promiſe, and ſo evidence yourſelves to be the children of promiſe.*

THE ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper is a ſeal either of a *curſe*, or of a *bleſſing*; either of a *threatening*, or a *promiſe*: to the *unbeliever* it ſeals a *curſe* and a *threatening*; *He that eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks damnation*, [or, JUDGMENT] *to himſelf.* To the *believer* it ſeals a *bleſſing* and a *promiſe*, being the ſeal of the covenant of promiſe. This is the very tenor of the inſtitution, *This cup is the new teſtament in my blood*: it is the new covenant, and all the promiſes thereof ſealed and ratified by the blood of Chriſt; therefore theſe that have right to it, are the children of promiſe: conſequently the text is fitted for the day.

Among the manifold characters given to the children of God in ſcripture, here is one of the moſt ſweet and ſignificant, that they are *the children of promiſe*. It is a great privilege and dignity to be a child of promiſe; for ſuch a relation to the promiſe, will argue a near relation to Chriſt: Chriſt is the neareſt relation to the promiſe; it is *Yea and Amen in him*: YEA, in point of *affirmation*; and AMEN, in point of *confirmation*. All the promiſes are affirmed and confirmed by him; affirmed by his word, confirmed by his blood: and ſo, to be a child of promiſe, is to be Chriſt's near relation; Chriſt himſelf is the firſt-born child of the promiſe, and next to him are all believers the children of promiſe.

Having formerly diſcourſed the doctrinal

* The following ſermon, which is the third on this text, was preached at Portmoak, on Monday, July 17th, 1726. after the celebration of the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper.—The two firſt paragraphs are introductory.

part of the ſubject, we entered upon the application, and deduced eight inferences for information; I come now to offer ſome further leſſons from this doctrine, by way of *information.*

1. Hence ſee the NATURE *of faith.* If all believers, as believers, are the children of promiſe, then faith itſelf is a child of promiſe, as well as all the reſt of the graces, bleſſings, benefits, and privileges, in time, and through eternity, that believers do and ſhall enjoy; they are all children of promiſe, or promiſed mercies. Particularly, faith is a child of promiſe, in two reſpects; the one is breeding, and the other is feeding: the promiſe is the womb that breeds faith, and the promiſe is the breaſt that feeds it. Faith is firſt brought forth out of the womb of the promiſe, it is *begotten by the word of truth;* James i. 18. *Of his own will begat he us* thereby. Indeed, the faith of God's elect, is the faith of God's operation; and God works it by the means of the word: *faith comes by hearing.* While the power of the Spirit of faith comes along with the doctrine of grace, then the womb of the promiſe is impregnate with almighty efficacy, and comes to its time of bringing forth the grace of faith in the heart: and then faith, when it is brought forth, or caſt out of the promiſe into the heart of the ſinner, he becomes a believer; and when that child that is called *Faith* is born, how does it actually exert itſelf? Why, being a daughter of the promiſe, ſhe ſucks her mother's breaſt, by embracing the promiſe; as a child embracing the parent that bore her, and cleaving cloſe to her breaſt; and, according to the meaſure of its ſtrength, drawing in, and applying to itſelf the milk. The metaphor agrees here with reſpect to the application and appropriation that is in the nature of faith: only the child's taking the breaſt, is a natural act of the body; but faith's taking the promiſe, is the ſpiritual act of the ſoul, and particularly of the underſtanding; for, to embrace the promiſe, is to believe it; to believe it, is to give a cordial aſſent thereunto, with particular application. It is a taking God's word as a ſufficient ſecurity to me for life and ſalvation. Therefore, if any aſk, whether aſſurance be in the nature of faith; I would aſk how the particular faith of a promiſe can be, without aſſurance in the nature of it. To believe, is to take the promiſe to yourſelf; and to take the promiſe to yourſelf, is to believe, or be ſure of it with reſpect to yourſelf. If one promiſe ſome good thing to you, what do you, when you take his word, or take his promiſe? If you be not aſſured and perſuaded of it with reſpect to yourſelf, then you do not take it; but if you take it, then, upon the fidelity of the promiſer, you are aſſured and perſuaded of it with reſpect to yourſelf: even ſo it is here, faith is a taking God's word, a reſting on God's promiſe, and truſting to the fidelity of the Promiſer, Rom. iv. 20, 21. It is the nature of unbelief to *ſtagger* at the promiſe: and, indeed, the believer may have many doubtings and ſtaggerings, becauſe he hath much unbelief; and the moſt part of believers, in our day, are unbelieving believers; ſtaggering believers: but it is not faith that ſtaggers, it is unbelief. The queſtion is, What he does when he believes? Why, it is the nature of faith, to be perſuaded of the promiſe, and to take God at his word; and it is by the virtue and power of the promiſe, to believe the truth and accompliſhment of the promiſe, ſaying, *Faithful is he that hath promiſed, who alſo will do it.*

2. Hence ſee the difference betwixt *faith* and *ſpiritual ſenſe;* or the *aſſurance of faith,* and the *aſſurance of ſenſe.* Faith is a taking poſſeſſion of the promiſe, but ſenſe is a begun poſſeſſion of the thing promiſed; faith is a believing the promiſe, ſenſe is an enjoying what is promiſed; faith is a taking of his word, ſenſe is a feeling of his work in conformity to his word. The aſſurance, that is ordinarily ſo called, is not faith as all, but ſenſe; for it is not grounded upon God's word without, but upon his work within; it is the fruit and effect of faith, and not in the direct act of it; it is the man's reflecting upon his faith, and other graces, and ſeeing, in the light of the Spirit of God, that he hath faith: faith lives upon the promiſe, ſenſe lives upon the performance of the promiſe: by faith the believer credits the truth of the promiſe, by ſenſe he taſtes the ſweetneſs of it: the aſſurance of faith ſays, *I am ſure, becauſe God ſays it;* and the aſſurance of ſenſe ſays, *I am ſure, becauſe I feel it.* To rid marches thus diſtinctly betwixt theſe two, would be of great uſe: for, when you hear one aſſert, that there can be no faith without aſſurance; why, it is true, when it is meant of the aſſurance of faith. If another aſſert, that there may be faith where there is no aſſurance; why, that is true alſo, if he ſpeak of the aſſurance of ſenſe. But if this diſtinction be not obſerved, then a man cannot but ſpeak confuſedly on this head; nor can he reconcile himſelf either with the doctrine of the word, or the doctrine of our Reformers, and the doctrine of our received Standards, which we are ſolemnly bound to maintain. But, by ſtating the matter fairly, we will be in caſe to ſhow the conſiſtency betwixt our faith, and the faith of our believing forefathers, who placed aſſurance in the nature of it; and alſo the conſiſtency betwixt our older and later Standards, which differ not at all in this matter, when it is diſtinctly explained.

3. Hence ſee the difference betwixt *faith* and *hope,* with relation to the promiſe, whereof believers are the children. Why, faith reſpects the promiſe itſelf, and hope reſpects the thing promiſed; faith reſpects the truth of the promiſe, hope reſpects the good of the promiſe: like a king ſending his meſſenger to acquaint his favourite that he is to come to his houſe; the favourite receives the meſſenger, and then goes out to meet the prince: ſo faith receives the meſſenger, the promiſe; and then hope goes out to meet the King, and waits for the thing promiſed. The object of faith, then, is the truth of God; for it looks to the word of promiſe: the object of hope is the goodneſs of God; it looks out towards the good thing promiſed.

4. Hence ſee the difference betwixt the *law* and the *goſpel.* See here how they differ in their *nature;* the law is a precept, and the goſpel a promiſe: hence the law and the promiſe are ſet in oppoſition to each other, Gal. iii. 18, 21. *For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promiſe; but God gave it to Abraham by promiſe. Is the law then againſt the promiſes of God? God forbid.* The goſpel is not a new law, otherwiſe it would be a new covenant of works; if there were new commands in it, that were not imported in the law, either directly or indirectly, then theſe

new

new commands behoved to have a new righteouſneſs anſwering them, in order to our juſtification, beſides the righteouſneſs of Chriſt; and ſo we would need another righteouſneſs to juſtify us, than Chriſt's righteouſneſs fulfilling the law in our room.

QUEST. What ſay you? *Is not faith and repentance new goſpel-commands, that were not in the law?*

ANSW. They may be called goſpel-commands, as they are brought in to the goſpel-diſpenſation; but, ſtrictly as commands, they belong to the law. Faith and repentance, and the like, may be conſidered three ways, 1. As they are *conditions*. 2. As they are *duties*. 3. As they are *graces*.

(1.) As they are *conditions*; I mean, made ſo by men, they belong to the covenant of works, which is the conditional covenant: and though the covenant of works required nothing leſs than perfection as its condition, nor accepts of repentance, yet men make a new covenant of works to themſelves, when they make faith and repentance the conditions of life. Now, as conditions we have nothing ado with them: for the only condition of our eternal life is Chriſt's obedience unto death.

(2.) Conſider them as *duties*, and thus they belong to the moral law in the hand of Chriſt, and the general diſpenſation of the goſpel; or to the goſpel largely taken, which comprehends all the duties of the moral law: and, in this ſenſe, we are ſtill under obligation to do theſe duties; for Chriſt came not under the law as a rule, to diſſolve our obligation to obedience to it as a rule; though he came under the law as a covenant, to diſſolve our obligation to obedience to it as a condition of life.

(3.) If you conſider them as *graces*, then they belong to the goſpel ſtrictly ſo called; for they are both promiſes thereof, even as all grace and glory is promiſed therein. Now, it is neceſſary that we conſider the goſpel ſtrictly taken as a promiſe, even as the ſcripture calls it, that ſo we may not confound the law and the promiſe together, and ſo confound the old and new covenant, namely, the covenant of works and grace. Thus the apoſtle, Rom. xi. 6. *And if by grace, then is it no more of works; otherwiſe grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace, otherwiſe work is no more work.* The law and the promiſe cannot be mixt together, no more than fire and water: the law joined with the free promiſe diſanuls that promiſe; *If life come by the law, then it comes not by the promiſe*, ſays Paul, Rom. iv. 14. *If they which are of the law be heirs, then the promiſe is of none effect.* The law promiſes life upon condition of our doing; the goſpel promiſes life only upon the condition of Chriſt's doing.

QUEST. *Does not the goſpel promiſe life upon condition of our faith?*

ANSW. As *faith is the free gift of God*, as well as *eternal life*; ſo it is to be conſidered, not as a *work* done by us, but as an *inſtrument* to receive the promiſe, and the things promiſed; and true faith never looked upon itſelf as a proper condition, but diſclaimed itſelf always, and took on with Chriſt for *wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification, redemption*, and all. The difference betwixt the law and the goſpel muſt be kept as a treaſure, for it is the ground of many other goſpel truths; and ignorance of this point, hath been the decay of religion in all ages of the church. When faith and works, in the matter of juſtification, are confounded, goſpel-holineſs and ſanctification itſelf is marred; becauſe no holineſs comes by the law, but by grace. Therefore the goſpel conſiders not faith in itſelf as a work; for it does not cauſe, effect, or procure our ſalvation or juſtification; but, as the beggar's hand, it receives them, being wholly wrought and given of God. Hence, the law, being a word of precept to be done; the goſpel, a word of promiſe to be believed: believing and doing, faith and works, are, by the apoſtle, ſet in direct oppoſition to each other; and the miſtaking of this diſtinction betwixt the law and the goſpel, hath been the ruin of the goſpel. "Men dangerouſly fail, "ſays Luther, if they do not heedfully diſtin-"guiſh betwixt the voice of the law, and the "voice of the goſpel, in this eſſential differ-"ence, that the law only teaches what we "ought to do, but the goſpel teaches what "we ought to receive."

5. See the difference betwixt the *law* and [illegible]t only in their *nature*, but in their *effects*: the law is *a killing letter; the miniſtration of death and condemnation*, 2 Cor. iii. 6, 7. But [illegible]el is *the miniſtration of the Spirit, and life, righteouſneſs*, ver. 8, 9. It is the goſpel-promiſe that is the prolific womb for bringing forth children to God; therefore they are called *the children of promiſe*. Here law and goſpel differ as much as life and death. Since the law was broken, it was never able to quicken the ſoul, or to bring it from death to life; nay, it is *weak through the fleſh*, Rom. viii. 3. The law may convince and awaken, but it cannot convert and quicken: God hath reſerved that honour for the goſpel-promiſe, to beget children to him, becauſe it is the channel in which the Spirit runs, Gal. iii. 2. Hence, take a man who underſtands the goſpel, and let the law come home upon him with a thouſand precepts, and a thouſand moral arguments to back them; yet all its urging is good for nothing, but to make him dead and ſtupid, till once the promiſe be preſented, by the Spirit of God, and then life comes in, and the ſoul is quickned: Why? becauſe then relief is preſented, and ſo his heart and hope riſe out of the depths, in which they were ſunk.

6. Hence alſo ſee the difference betwixt theſe things that may be called *legal*, and theſe that are *evangelical*; ſuch as,

(1.) Here you may ſee the difference betwixt a *goſpel* and a *legal hypocrite*. Why? the *goſpel-hypocrite* is indeed all for the *promiſe*, but he is an abuſer thereof, and a mangler of the promiſe; he is not for the whole promiſe: he hugs the promiſe of *indemnity*, but he hates the promiſe of *ſanctity*; he takes the promiſe of pardon, but he rejects the promiſe of purity; he likes the promiſe of happineſs, but diſlikes the promiſe of holineſs: and ſo he is a injurer and mangler of the goſpel, and of the promiſe.—On the other hand, the *legal hypocrite*, he is all for the *law*; but he is an unaccountable abuſer and mangler of the law: inſtead of ſatisfying the law, by the perfect obedience of Chriſt, he thinks to ſatisfy the law by his own imperfect, ſilly, trifling duties. Paul calls all his own righteouſneſs *dung*; and what better is your obedience, man? and, think you to ſatisfy God's holy law with a piece of dung? Oh! what an affront does that man caſt upon the law, who does not come to Chriſt for

for righteousness! Nay, say you, It is my obedience and Christ's together, by which I hope to satisfy the law. Nay, but, man, if you think to be justified by the law, in part or in whole, to the neglect of the free promise of life and justification through Christ only; the apostle tells you, that Christ is of *no effect to you;* and that, if you will pay any of the debt to the law, you must pay all, and art a *debtor to do the whole law*, Gal. v. 2, 3, 4. Besides, as the law requires a perfect, so it requires a personal obedience; that is, the obedience of one person only: you must not think to join the obedience of two persons, to make up one perfect obedience; for, in that case, the obedience both of the one and of the other is imperfect, and so not conform to the law, therefore it cannot be accepted for righteousness: but the soul that has it must die, because it is a *sinful soul*, Ezek. xviii. 4.

(2.) Here you may see the difference betwixt a *legal* and a *gospel-believer*. There may be some true believers that are more [illegible] than others that are more evangelical [illegible] *believer* deals most with *promises*, [illegible] believing, and living by faith; and [illegible] is the most holy, the most joyful, and [illegible] most chearful Christian: whereas the *legal believer*, though, so far as he is a believer, he is not under the law; yet, through unbelief, he keeps himself much under it, and deals more with the *precept* than with the promise: hence, upon every short-coming and defect in his obedience, he is discouraged and heartless, and filled with doubts and fears. Some people are like these the apostle speaks of, Gal. iv. 21. that *desire to be under the law.*

QUEST. *When may a person, even a believer,* DESIRE *to be under the law?*

ANSW. When, according to the legal temper in them, they incline to ground their acceptance with God upon their own duties and performances, instead of grounding it upon Christ's obedience; and more upon grace within inherent, than upon the imputed righteousness of Christ.—Also, when he is more influenced in obedience by the terror of the law, and the curse thereof, than by the alurement of grace in the free promise; and when there is a looking for what is promised only in a conditional way, then there is a keeping up of the old covenant, which did run upon a conditional promise, *Do so and so, and live.*—When they have been helped to duty, and think the Lord engaged to give out mercy upon their performing thereof; when they look for nothing but upon their performing of some condition, like these, Isa. lviii. 3. *Wherefore have we fasted, and thou seest not? wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge?*—And when their hope of mercy rises and falls with their own performances, rather than by the rule of free grace and faithfulness of God: then is a man a legal believer with a witness, if he can be called a believer at all. Little wonder than he be a staggering one. Happy is the believer that is more enlightened in the mystery of the gospel! Surely he is more in case to glorify God.

(3.) Here you may see the difference between a *legal* and a *gospel-strain of doctrine.* Why, the legal strain sets forth God more especially as a *commanding* and a *threatening* God; the gospel-strain sets him forth more especially as a *promising* God: the legal strain makes God, as it were, nothing but a commander; but the gospel exhibites him as a promiser. Why, the law is God in a command; but the gospel is God in a promise, God in Christ.—The legal strain *humours* the *natural pride* of man, as if life were to be sought, *as it were, by the works of the law;* but the gospel-strain *humbles* the pride of men, while it shews life to be had only by the free promise. Hence the gospel is such a strange thing to carnal reason: learning cannot reach it; worldly wisdom is offended at it; nature is astonished at it: what! life and salvation for nothing! life and salvation in a free promise! This gospel is foolishness to the world; it is hard to believe it: why, the world cannot think that God will give salvation at such a low rate.—In a word, the legal strain gives men *more to do for salvation*, than they are able to do; the gospel-strain gives men *less* ado for salvation than they are willing to do; for no man is willing to be saved by absolutely free grace, till God make them willing in a day of power.—A legal strain speaks as if all depended upon our *obeying* a command; a gospel-strain speaks on the contrary, as if all depended upon God's *fulfilling* of a promise.—As the law gives man all the work, and the gospel gives grace all the work, that it may get all the glory; so the legal strain leads a man *to himself*, the gospel-strain leads a man *out of himself* to Christ for all.—Hence also the legal strain *genders unto fear and bondage*; but the gospel-strain to *hope* and *liberty.*

(4.) Here you may see the difference betwixt *legal* and *gospel-repentance*, and betwixt *legal* and *gospel-obedience.*—Repentance is a fruit of faith, whatever kind it be of: *legal repentance* is influenced by the *faith of the law*, and its *threatenings*; hence it hath a mixture of dreadful horror and terror in it: *gospel-repentance* is influenced by the *faith of the gospel*, and its *promises;* hence it hath a mixture of joy and gladness, the man reads the promise of pardon with tears of joy. To speak of gospel-repentance before faith, is a strange dream: No gospel-repentance can take place till faith apprehend the mercy of God in Christ through the glass of a gospel-promise.—Again, for obedience; *legal obedience* is influenced by the *legal hope of heaven*, or the *slavish fear of hell*, according to the tenor of the law, *Do and live;* or, *If not, thou shalt die:* but *gospel-obedience* is influenced by the *faith of God's free love* and *favour in Christ*, manifested in the promise.——Thus, this doctrine shews us the difference betwixt legal and evangelical matters.

7. Hence see the difference betwixt *believers* and *unbelievers.* Believers of the promise are *the children of the promise*; and they are distinguished from others that pretend to faith, even by their faith. Believers credit the promise, and apply what they believe to themselves: the wicked may believe like the devil, that knows all to be true, but cannot apply. The faith of many is like the gadding hen, that carries her eggs to another, but never lays them at home: so they believe that others shall be saved but not themselves; they believe the promise with reference to others, but not with reference to themselves. How believers and unbelievers differ in point of *quality* and *disposition*, may appear afterwards, in the use of *examination:* but how they differ in point of *priviledge*, the text and doctrine declare to us; particularly, they are free-born children of

children of the promiſe; children of the *free-woman*, as the context ſays; whereas unbelievers are the children of the *bond-woman*: that is, believers are freed from the law, as a covenant of works, and unbelievers are in bondage to it; and being in bondage to the law, they are in bondage to their luſts, Rom. vi. 12. It is only the privilege of the believer, that however ſin may domineer ſome time, yet *ſin ſhall not have dominion over him, becauſe he is not under the law, but under grace*: but, on the contrary, it is the miſery of the wicked and unbelievers, that ſin muſt have dominion over them, becauſe they are not under grace, but under the law. And the law hath no promiſe of ſanctity to the ſinner: the law that he is under, curſes and condemns him to hell for his ſin, but cannot ſave him from ſin or hell either. But believers are free from the law, as a covenant of works, and conſequently free from the guilt and power of ſin both, being not under the law, but under grace: grace makes him free; juſtifying grace frees from the guilt, and ſanctifying grace from the power of ſin. Hence, does the doctrine of the believer's freedom from the law, as a covenant, open a door to him for looſneſs and licentiouſneſs? Oh! groſs ignorance! It is the only thing that liberates him from ſin, according to the apoſtle's experience, *I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God: do we then make void the law, through faith? God forbid; nay, we eſtabliſh the law.*

8. Hence ſee the difference betwixt the *ſecurity* of the *covenant of works*, and the *ſecurity* of the *covenant of grace*, with reference to eternal life: the former depended upon a promiſe made to man's changeable righteouſneſs, and ſo it failed; the latter depends upon a promiſe made in Chriſt Jeſus, upon his everlaſting righteouſneſs; and now the believer's title to eternal life ſtands upon the ſure bottom of Chriſt's perfect obedience to the precept of the law, not upon the ſandy foundation of any perſonal obedience of his own: and as his ſecurity for eternal life ſtands upon Chriſt's obedience to the precept of the law, ſo his ſecurity from eternal death ſtands upon Chriſt's ſatisfaction given to the threatening of the law; he cannot any more be under the threatening of eternal death, becauſe he is a child of promiſe. How falſe is it then to aſſert, That believers, by their new ſins, become liable to death and hell? Their ſins deſerve hell, but they can never be liable to it, ſo long as they are children of a promiſe, ratified by the oath of God, and the blood of Chriſt. God hath other ways of correcting his children, than by caſting them out of his family, or turning them off from being children of promiſe to be children of wrath again, as they were by nature: nay, as they cannot again incur the forfeiture of eternal life, becauſe Chriſt's active obedience does confirm the promiſe of life to them; ſo they cannot incur a liableneſs to eternal death, becauſe Chriſt's paſſive obedience and ſuffering to death hath confirmed the promiſe of their freedom from it; *There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them that are in Chriſt*: and to make them liable to it, were to invalidate both the virtue of Chriſt's death, and the truth of God's promiſe at once. We are ſo far from being aſhamed or afraid to preach theſe truths, Sirs, however oppoſed by ſome, that we look upon them as a moſt ſacred treaſure, worthy to be contended for, were it even unto blood.

9. Hence ſee where it is that both the *hope of a ſinner*, and the *portion of a ſaint*, doth ly; namely, in the free promiſe of God in Chriſt, whereof believers are the children. I ſaid, both the hope of a ſinner, and treaſure of a ſaint, ly in the promiſe; that is, in the mercy of God in Chriſt, that gives forth the promiſe unto ſinners; and the truth of God in Chriſt, that is engaged to make out the promiſe to the ſaints or believers: therefore, the giving a promiſe, is called *mercy*; and the accompliſhing, *truth*. Mic. 7. 20. *Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham.* It is MERCY *to Abraham*, becauſe God glorified his mercy in giving the promiſe to him; and TRUTH *to Jacob*, becauſe God glorified his faithfulneſs, which was now concerned to make out the promiſe which he had made: and it teaches us this, that the hope of a ſinner lies no where but in the promiſe, which God, as a merciful God in Chriſt, gives forth to him, to be received and applied by him; and that the treaſure of a ſaint lies nowhere but in the promiſe, which God, as a true and faithful God in Chriſt, is concerned to accompliſh to him, as being actually a child of promiſe.

O then, ſinner, ſee a door of hope open to you: that very promiſe, which is the ſaint's treaſure, comprehending God, and Chriſt, and the Spirit, and grace, and glory; that very promiſe is preſented to you, in this goſpel, by a merciful God in Chriſt, that you may take it for your treaſure, even all *the unſearchable riches of Chriſt*. It is not your own peculiar treaſure indeed, till, through grace, you take it for your own: but, be who you will, you are as welcome to take it for you own, as the offer of the goſpel, and the command of the God of heaven can make you. I ſpeak even to you, O graceleſs, Chriſtleſs, and hitherto impenitent and unbelieving ſinner! you have as good a right to come and take the promiſe, and Chriſt in it, as ever a believer had the day or hour before he believed. It is true, none will come, unleſs the Lord draw them by his powerful grace; yet *the foundation of God ſtands ſure*, and *the Lord knows them that are his*, and whom he hath a mind to draw. But ſince he draws by ſuch means as theſe, namely, the goſpel-offer, and univerſal call to all ſinners to whom the goſpel comes; and hence hath ordered us to *preach the goſpel to every creature*, that he may take whom he hath a mind, and leave the reſt inexcuſable in their wilful enmity, to ſhew how juſtly he will proceed againſt them in judgment: and ſince he hath a mind to glorify his mercy on the veſſels of mercy, therefore, like a merciful God, he holds forth himſelf as a promiſing God, opening his treaſures to you in free promiſes; and he hath *put his treaſure in earthen veſſels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of man*. What are poor miniſters ſent here for, but as earthen veſſels preſenting to you all the divine treaſures in the goſpel-promiſe? Whether you will take the treaſure or not, yet be it known to you, O ſinner, that there is no other door of hope, no other ground of hope to you, with reference to eternal life and ſalvation, but this promiſe of life in Chriſt Jeſus, which the mercy of God is holding out to you, as a treaſure to enrich

you to eternity, and holding out to you in the like of this earthen veſſel that is now preſenting it to you in God's name.

O *miſerable* ſinner, that hath loſt God, and all good by the loſs of him, here is a treaſure for you to come to, in that promiſe, *I will be thy God.*—O *bewildered* ſinner, that hath loſt your way to God, and knows not where to find him, here is a treaſure for you, in that promiſe, *I will lead the blind in a way they know not;* that is, in Chriſt, who ſays, *I am the way.*—O *ſtupid ignorant* ſinner, that cannot ſee this way, nor know Chriſt, unleſs you have a guide and inſtructor, here is a treaſure for you, in that promiſe that Chriſt hath made of his Spirit, *I will ſend the Comforter, and he ſhall teſtify of me; he ſhall convince the world of ſin, righteouſneſs, and judgment. He ſhall glorify me, for he ſhall receive of mine, and ſhew it unto you.*—O *guilty* ſinner, whoſe ſins are of a ſcarlet colour, and of a deep dye, there is a treaſure of pardoning mercy held out to you, in that promiſe, *Come and let us reaſon together, ſaith the Lord; though your ſins be as ſcarlet, they ſhall be white as ſnow; though they be red like crimſon, they ſhall be as wool: I will be merciful to their unrighteouſneſs, their ſins and iniquities will I remember no more. I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy tranſgreſſ*—O *filthy*, filthy ſinner, whoſe heart is nothing but a neſt of unclean devils, and whoſe life hath been nothing but a maſs of unclean practices, here is a treaſure of purifying mercy; if you will not wilfully reject it, you may have it for the taking, in that free promiſe, *There ſhall be a fountain open for the houſe of David, and inhabitants of Jeruſalem, for ſin and for uncleanneſs* both; that is, not only for ſin and guilt, but for pollution and defilement: the fountain that is open to you, is juſt the fountain of *the blood of the Lamb, the blood of Chriſt, that cleanſes from all ſin.*—O *prodigious* ſinner, whoſe ſins are of ſuch a nature, that may be you are thinking God cannot be calling me by that offer of grace; for there are ſome ſecret abominations about me, that are about none of the world; there is ſome thing horrid, ſome thing monſtrous, that none but God and my conſcience knows of, and that would make the hair of a man's head to ſtand to hear tell of it; and if it were known what I am, I would be a diſgrace to all living, I would be the reproach of men, and the ſport of devils; I think my neighbours would either ſtone me to death, or cauſe burn me alive, if they knew what I were: even to you, man, I ſay, there is a treaſure of welcoming mercy for you, held out in the offer and promiſe of the Goſpel; *Whoſoever will, let him come*; and, *Him that comes, I will in no wiſe caſt out*; that is, I will by no means caſt out; I will on no account caſt him out; and for no fault, or folly, or blaſphemy that ever he was guilty of, will I caſt him out. If you welcome the grace that is welcoming you, you ſhall find, in the Lord's time, that you ſhall be made as kindly welcome as ever a ſinner was ſince Adam's fall, and as ever any ſinners were that are now glorified ſaints.—Again, O *plentiful* ſinner; I mean, whoſe ſins are more numerous and plentiful than the piles of graſs upon the ground; here is a treaſure of plentiful mercy for you, in that promiſe, *With the Lord there is mercy, and with him there is plentiful redemption*; therefore will he *redeem Iſrael from all his iniquity.* His mercies are more plentiful than drops in the ocean; the cloud of mercy breaks in plentiful ſhowers.—O *hard-hearted* ſinner, that cannot be wrought upon by the grace and kindneſs of God manifeſted in the goſpel, here is a treaſure of heart-melting grace preſented to you, in the promiſe, *I will take away the heart of ſtone:* and again, *Hearken to me, ye ſtout-hearted and far from righteouſneſs, I bring near my righteouſneſs, and my ſalvation ſhall not tarry.*—O *rebellious* ſinner, whoſe heart and nature is nothing but a hoord of rebellion and enmity againſt God and Chriſt, here is a treaſure of conquering grace for you, held out in the promiſe, *He hath aſcended up on high, and led captivity captive, and received gifts for men, even for the rebellious, that God the Lord might dwell among them:* he hath *received the Spirit above meaſure*, and it is for rebels, ſuch as you and I are by nature. O let your heart claſp about the promiſe, take hold of it, and take him at his word.—O *curſed* ſinner; curſed in the firſt Adam, and for ever under the curſe of God, if you die without taking hold of the promiſe; here is a treaſure of bleſſings, ſpiritual and eternal bleſſings, held out to you, in the promiſe, ſaying, *In him ſhall all nations of the earth be bleſſed; men ſhall be bleſt in him, and all nations ſhall call him bleſſed.*

Chriſt is here knocking at the door of your hearts; Oh can you find in your hearts to hold him out, and his bleſſing too? or, will you let him in with a hearty AMEN to the word of promiſe, ſaying, *Even ſo come, Lord Jeſus;* and, *Bleſſed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord?*—Are you a *powerleſs* ſinner, that finds you cannot take what God is offering you? Here is a treaſure of ſtrengthening grace laid to your hand, in the promiſe, *He gives power to the faint; and to him that hath no might, he encreaſeth ſtrength: Thy people ſhall be willing in the day of thy power.* There is power promiſed, and there would be hope in Iſrael concerning you, if, under a ſenſe of your own weakneſs, you were crying, O for power, divine power, to enable me to apply the promiſe! Faith is never acted in the ſenſe of ſtrength, but in the ſenſe of weakneſs: faith never hath any language like this, Lo, now I have power, now I have ſtrength in myſelf; and therefore, in the ſtrength that I have received, I will do ſo and ſo: no; that is never faith's way of ſpeaking: but it ſays, Oh! I have no power, no ſtrength in myſelf, nor ever had; therefore I will go quite out of myſelf, ſaying, *In the Lord have I righteouſneſs and ſtrength*, according to the promiſe, *Surely ſhall one ſay, In the Lord have I righteouſneſs and ſtrength.*—Are you a *witleſs* ſinner, perhaps, fearing that you miſmanage in the way of believing and applying of the promiſe? Here is a treaſure of conducting and inſtructing grace for you to take hold of, in the promiſe, *They ſhall be all taught of God; every man therefore that hath heard and learned of the Father, cometh unto me*, John vi. 45. Chriſt, who is the ſum total of the treaſure held forth to you in the promiſe, is both the *power of God* and the *wiſdom of God*; and *in him are hid all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge.* Treaſures of inſtruction are laid to your hand, in the promiſe; and if you take God's word of promiſe for it, as it is yours in the offer to warrant your taking it, ſo it ſhall be yours in poſſeſſion. All the treaſures you need to enrich you, O poor ſinner, are hid in the field of the goſpel-promiſe; yea, it is God's treaſure-houſe, and the door is open, that you may go in and take what promiſe ſoever you need; and if you

come

come in and take, you are a child of promiſe, as well as the beſt.

Say not, I am a ſinner, and I muſt ſtay till I *turn from ſin*, before I venture to meddle with a promiſe: indeed, if you think you can turn from ſin, before you come to Chriſt to turn you, you do not know the power of ſin, nor the office of Chriſt as a Saviour to ſave from ſin. Beware of ignorant miſinterpretations of ſcripture-texts concerning turning to the Lord; for example, that text, Iſa. lix. 20. *The Redeemer ſhall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from tranſgreſſion in Jacob, ſays the Lord.* I own, Sirs, I have ſometimes been kept in bondage by ſuch ſcriptures as that, while miſunderſtood; and, perhaps, ſome miſtake them the ſame way, ſaying, O there is no benefit to be expected from Chriſt, till I turn from my tranſgreſſions; and yet I can no more turn aright from ſin, than I can turn the ſun in the firmament that is going weſt, and make it turn back and go eaſt. And what ſhall I do? Indeed, Sirs, if I were of their opinion that make goſpel-repentance, and turning from ſin, to be before faith, I could preach no relief to you in that caſe; but I know and believe otherwiſe from God's word: therefore I only deſire you to remember to take that text, and ſuch like, in the goſpel-ſenſe of it. Why, ſay you, what is the goſpel-ſenſe of it? Indeed I ſhall not gloſs it to you out of my own head, for then you needed little regard it; but ſee the goſpel-gloſs that the apoſtle, or rather the Spirit of God, gives it, Rom. xi. 26. *There ſhall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and ſhall turn away ungodlineſs from Jacob.* Why, then, the meaning of the prophet's words, *He will come to them that turn*, is this, he will come and turn them, and turn away ungodlineſs from them. O ſinner, how like you that gloſs? Is there not a door of hope open here? Cannot the Lord Jeſus, by virtue of his office, turn you, and according to his promiſe, which you are called to plead, ſaying, *Lord, turn me, and I ſhall be turned?* This is his covenant, his promiſe, that he will turn ſinners, Rom. xi. 27. *For this is my covenant unto them, when I ſhall take away their ſin.* Why, then, for the Lord's ſake, do not think, poor brat of old Adam by nature, without ſtrength, able to do nothing; do not think to take Chriſt's work out of his hand. Expect not ſalvation from him under the notion of ſaints, but of ſinners: he will not ſave you upon any other terms, but as you are a ſinner, and he a Saviour. The promiſe comes to you as a ſinner; and Chriſt in the promiſe comes to you as ſinners; and there would be no need of ſuch a perſon as Chriſt, if there were no ſinners; there would be no need of any of his ſaving offices. If there were no blind ſinners, there would be no need of Chriſt as a Prophet; if there were no ſinners, there would be no need of Chriſt as a Prieſt; if there were no bound and enſlaved ſinners, under captivity to the devil and luſts, there would be no need of Chriſt as a King. He hath no office as Redeemer, but what concerns ſinners; and he would get no glory as a Saviour, if there were no ſinners: therefore ſinners, as ſinners, and nothing but ſinners, are the only perſons that God calls to come to Chriſt in the promiſe. In all the world I know no uſe you have for Chriſt, if you have no ſin to be pardoned, no luſts to be conquered, no plagues to be healed, no hard heart to be ſoftened, no broken bones to be helped, no dead and dry bones to be quickened, no devil to be caſt out of you, no unbelief, atheiſm, enmity, ſtupidity, carnality, or any ſuch like diſeaſes, to be cured. If there were nothing ado to this purpoſe among ſinners, why then, Chriſt, and the goſpel, and the promiſe, would be the moſt uſeleſs things in all the world.

Therefore, O my dear fellow-creatures, he that enjoins me to preach the goſpel to every creature; even that goſpel, that *Jeſus Chriſt came to ſave ſinners*, commands me to warn you that you ſtand not at a diſtance from Chriſt becauſe you are ſinners, but rather come to Chriſt becauſe you are ſinners; and the more work of this nature you have for Chriſt, the more welcome will you be to him, and the more glory will he get in ſaving you. He looks on it as his honour to ſave ſinners; and of all the ſins that ever you was guilty of, here is the greateſt, if you will not let Chriſt have the credit of ſaving you according to the goſpel-promiſe.

But, ſhould I not be ſo *humbled* and *convinced* before I come to Chriſt as held out to me in the goſpel-promiſe, and before I apply the promiſe to myſelf? Why, man, if you be even ſo far humbled as to ſee that Chriſt would be of any uſe to you, and that you would be the better of him if you had him; then, for the Lord's ſake, ſtay not away from Chriſt, waiting for other ſort of preparation; for otherwiſe the law will get ſuch hold of you by the way, that it will not ſuffer you to apply the promiſe at all. The law ſays, You muſt have this and that qualification, before you come to Chriſt, or apply the promiſe; and if they were obtained, it will ſay, Stand back yet, for you are a ſinner, and muſt have perfection before you come; and ſo there will be no end of it. Never will you come to Chriſt at all, if you will hear nothing but the voice of the law, and the legal bias, and the legal conſcience that is by nature within you: but the voice of the goſpel is, *Whoſoever will, let him come;* be what you will, come: whatever qualification you want, it is lying within the boſom of the promiſe; therefore come and take freely, without fear of preſuming.

Indeed, man, if you come to Chriſt, or the promiſe, with any conditions or qualifications, and fancy that you muſt do ſo, it is preſumption, and not faith; you are preſuming to deal with God in the old conditional way of the covenant of works, and ſo you will make no hand of it, and have no ſucceſs: but if you come to Chriſt as held out in the promiſe, in order to get all, and all freely, and all for nothing, except it be for God's own name's ſake, and for his Chriſt's ſake; then you may come boldly, there is no fear of preſuming. This the law ſays, Give, and give all, even to perfection; the goſpel ſays, Take all, for you have nothing to give: and ſince God is here dealing with you by the goſpel, and not by the law, it is preſumption for you to pretend to come and give, when God is ſaying, Come, and take.

The legal heart, and the legal ſtrain of doctrine, would make it preſumption for you to come to Chriſt, or apply the promiſe, without ſome good qualification before-hand; but I will tell you, in God's name, that it is not only impoſſible for you to bring, but preſumptuous for you to pretend to bring any good qualifica-

qualification with you. It is nothing but a proud treating with God upon the old-covenant footing, and that even when God is treating with you, as a promising God, upon the ground of the free, absolute, unconditional promise of the new covenant, whereof Christ hath fulfilled the condition by his death, to God's full satisfaction. If ever the second Adam find you, it will be where the first Adam left you; that is, plunged into the gulf of a sinful, miserable, guilty, and condemned state, destitute of all good qualification, except hell and enmity, death and confusion, can be so called; and it is just in these doleful circumstances, that you are called to come, and embrace the gospel-promise, for your complete relief. Hence, whenever the Spirit of faith is sent, it makes the man come under the notion of a lost sinner to a Saviour, and as a bankrupt to a Surety; and as a filthy vessel, empty of all good, to an immense ocean of all fulness, where all good is to be had.

Now, I have insisted the longer upon this, because it is of the greatest concernment to all Christless sinners, to all sorts of sinners that hear the gospel, to know what door of hope there is for them to enter in at; and that is, Christ presented to you in the promise, to be received and applied by you. I know no other door: and, if you do not think yourself concerned in this matter, poor sinner, know that the day is coming, when judgment and eternity will stare you in the face, and it may be sooner than you are aware of, when you shall find no relief for you under heaven, if you have never treated with God in Christ as held out in the gospel-promise. If you find not God cloathed with a promise, a gracious promise in Christ, you will find him arrayed in a terrible threatening; yea, if you meet not with God in a promise, you will meet him in a flame of fire and vengeance. God in a promise, is God as a Redeemer, a God in Christ, a Father, a friend, all love and mercy; but God out of a promise, is God out of Christ, a consuming fire, according to the tenor of the violated covenant of works, commanding, threatening, judging, condemning, and avenging himself upon his enemies: there is no hope then, but through the promise; and if, by the virtue of the promise, you were *begotten again to a new and lively hope*, then you would be, *with Isaac, the children of promise*.

But now, as hence we see where the *hope of a sinner* lies, so hence you see where the *portion of the saint* lies. By the saints, I mean, they who, though they still look upon themselves as sinners, and nothing but sinners in themselves, yet have fled out of themselves to Christ as held forth in the gospel-promise, and who are brought forth from the prolific womb of the promise, like Isaac, and by the generative virtue thereof are *begotten again to a lively hope*, and so are actually *children of promise*. Your portion lies in the promise; for God, and Christ, and the Spirit, and all things else, are conveyed to you by promise; and it is secure enough; it is God's band of provision for you, in time and through eternity: hence the children of promise only are the *heirs*, Gal. iv. 30. Rom. iv. 13, 14. As Isaac was the heir, so are believers heirs of all the promises; having not only a right of access thereto, as other sinners have, this being a door of hope to them, as I was saying; but also a right of possession, as children *begotten by the word of truth*, born and bred up by the side of the promise, insomuch that now the promise is their portion, their inheritance, their bond of provision, till they come to the full possession of all the inheritance therein secured to them by the word and oath of God, the *two immutable things, by which it is impossible for God to lye, that they may have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to the hope set before them*, Heb. vi. 18. Christ, in the promise, is the hope set before sinners; but believers are these who have fled for refuge thereto; and so, being actually children of promise, they are infeft (may I so express it) into their Father's estate; *If children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ*. Your name, believer, is filled up in the bond: and so the promise is no more given forth generally and indefinitely to you, as to the rest that hear the gospel, but particularly and definitely your portion is secured there, and it is your bond of provision by name. How many *items* soever you have to give in, by way of charge, for your daily supply, till you get to heaven, so many articles there are, by way of discharge, to be found in the bond of provision for you, among the rest of the children of promise. What items, and what articles answering them are here, cannot be all mentioned; I only name a few of them.

Item, So much of a charge for *bread* and *water*, for daily necessaries; the article for discharging thereof, is, Isa. xxxiii. 16. *Bread shall be given them, and their water shall be sure.* — *Item*, So much necessary for *wine* and *milk* to maintain the children: well, the article for answering that, is, Joel iii. 18. *The mountains shall drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk*; and it is *wine and milk without money and without price; a feast of fat things, and wines on the lees.* — *Item*, For clearing of all *bygone accounts*, and *discharging all debts* that were owing to the law: the article is, Jer. xxiii. 6. *His name shall be called, The Lord our righteousness; therefore will I be merciful to their unrighteousness, their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. He was made sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.* — *Item*, For clearing all the *debts* that may be *afterwards contracted*, through the power of corruption, and daily infirmities: the article is, Jer. l. 20. *The iniquities of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found*: Why? what will become of them? *He will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea*, Micah vii. 19. What sea? even that of Christ's blood; *The Lamb of God, that takes away the sins of the world; when he takes them away, they shall not be found any more.* — *Item*, For *cloathing* to the children of promise: the article is, Isa. lxi. 3. *I will give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness*; hence, ver. 10. *I will rejoice in the Lord, for he hath cloathed me with the garments of salvation, and covered me with the robe of righteousness.* — *Item*, For *washing the childrens garments*, or rather of their feet, when they are ready to puddle and defile themselves: the article is, Isa. iv. 4. where the Lord is said to *wash away the filth of the daughter of Zion, by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning. If I wash thee not, thou hast no part in me*, said Christ to Peter. Indeed the children need daily washing. Though the garment of imputed righteousness they have, needs no washing; it is

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the perfect, ſpotleſs righteouſneſs of God: yet the garment of their imparted righteouſneſs, their graces and duties, need conſtant waſhing. —*Item*, For *teaching* and *ſchooling* of the children in the knowledge of the myſteries of the goſpel: the article is, Iſa. liv. 11,—13. *O thou afflicted*, etc. *All thy children ſhall be taught of God.*—*Item*, For *correcting* the children for their faults, yet ſo as they ſhall never incur any liableneſs to the forfeiture of the promiſe: the article is, Pſal. lxxxix. 30. *If his children break my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my ſtatutes, and keep not my commandments; then will I viſit their tranſgreſſion with the rod, and their iniquity with ſtripes: nevertheleſs my loving-kindneſs will I not take from him, nor ſuffer my faithfulneſs to fail.*—*Item*, For *cordials* to the corrected child, leſt he ſhould faint under affliction: the article is, Iſa. lvii. 16. *I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth, leſt the Spirit ſhould fail before me, and the ſoul which I have made. For the iniquity of his covetouſneſs I was wroth, and ſmote him: I hid me, and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart: therefore I have ſeen his ways, and will heal him.* O wonder! as if a God of infinite grace ſhould ſay, Simple correction will not do with my children, and therefore I muſt even go and careſs and dandle them again; *I will reſtore comforts to him and to his mourners.*—*Item*, For *reviving* of the child, when under deadneſs of frame and indiſpoſition: the article is, *I am the reſurrection and the life; and becauſe I live, ye ſhall live alſo.*—*Item*, For *ſtrengthening* of the child, when under weakneſs, ready to be overcome with corruption, or to ſuccumb in duty: the article is, *My grace ſhall be ſufficient for thee; my ſtrength ſhall be made perfect in thy weakneſs.*—*Item*, So much for *light* and *candle*; I mean, the candle of the Lord to enlighten them, when they are in the dark, and ready to miſtake their way: the article is, *They ſhall hear a voice behind them, ſaying, This is the way, walk ye in it: I will lead the blind in a way they know not.*—*Item*, So much neceſſary for bearing the *charges*, both of their *work* and *warfare*, in the wilderneſs: the article is, *He will ſend none a warfare on their own charges; He will perform all our works in us and for us; I will ſtrengthen, I will uphold with the right-hand of my righteouſneſs.*—*Item*, For *medicine* to cure the falling-ſickneſs of the child, and for raiſing him up when he falls and hurts himſelf: the article is, *I will heal thy backſliding, I will love thee freely.*—*Item*, For *antidotes* and *preventives*, to hinder the child's falling totally and utterly away: the article is, Pſal. xxxvii. 24. *He ſhall not be utterly caſt down, for the Lord upholds him with his hand: I will put my fear in their hearts, and they ſhall not depart from me.*—*Item*, For *ſanatives* to heal ſome deſperate diſeaſes, and dreadful hardneſs of heart: the article is, *I am* JEHOVAH-ROPHI, *the Lord that healeth thee: the leaves of the tree of life are for the healing of the nations*, even of their deadly wound.—*Item*, For *corroſives*, to eat out ſin and corruption, and all theſe noxious humors that diſtemper the child: the article is, *I will ſubdue your iniquity*; and, *ſin ſhall not have dominion over you, for you are not under the law, but under grace.*—*Item*, For *purgatives* to make the child of grace to grow in grace, and the planting of the Lord to flouriſh: the article is, *Every branch in me that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit*: and, *I will be as the dew to Iſrael, he ſhall grow as the lily, and caſt forth his roots as Lebanon; his branches ſhall ſpread, his beauty ſhall be as the olive-tree, and his ſmell as Lebanon.*—*Item*, For *reſtoratives*, to make the child recover and revert after decays of grace: the article is, *They that dwell under his ſhadow ſhall return; they ſhall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine; the ſcent thereof ſhall be as the wine of Lebanon: I am like a green fir-tree, and from me is thy fruit found.*——What ſhall I ſay? tell me the *item*, and I will tell you the *article* or the *promiſe* that will anſwer it.—*Item*, For *antidotes* againſt the *temptations* of the devil: the article is, *The God of peace ſhall bruiſe Satan under your feet ſhortly; the ſeed of the woman ſhall bruiſe the head of the ſerpent.*—*Item*, For *ſecuring* of *renewed viſits* after deſertion: the article is, *For a ſmall moment have I forſaken thee; but with great mercy will I gather thee: in a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment, but with everlaſting kindneſs will I have mercy on thee.*—*Item*, For ſecuring the *continuation of divine favour* amidſt all the changes, either of frames or providences: the article is, *I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedſt the pillar, and vowedſt the vow unto me. The mountains ſhall depart, and the hills be removed*, [even *mountains of myrrh, and hills of frankincenſe*, of which you are ready ſometimes to ſay, *My mountain ſtands ſtrong, and I ſhall never be moved*, even theſe mountains of ſenſible enjoyments, and hills of ſweet frames may depart;] *but my kindneſs ſhall not depart from thee.*—*Item*, For *victory over the world*, not only over the god of this world, the devil; but over the things of this world, *The luſts of the fleſh, the luſts of the eye, and the pride of life*; alſo the loſſes and croſſes, the allurements or entanglements of the world: the article is, Though *in the world ye ſhall have tribulation*; yet, *be of good chear, I have overcome the world*, that my victory may be yours.—*Item*, For a *bleſſing upon all providences*, and for ſanctifying of all croſſes and calamities they meet with: the article is, *All things ſhall work together for good to them that love God, and are the called according to his purpoſe.*—*Item*, For the *want of love to God*, or the weakneſs of it; for the want or weakneſs of faith, repentance, zeal, and other graces: the article is, *In him dwells all the fulneſs of the Godhead*; and, *Ye are complete in him*; and, *It pleaſed the Father that in him ſhould all fulneſs dwell, that out of his fulneſs ye might receive grace for grace*: He is the *author and finiſher of faith*; the author and finiſher of love; the ALPHA and OMEGA of all grace. ——Are there any more *items* in the charge, for which there is no article in the bond of proviſion to diſcharge it? Nay, nay; ſit down and deviſe items; the child of promiſe may find articles in the bond to anſwer them.—*Item*, For *conduct through all ſnares* and *difficulties* in your way: the article is, *I will guide thee with mine eye; I will guide thee by my counſel.*—*Item*, For *victory over death*, and a happy entrance to eternal life: the article is, *Death ſhall be ſwallowed up in victory*; and, *The ranſomed of the Lord ſhall return, and come unto Zion with ſongs; they ſhall obtain joy and gladneſs, and ſorrow and ſighing ſhall flee away; and ſo ſhall we ever be with the Lord.*—What think you, believing child, of the promiſe? What think you of your bond of proviſion? Come read over the charge and diſcharge, compare them together, and ſee if there be any thing wanting in the covenant of promiſe, and ſee if it hath not all your ſalvation in it. If I have paſſed by or forgot any thing, I ſhall make it up in one word; *Item*, For defraying the charge of the *want of all things*: the article for

anſwering it is, Rom. viii. 32. *He that ſpared not his own Son, but delivered him up to the death for us all, how ſhall he not with him freely give us all things? All things are yours, and ye are Chriſt's:* yea, ten thouſand times more than all things is in the bond of the promiſe; God himſelf is in it, *I will be thy God;* Chriſt himſelf is in it, *God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son,* etc.; The Spirit himſelf is in the bond, to be the Spirit of faith, love, light, life, and liberty, grace, and glory; *I will pour water upon him that is thirſty, and floods upon the dry ground; even my Spirit upon thy ſeed, and my bleſſing on thine offspring.* And if God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, be in the bond of proviſion; pray, what is wanting, when he who is *all in all* is in the bond? What want you, believer, that is not here? If you converſe only with the law, you will find all wanting; *item,* all ſpent; but when you come to the promiſe, you will find a ſtock that can never be exhauſted.

Now, believer, you ſee where your portion lies; rejoice in your heirſhip: being a child of promiſe, you have won Chriſt in it, and you are called to live upon your winning; being a child of the promiſe, you ſhould live upon the promiſe in every caſe; ſuck the breaſts of the promiſe, as the child does the mother's breaſt, for that is to live by faith. As you would be holy, as you would be happy, as you would be grateful and fruitful, as you would glorify God, and edify your neighbour, make more uſe of the promiſe, by pleading the promiſe by prayer, and feeding on the promiſe by faith, and applying the promiſe for anſwering all charges of the law: for in the law you will never find any thing, either for paying your debt, or performing your duty; but the diſcharge that is in the goſpel-promiſe, and that only, can anſwer it.

I will tell you my friends, what would make notable religion among us; if the charge of the law were duly known, and conſcience taking home that; and if the diſcharge of the goſpel were duly known alſo, and faith were taking home that: therefore conſider what the law-charge is, and what conſcience ſays to it; alſo what the goſpel-diſcharge is, and what faith ſays to that.

(1.) The law-charge is, Man, you have a *wicked, deviliſh, hard* heart; you are nothing but a maſs of ſin; for, *by the law is the knowledge of ſin.* What ſays conſcience to that? does it take with the charge? Then hear how the goſpel-diſcharge runs, *I will take away the heart of ſtone, and give the heart of fleſh.* What ſays faith to that? O welcome promiſe! Lord, I take thee at thy word; *Be it to me according to thy word.*

(2.) Again, the law-charge is, Man, you are a *grievous, hainous* ſinner, that juſtly ſhould be thruſt down to the bottom of hell, to be burnt in the fire of God's wrath for ever. What ſays conſcience to that charge? does it take with the charge, ſaying, True, true? Then hear how the goſpel-diſcharge runs, *Deliver his ſoul from going down to the pit, for I have found a ranſom.* What ſays faith to that? O welcome ſweet word of grace! Lord, I take hold of thy promiſe, and *I will hope in thy word.*

(3.) Again, the law-charge and challenge is, Man, woman, you are *deſtitute of all holineſs,* and *unable to ſerve God,* or honour him, by walking in his way. What ſays conſcience to that? Why, if it be not ſeared, it takes with the charge. Well, the goſpel-diſcharge anſwers, *I will put my Spirit within you, and cauſe you to walk in my ſtatutes.* What ſays faith to that? Why, if you have any, it will ſay, O welcome, welcome bleſſed promiſe! Lord, I will take thee at thy word; AMEN, even ſo be it unto me according to it.

(4.) Again, the law-charge runs thus, Man, woman, you are an *ignorant* creature, you know nothing of God as you ought to know. What ſays conſcience to that? if it be not ſleeping, it will ſay, Oh! a true charge, a true challenge; I take with it. Well, the goſpel-diſcharge anſwers, *They ſhall be all taught of God: I will ſend the Comforter, and he ſhall teach you all things: He ſhall open the eyes of the blind, and bring them from darkneſs to light.* What ſays faith to that? Even, O welcome good tidings! welcome ſweet promiſe! Lord, I know no other ſchool but thine, where I can be ſavingly inſtructed; therefore, I will take thee at thy word; *Do as thou haſt ſaid.*

(5.) Again, the law-charge runs thus, Man, woman, you are *curſed* and *condemned;* for, *Curſed is every one that continues not in all things written in the book of the law to do them.* What ſays conſcience? If it be not dumb, it will ſay, then, according to the tenor of the law, I am the man, the curſed man, that hath broken God's law; the charge is juſt and true. Well, the goſpel-diſcharge anſwers, *Chriſt hath redeemed us from the curſe of the law, being made a curſe for us.* What ſays faith to this? O it will ſay, Welcome, ſweet goſpel-promiſe! Lord, I take thee at thy word, I embrace thy promiſe with application to myſelf, for there is *all my ſalvation.*

(6.) In a word, the law-charge is, Man, woman, you are in every reſpect a *broken bankrupt:* your debt of obedience to the precept of the law is impoſſible, you cannot do it; your debt of ſatisfaction to the penalty of the law is intolerable, you cannot bear it: and as your debt of obedience and ſatisfaction to the law, as a covenant, is inſolvable, ſo your duty of obedience and obſervance of the law, as a rule, is impracticable by you. What ſays conſcience to this? If it be awakened, it takes with the charge, ſaying, O true, true; I am every way, indeed, broken and inſolvent. Well, the goſpel-diſcharge runs thus, *Chriſt is a Surety of a better teſtament; the Lord our righteouſneſs and ſtrength:* our *righteouſneſs,* for paying all the debt we owe to the law, as a covenant, by his juſtifying merit; our *ſtrength,* for defraying the charge of all the duty we owe in point of gratitude to the law, as a rule, and that by his ſanctifying Spirit. Now, what ſays faith to this? Why, if it ſpeak, it will now ſay, O welcome promiſe! O welcome Surety! welcome debt-payer and burden-bearer! It takes God at his word, and ſays, *Surely in the Lord only have I righteouſneſs and ſtrength.* *

Now, then, does a man act like a child of promiſe, when conſcience takes with the law-charge, and owns it; and when, at the ſame time, faith takes the goſpel-diſcharge, and anſwers the law with it, by a particular application: for, as it is with conſcience in applying the threatening of the law for conviction, it is with particular application; ſo it is with faith in applying the promiſe of the goſpel, it is with a particular cloſe application. I am concerned with that charge of the law, ſays conſcience; I take it to myſelf; I am the ſinful guilty man: well, ſo ſays faith, I am concerned with this diſcharge of the goſpel-promiſe, I take it to myſelf,

* See more particulars of the law-charge, and goſpel-diſcharge, with faith's reply, p. 377, 378.

myſelf, and believe, through grace, I am the abſolved man. Something of this particular appropriation, more or leſs, muſt be in faith; otherwiſe there is no relief comes in by the goſpel. As it is with the law, if there were no cloſe application of the threatening, with ſome aſſurance that the threatening is to me, I would have no conviction by the law; ſo it is with the goſpel, if there were no cloſe application of the promiſe, with ſome aſſurance that it is to me, I would have no relief or conſolation by the goſpel. Let this be marked, I pray you; if a man hear the law-charge, without reckoning himſelf much concerned, he may think he believes it, and yet be but an atheiſt; his conſcience was never wounded by it: and if a man hear the goſpel-diſcharge, or promiſe, without reckoning himſelf much concerned in the matter, he may think he believes the goſpel, but he deceives himſelf, his heart was never healed by it: why? there is no application. If any think that it is eaſy to believe with application, let it be conſidered, that this application, in the nature of faith, is the beſt way to find out whether your faith be but a fancy or not: for, if you ſay you believe, and yet it is with no particular concern and application to yourſelf; it is not faith, but a ſtrong fancy, a ſtrong imagination, yea, a ſtrong deluſion; if it can be called faith, yet it is not the faith of God's elect. If you ſhould hear that there is a great man in America, that hath ſo many thouſands a year; why, if a man of ordinary credit tell you this, you readily believe it, becauſe you are not much concerned about it: but if at the ſame time you are made to underſtand that you will turn to beggary, and have nothing in the world but what you muſt receive from that great man, and that you muſt be ſupplied out of his ſtore, and that he is heartily content to impart it for your uſe; why, if you find yourſelf ſo much concerned, you would begin to be a little more ſcrupulous in believing the point, and entertain a thouſand ſuſpicions about it; or, if you got his bond, I ſuppoſe you would receive it with application, and ſee if you could draw any bills of exchange upon it: even ſo it is here; while you hear that there is a great Saviour in heaven, that hath unſearchable riches, and all the fulneſs of the Godhead, perhaps you never ſaw what concern you had in him; you are able, you think, to do your own buſineſs without him, and ſo you think you believe well enough, and never doubted of your faith; you have an eaſy credulity about that in which you have little or no concern: but did you once know, that as you are poor and needy, ſo you will die a bankrupt, and be ſent for ever to the priſon of hell for the debt that you owe to God's juſtice, unleſs Chriſt be your Surety for paying your debt; then it is another matter to believe, when it comes to a believing with application. While men are ſtill ſleeping in their natural ſecurity, and ſee no need of Chriſt, they think they can eaſily believe all that the goſpel reports to them, and ſo never doubt. What! would you have us to be ſuch atheiſts and infidels, as not to believe the Bible? Yea, but when God awakens the conſcience, to ſee how much depends upon it, with reſpect to their own particular concern, then they find believing is another thing than they imagined.

Therefore, you that think you have been good enough believers all your days, and never doubted of your faith, you may ſuſpect your faith is but a fancy. O man, do not hazard your ſoul upon a ſtrong imagination; yet withal, faith in its nature does not conſiſt in doubting, for it is juſt the oppoſite of it. Do not think you believe, becauſe you doubt; for doubting is unbelief; and unbelief is neither a negative nor a poſitive mark of faith: I mean, doubting of God's word of promiſe, ſo as not to receive it with application; which differs vaſtly from doubting about your faith. When the object of a man's doubting is about his own faith, there is good reaſon for his doubting of that, until once he believe God's word of promiſe with application; which, when, through grace he does, then he hath no more reaſon to doubt of his faith: but when the object of a man's doubting is God's word of promiſe, which God commands him to believe with application, there is no reaſon in the world for his doubting of that; nay, his doubting of it will be ſtill his ſin, as long as unbelief is his ſin: and while he doubts of that word of grace, and does not receive the promiſe with application to himſelf, he hath good reaſon to doubt of his faith; for application and appropriation of the promiſe, and of Chriſt in it, is the very heart and ſoul of faith, and the moſt vital act of the child of promiſe, whereby he takes it as God's bond to himſelf, and thereupon draws bills of exchange upon Chriſt, as *made of God to him, wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification, and redemption;* and looks to him as a promiſing God in Chriſt; pleads the promiſe for all neceſſary ſupply that is held forth there; and lives upon the promiſe, like a child upon the breaſt, till the full performance come.

May the Lord give you underſtanding in all things, and help you thus to believe to the ſaving of your ſouls, and to the evidencing that you are *the children of the promiſe.* *

HAVING thus given you a ſuccinct view of what we had formerly offered upon this ſubject elſewhere, in the brief recapitulation of ſome of the principal topics inſiſted upon, I proceed now to ſome further inferences.

1o. Hence ſee what is the reaſon that all men, by nature, are not only under the *curſe of the law*, but alſo, at the ſame time, under a *curſed byaſs* and *inclination to the law-way of juſtification.* Why? becauſe they are, with Iſhmael, *children of the bond-woman;* and not, like Iſaac, *children of the promiſe.* We are all by nature curſed Iſhmaelites; born under bondage to the law as a covenant of works. Hence ſinners, that remain in that ſtate, though the law curſe them, yet they deſire to be under the law; that is, to be ſaved by their doing, or in ſome conditional way, and cannot think it poſſible to be ſaved by a free and abſolute promiſe; yea, they will run down and perſecute all theſe that would vilify their works, and repreſent them as dung in point of juſtification before God. What, ſay they, theſe men are certainly ill

* Where this ſermon, which is the fourth upon the text, was delivered cannot be poſitively aſcertained, in regard the Author omitted to mark it in his notes; but it is probable it was preached at Dunfermline, July 23d, 1726. his ordinary place of preaching; for, by noticing the place and date of the preceding one, *viz.* Portmoak, July 17th, and the date and place of the following ones, *viz.* Glendovan July 31. there is juſt one free Sabbath between theſe two ſacramental ſolemnities; and therefore the more likely he was at home.

men,

men, enemies to the law and good works, that would have us caſt away all our hope built upon our religious duties, and would have us building upon a quite contrary foundation. Hence perſecution ariſes, as it is ſaid in the verſe following our text. The children of the promiſe, like Iſaac, need not think it ſtrange though they be perſecute in the world by the Iſhmaelites, the children of the bond-woman, and that particularly by mocking tongues; for ſo was Iſaac by Iſhmael. The ſcripture foreſaw this, and God therein forewarned us, that when ſuch a diſpenſation takes place, we may not be ſurprized at it. However, the main ground of the difference is the ſame that the text and context does ſpeak of, namely, the law and the promiſe. The one is ignorantly zealous for the law; and the other is ſpiritually zealous for the promiſe; the one is for ſalvation, as it were, by the law; the other is for ſalvation merely by the promiſe: the one cries up ſanctity and holineſs, and that in a conformity to the law; the other is for ſanctity and holineſs alſo, but not by the law, but by the promiſe, and as the fruit of the faith of free juſtification, without the deeds of the law, knowing that this faith, and this only, *works by love*. Hence Papiſts and ignorant Proteſtants alſo declare themſelves to be Iſhmaelites, and children of the bond-woman, even though they pretend to be zealous for the goſpel, while they turn the goſpel to a new law, a conditional covenant betwixt God and man, with ſo much on his part, and ſo much on ours. But all the children of promiſe, that have any tolerable inſight into the goſpel, will own it to be a "free and "abſolute promiſe, unconditional to us; and "that, ever ſince the covenant of works was "broken, God never made any covenant with "us, for life and ſalvation, but that covenant "that he made with Chriſt, and in him with "all the elect as his ſeed," as our Larger Catechiſm declares. Mean time, think not ſtrange, when either you find in yourſelf, or others, a ſtrange propenſity towards the old-covenant way of ſalvation and juſtification; for, we are all by nature the children of the bond-woman. And, O believer, bleſs God, if he hath opened your eyes to know the *goſpel-liberty wherewith Chriſt hath made you free*: happy are they that are the children of the free-woman! they are the *children of promiſe*.

11. Hence ſee the *freedom* and *ſovereignty of the grace of God*, in the adoption of any child to himſelf. Why, all his children are children of promiſe, as Iſaac, who was not born by the ſtrength of nature; for Abraham and Sarah were both old, and his body was dead, and her womb was barren; and, beſides natural barrenneſs, ſhe was paſt the prolific age; ſo that Iſaac was not born by the ſtrength of nature, but merely by the virtue of the promiſe: ſo believers are made the *children of God*, not by the power of nature, but by the virtue of the promiſe, when the Spirit of God puts a generative virtue therein. It is the promiſe of God in Chriſt, that makes us children; and the promiſe is of the mere free grace of God; therefore they that are God's children, are ſo by the mere free grace of God; *Having predeſtinate us to the adoption of children by Jeſus Chriſt to himſelf, according to the good pleaſure of his will, to the praiſe of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved*, Eph. i. 5. How diſhonourable then to the doctrine of God's free grace and ſovereignty is it, for any to aſſert, "That "election and adoption is according to God's "foreknowledge of our faith and obedience?" For, thus would we elect ourſelves, and be children, not by divine promiſe, but of our own free-will and faith. God foreſaw the faith of his elect, indeed, becauſe he firſt decreed to give the grace of faith to them; for the foreknowledge of things to come to paſs, depends upon a precedent will in God; nothing comes to paſs without his will. The friends and favourites of the free-will of man, in converting themſelves, are enemies to the free grace of God in begetting children to himſelf, by virtue of his promiſe in Chriſt, and by the means thereof. Neither does this aboliſh the freedom of the will; for, as the generative promiſe is juſt the abſolute will of God, ſo the determination of man's will by the will of God, is the liberty of the will, and not the bondage of it: when he works powerfully on the will of man, he gives *both to will and to do*, he makes the man willing; and this is the perfection of liberty, when man's will is made conform to the will of God.—Thus all the children of God are the children of promiſe.

12. Hence ſee what is the *great buſineſs of miniſters*, if they would be the happy inſtruments of begetting children to God. If all that are his children, are the children of promiſe, then his miniſters had need to be the heralds of the promiſe, miniſters of the New Teſtament, which is *the covenant of promiſe, not of the letter, but of the Spirit*. It is the goſpel, in contradiſtinction from the law, that is the *miniſtration of the Spirit*, 2 Cor. iii. 6, 7, 8. The law is to be preached, indeed, but it is only in a ſubſerviency to the goſpel. The ſinner muſt hear what the law hath to charge upon him, that ſo, when he takes with the charge of the law, he may haſte to flee to the diſcharge that is preſented in the goſpel-promiſe, or to Chriſt *as the end of the law for righteouſneſs, to every one that believeth*. None can lawfully preach the law as a covenant, unleſs they preach Chriſt as the end of it; nay, nor can any rightly preach the law as a rule, unleſs they preach Chriſt as the beginning of it; I mean, Chriſt for our *righteouſneſs*, is the end of the law as a covenant; and Chriſt for our *ſtrength*, is the ſpring of our obedience to the law as a rule. Think not ſtrange that we harp ſo much upon this ſtring, eſpecially in a day wherein the goſpel is brought under ſo much contempt, reproach, and ſuſpicion, as if it were a door of *licentiouſneſs* †. As the expreſs words of our commiſſion are, *Go preach the goſpel to every creature*, to every rational creature; ſo it is the goſpel only that ſaves all that are ſaved, and that ſanctifies all that are ſanctified; for it is the *miniſtration of the Spirit*, and the *power of God to ſalvation*; and it is the goſpel-promiſe, and that alone, that is the prolific womb from whence all the children of God have their new birth, for they are the children of the promiſe. O then, Sirs, let us then put honour and reſpect upon the promiſe. A throne without a promiſe, is but the devil's dungeon; wealth, without a promiſe, is but fewel for hell; temporal enjoyments, without a promiſe, are but dreadful curſes; life, and health, and merriment, without a promiſe, are nothing but

† See this matter fully handled, Serm. VIII. Beſides p. 70, 149, 150, 178, 198.

but a ſilk threed, by which you are hinging over the gulf of death and eternal damnation: therefore, O intreat God to manifeſt himſelf to you in the promiſe, and to make you know the myſtery of the goſpel!—Religious duties themſelves, without a promiſe, are nothing but a building of your habitation about the old ruinous walls of a covenant of works, which will tumble down and fall upon you with a vengeance: therefore, O ſeek to know God in Chriſt, God in a promiſe, where alone you can find him reconciled!—God, in a promiſe, is all love; Chriſt, in a promiſe, is all heaven; the Spirit, in a promiſe, is all holineſs and comfort; and every thing, with a promiſe, is ſweet.—Outward bleſſings, with a promiſe, are bleſſings indeed; a cup of cold water, with a promiſe, is a feaſt; yea, a croſs, with a promiſe, is a cordial; a dungeon, a priſon, with a promiſe, is a paradiſe; a bloody ſcaffold, with a promiſe, is a place of honour; death, with a promiſe, is a door of life: O then, ſeek to know God in a promiſe!—God as a lawgiver and commander, is no myſtery to the world, for nature's light ſhows ſomething of that; but God in a promiſe, is indeed a myſtery. Hence more errors have ariſen about the goſpel than about the law, becauſe the principles of the law are written in man's nature. Heathens have made laws againſt all manner of outward vices forbidden by the moral law; but the goſpel is ſupernatural, and the goſpel-promiſe of *writing the law in the heart*, by a new creation in Chriſt unto good works.—It is the greateſt honour of any nation to be the ſeat of the goſpel: as the ark was the glory of Iſrael; ſo is Chriſt, in the promiſe, the glory of the church of God. And what is it that makes a flouriſhing church, but the goſpel-promiſe, impregnated with the power of the Spirit for bringing forth children unto God? As you ſee in the verſe preceding our text, *Rejoice thou barren, that beareſt not; break forth and cry, thou that traveleſt not: for the deſolate hath many moe children, than ſhe which hath a husband.*—What made our reformation-days and Scotland's covenanting-days to be ſuch joyful and heartſom days of the church, in bringing forth many children unto God? Why, the matter was, a goſpel-ſpirit was poured out, in oppoſition to the old Popiſh legal ſtrain; and when the free-promiſe, the free-grace of God in Chriſt took a vent, then was the church a *joyful mother of many children to God, a nation*, as it were, *born at once*; a multitude of converts was born in her.—But, alas! Whence is the barren womb of the church of Scotland in theſe covenant-breaking days, wherein our ſolemn covenants are much buried in oblivion; yea, the obligation thereof impunged and denied by many, who conſequently juſtify the burning and burial of our covenant, and condemn the principles of our covenanting reformers, and pureſt aſſemblies, that laid the foundation of the Lord's houſe among us; and travelled night and day, to get the work of reformation brought to the ſcripture-pattern; and tranſmitted goſpel-truths down to us at the expence of their blood, ſome ſealing it by their martyrdom; while we, their ungrateful poſterity, are either forgetting their labours, or caſting a reproach upon them, as if they had been more led by phrenzy than true zeal; notwithſtanding all their prayers, and tears, and wreſtling with God in behalf of our Zion? But, as their remarkable ſucceſs, ſhewed how much they were honoured of God; ſo our remarkable barrenneſs ſhows how much we are left of God.—The glorious goſpel is brought under much contempt, and the goſpel-preaching marked out with notes of ignominy and calumny, whereby God is diſhonoured, Chriſt is deſpiſed, the Spirit is grieved, the goſpel is ſlighted, and the edification of ſouls marred, and many led to ſuſpect the truth as if it were error, and few or none honoured to do any good to ſouls. The legal preacher is not honoured, becauſe the law is not the *miniſtration of the Spirit*; the goſpel-preacher is not honoured, becauſe God is angry at his mother-church, and ſhe, and all her children, are under a cloud. Oh! ſeek that the Lord may pity us, and return with a day of power, that he may appear in his glory, and build up Zion.—Mean time, you may ſee what our great buſineſs ſhould be in preaching the word to you; particularly, rightly to rid marches betwixt the law and the promiſe: for, when law and goſpel are mixed and confounded together, neither true law nor true goſpel can be preached, but a hotch-potch of both, to the marring of both; juſt like the mingling together of water and wine, which makes flaſh matter of both, and is rejected of God, Iſa. i. 22. And how miſerable are you that are goſpel hearers, if you can never come to underſtand what is the goſpel, and what is the law, and whether your ſalvation be in this or that? My text leads me to no more of the difference betwixt the law and the goſpel at preſent, than to tell you that the goſpel is a promiſe, or a revelation of God's grace and good-will to ſinners in Chriſt; and that it is the goſpel-promiſe only, under the influence of the Spirit, that begets children unto God. And if this one point were obſerved, it might be of uſe to you all your lifetime, in hearing the word preached, for making you underſtand what is the voice of the law, and what is the voice of the goſpel therein: for the law runs always in a mandatory or minatory ſtrain; that is, in commands and threatenings; but the goſpel runs in a promiſſory ſtrain: the former begets fear and dread, and the latter begets hope; and happy they, who, being terrified by the law, are made to flee away to the goſpel, and thereby are begotten to a lively hope: but wo will be to you, if you can never diſtinguiſh betwixt God in a threatening, and God in a promiſe, ſo as to flee from a threatening to a promiſing God; that is, from a God out of Chriſt, clothed with threatenings and wrath, to a God in Chriſt, clothed with promiſes, and mercy, and grace; for there lies all your ſalvation. Oh! Sirs, ſeek that the diſpenſation of the goſpel may be powerful towards you!*

HAVING elſewhere finiſhed the doctrinal part of this ſubject, and proſecuted an uſe of information at conſiderable length, the *ſecond* uſe, I propoſe, is by way of *examination* and *trial*; namely, for reſolving this inquiry, Whether or not you be *children of promiſe?* Much depends upon this inquiry: for, if you be a child of promiſe, you are a child of God, and an heir of glory; if you be not a child of promiſe, you are yet under the curſe of the law, and upon

* What follows of this ſubject was delivered in three ſermons, at diſpenſing the ſacrament of the Lord's Supper at Glendovan, July 31ſt, 1726. on the Saturday, Sabbath, and Monday.

the very brink of hell and damnation, and under the power of sin and Satan; a servant unto sin, and a slave to the devil. Try then, whether you be a child of promise or not; I mean, an actual child of promise, for the Lord only knows who are the children of promise virtually. Isaac was a child of promise virtually, before ever he was born by the power of the promise; he was lying in the womb of the promise, till the promise came to the full time of bringing him forth: so, I hope, there may be some here that are the children of promise virtually, but they are not yet brought forth, they are lying in the womb of God's gracious purpose and promise, and such will be brought forth in the fulness of time; for, *All that the Father hath given me, shall come to me*, says Christ: but as to themselves, and their natural state, they are in the same common mass of sin and misery with the rest of the world, and may be worse than their neighbours, and are yet strangers to the covenant of promise. The question and inquiry is not concerning these; no marks can be given of these, but such as will find them out to be children of the devil, enemies to God, aliens and strangers to Christ: understand the question then to be meant of these that are the actual children of promise, adopted, regenerated, and begotten by the word of truth.

Now, I might here offer *negative* marks, to shew who are not the *children of the promise*; particularly,

1. None that are *mocking* Ishmaelites, that hate and oppose, mock and ridicule the free gospel-dispensation, and the close followers thereof; for here the children of promise, as Isaac, are set in opposition to mocking Ishmael, the son of the bond-woman. These, then, that mock, persecute, and malign the freedom of the gospel, when it is set forth in contradistinction to the law, and reproach the believers and professors thereof, as if it were a new invention, to expect salvation by a free promise, and not by the law. Mockers of the free grace of God had need to take care what they are doing: for, if that same grace do not marvellously prevent, they shall be cast out of God's family; though for a time they may bear sway therein, as Ishmael did in Abraham's family, till it came to this, *Cast forth the bond-woman and her son.* Mockers of the gospel then, are not the children of promise.

2. None that live in the *practice*, and under the *power* of *any known sin whatsoever*, secret or open, are the children of promise; for, the faith of the promise *purifies the heart.* The children of the promise are *begotten again to a lively hope*, by the promise; and, *He that hath this hope, purifieth himself.* It is true, the children of promise may feel the power of sin, and sometimes fear they be under the power of it, because of the strength of corruption hurrying them oft down the stream; but yet their pleading of the promise of God against the power of sin, and their secret wrestling with God on that head, declares that they are not under the power of sin, and that *sin shall not have dominion over them*, because *they are not under the law, but under grace:* but as for these that sin with a high hand, that live in drunkenness, whoredom, swearing, sabbath-breaking, and in the neglect of secret and family-prayer, or in any other sin without controul; it is evident they are not under the power of the gospel-promise; sin hath dominion over them, because they are not under grace, but under the law. Therefore,

3. None that are *self-justiciaries*, people looking to be saved and justified by the law, and the works of the law, either in whole or in part; none of these are the children of promise: nay, such can have no part in the kingdom of heaven, they are to be cast out of the church and family of God, as you see in the context; *Cast out the bound-woman and her son.* There is the voice of God, casting down from heaven to hell the greatest part of the earth, the Turk, the Jew, the Pagan, and the Papist, together with all the grossly ignorant protestants and professors, that know no other way of salvation and justification but by their works, or, *seek salvation, as it were, by the works of the law.* Oh! how is the world perishing in a legal dream, imagining to deal with God in the law, not knowing God in Christ, or in the promise! And some that hear of Christ, and that there is no salvation but in him, how do they dream of salvation partly by the law, and partly by the promise! and so they divide salvation betwixt themselves and Christ; and, in doing so, they take all the honour to themselves, and Christ hath but the name by way of compliment. How expect you to be saved, man? Why, say you, it is only by Christ? Well said: but, why expect you to be saved by Christ? Why, say you, because I do as well as I can, and am a good honest neighbour, that never wronged any body; I am just in my dealings, and frugal in my calling, and sober in my conversation; yea, I read, and pray, and communicate: and though I be not perfect, for none are without faults; yet I am sincere, and have a good meaning. Very well, man; but what of all that? Why, say you, therefore I hope Christ will save me, or God will save me for Christ's sake, because I do my best. Nay, man, I tell you, therefore God will cast you out, because you give Christ but the compliment of being your Saviour, and you take the honour to yourself; your hope is not built upon God's promise, but upon your own practice. What, Sir, would you have us giving up with all good works and good practice, and running in to Antinomian laxness? Oh! gross ignorance of the grace of God! Do you think that your giving up with your dead works, will be the ruin of good works. All your works before faith in the free promise, are dead works; and you are lost for ever, if you get not the blood of Christ to *purge your conscience from* these *dead works, to serve the living God*, Heb. ix. 14. And there is no serving of the living God acceptably, till the old dead works be purged out. You cannot be too much occupied in reading, and praying, and hearing, and using the means; but your turning the means to conditions, as if you were to deal with God upon the terms of the old covenant, this is a siding with the conditional law, against the free absolute promise.

4. None are children of the promise, who are *strangers to the power and virtue of it*; for all the true-born children thereof, are brought forth by the virtue thereof. If your religion spring only from education, from custom, from example, from your own free-will, and the refinement and improvement of natural parts, not from the virtue and efficacy of the promise, under

under the influence of the powerful Spirit of God, you are but ſtill-born, or a baſtard, like Iſhmael; not a free-born child, like Iſaac. The promiſe bears all the expences of her own children; they cannot do without a promiſe and power in it, or without Chriſt and virtue from him, for bearing the charges of their religion, and of all their religious actions. As Chriſt hath ſaid, *Without me ye can do nothing*; ſo they find and know, to their experience, that they *are not ſufficient of themſelves, to think any thing as of themſelves*; therefore, their dependence is upon, and their ſuccour is from the free promiſe, the free grace of God in Chriſt. Whereas, theſe that are not born by virtue of the promiſe, as Iſaac, but by the power of nature, as Iſhmael, they can do all by their own natural power: indeed they may learn to ſay, O without Chriſt we can do nothing; but they lye, for they have a rooted perſuaſion in their heart, that they can defray their own charges well enough; they can hear, they can read, they can pray, they can believe, they can communicate, and all, with the greateſt eaſe, and without any difficulty; and may be think ſtrange to hear ſome of God's people complaining of difficulties, and making it impoſſible kind of work to them, for they never found any difficulty; it was always poſſible and practicable enough for them. Why, what is the matter? Indeed, it is juſt here, they were never acted by the ſtrength and virtue of the promiſe, but merely by the power of nature, and common influences; for they are not the children of promiſe.

But now I proceed to offer ſome *poſitive* marks of the children of promiſe. And 1. I would offer ſome *antecedent* marks. 2. Lay down ſome concluſive and determining evidences of them.

I would, *firſt*, offer ſome *antecedent* marks of the children of promiſe. Such as,

1. Theſe that are actually by grace the children of promiſe, have well known and underſtood that by nature they are the *children of diſobedience*, and by practice alſo, Eph. ii. 2. They have been convinced of ſin in breaking the commands of the law, which makes them value that ſalvation from ſin, that is held forth in the promiſe of the goſpel. They that have not known God in the command, as offended and diſhonoured by them; ſurely they have not yet known God in a promiſe, as reconciled to them. Till the commandment come, the man is *alive to the law*, Rom. vii. 9.; or, *alive without the law; but when the command comes*, and the man ſees the ſpirituality of the precept, then *ſin revives, and he dies*. Some look only to the letter of the law, and ſo think they are very innocent: but if the Spirit of God had once diſcovered the ſpirit of the law, then the ſoul will cry out, *Unclean, unclean!* I have broken every command. If you will believe ſome people, I mean, ignorant legaliſts, they ſpeak as if they had never broken one of the ten commands: why, I was never given to idolatry, ſuperſtition, profaning of God's name, nor his Sabbath; never diſobedient to my parents, nor a murderer, adulterer, thief, nor a falſe ſwearer, nor a coveter of my neighbour's wife, houſe, or goods, *&c.* Oh! but they that are humbled, by the coming of the commandment, they ſee what a huge maſs of corruption the natural heart is, even the reverſe of all God's commands.

The language of the child of promiſe, that hath got a view of God in the command to his conviction, is not, *All theſe things have I done from my youth up*; but, *In all theſe things have I offended*.—In oppoſition to the *firſt* command, my heart is but a throne of iniquity, a *receptacle of falſe gods*: I have broken it a thouſand times; for, ſo many luſts and idols as I have had, ſo many ſtrange gods have taken away my heart.—In oppoſition to the *ſecond* command, my heart is but a *chamber of imagery*: as oft as I have neglected God's worſhip, or worſhipped him in an unſuitable manner, ſo oft have I broken this command, and that is, times without number.—In oppoſition to the *third* command, my heart is but a *dungeon of profanity*: and as oft as I have thought amiſs of God's holy name, and ſpoken irreverently of it, or of any of his titles, attributes, ordinances, words, and works, ſo oft am I chargeable with guilt here.—In oppoſition to the *fourth* command, my heart is but a *ſacrilegious waſter of holy time*, a play-houſe of idleneſs: and as oft as I have entertained carnal and worldly thoughts, and ſpoken vain and fooliſh words, and put off God with dead and formal prayers, and roving affections, in reading, hearing, ſinging, and praying on the Lord's day; ſo oft have I been a damnable breaker of God's Sabbath.—In oppoſition to the *fifth* command, my heart is but a *palace of pride*, the ſpring of all my haughty carriage towards my neighbour, whether ſuperiors, inferiors, or equals: and as oft as I have failed in the duties of my ſtation, as a magiſtrate, miniſter, elder, huſband or wife, parent or child, maſter or miſtreſs, or ſervant, not inſtructing my children and ſervants, not receiving inſtruction from maſter or ſuperior, *&c.* ſo oft have I miſerably thwarted this command.—In oppoſition to the *ſixth* command, Oh! my heart is but a *houſe of ſlaughter*; many cruel thoughts againſt my neighbour make my heart but a ſlaughter-houſe: for God hath ſaid, *He that hates his brother in his heart is a murderer*; yea, *He that is angry with his brother, and ſays to him*, RACA, *Thou fool, is in danger of hell fire*: therefore, ſo oft as I have been guilty of angry thoughts, angry words, and mocking carriage, ſo oft have I broken this command.—In oppoſition to the *ſeventh* command, my heart is but a *cage of unclean birds*, a fountain of pollution: Chriſt charges the luſtful eye to be a committing adultery in the heart; and as often as I have had unclean thoughts, obſcene words, an immodeſt carriage, or a wanton garb or dreſs, ſo oft have I broken this command.—In oppoſition to the *eighth* command, Oh! my heart is but a *den of thieves*, and a field of robbery: for, as oft as I have deviſed fraud, and contrived how to have advantage of my neighbour, ſo as to gain at his loſs, ſo oft have I offended here.—In oppoſition to the *ninth* command, my heart is but a *fountain of backbiting*, and a ſeed-pot of ſlander, debate, and reviling: and as oft as I have reproached his name, received an ill report, and been glad to hear an ill tale of him, and fond to repeat it; ſo oft have I tranſgreſſed this command.—In oppoſition to the *tenth* command, my heart is but a *temple of idolatry*; for *covetouſneſs is idolatry*: and ſo oft as I have not been fully content with my own eſtate, nor pulled out the eyes of envy with reſpect to my neighbour's goods and poſſeſſion, wiſhing what is his were mine; ſo oft have I broken this command.

command.——Alas! Sirs, you that ſay or think you have a good heart, or a good nature, did you ever look to your heart and nature in this glaſs of God's commands? No, no: if you ſee the ſpirituality of God's law, you cannot but ſee the carnality and corruption of your heart and nature, Rom. viii. 7. If you have ſeen God in a command, you cannot but cry out, *Oh! I am a tranſgreſſor from the womb; the law is ſpiritual, but I am carnal, ſold under ſin.* Surely, if you have not ſeen God in the law-command to your conviction, you have not known him in the goſpel-promiſe to your conſolation; you are not a child of promiſe.

2. The *ſecond antecedent* mark is this, That theſe that are actually by grace the children of promiſe, have well known and underſtood, that as, by nature, they are *children of diſobedience*, ſo of conſequence that, by nature, they are *children of wrath*, Eph. ii. 3. And as they have not only ſeen God in the command, whoſe authority was affronted by them; but God in a threatening, whoſe curſe was gone out againſt them, according to the tenor of the law; *Curſed is every one that continues not in all things written in the book of the law to do them*, Gal. iii. 10. I ſpeak not of the meaſure of this diſpenſation; but ſo it is, that the children of promiſe are perſons that have been ſo far awakened, by the threatening of God's wrath, to a ſight of their miſery, as to make them ſee their need of Chriſt held out in the promiſe, and to flee for refuge to that quarter. I ſpeak not juſt now of the warrant that all have to flee to the promiſe, but of the method wherein God brings them to it, whom he calls effectually to be the children of promiſe: he convinces them of ſin and miſery; not only of ſin, by opening up the ſpirituality of the command; but alſo of miſery, by opening up the ſeverity of the threatening, ſhewing them that *the wages of ſin is death*; that *the ſoul that ſinneth ſhall die; tribulation and anguiſh to every ſoul that doth evil.* If you was never put in fear of hell and damnation, which all Chriſtleſs unbelieving ſinners ought to fear, or if you have never been terrified at the ſight of God manifeſted in the threatening, it is much to be feared you have never been truly relieved, by the ſight of God manifeſted in a promiſe. God manifeſting himſelf in a command, makes way for Chriſt's perfect obedience to be eſteemed; and God manifeſting himſelf in a threatening, makes way for Chriſt's complete ſatisfaction to be prized: and it is no wonder that Chriſt, the great promiſe, be ſlighted, ſo long as people have not, in the light of the command, ſeen themſelves to be *children of diſobedience*; and in the light of the threatening, ſeen themſelves to be *children of wrath.*

A man's being a child of promiſe, does therefore preſuppoſe both theſe; yet theſe are but *antecedent* marks, and cannot determine the caſe, except in conjunction with what is to follow: for it is poſſible a man may be convinced both of his ſin and miſery, and ſee himſelf both a child of diſobedience, and a child of wrath by reaſon thereof, and yet not be a child of promiſe. Though all the children of promiſe are thus conceived, yet all that are thus conceived are not the children of promiſe. The following marks, therefore, are concluſive and determining, being either concomitant with, or conſequent unto, your being the children of promiſe.

1*ſt*, The *firſt* mark then is, they that are children of promiſe, are the ſpecial *diſcerners* of the promiſe. Their eyes are *enlightned by the Spirit of wiſdom and revelation in the knowledge of Chriſt:* Enlightend to ſee God in a promiſe, as the only door of hope and relief in that extremity I was ſpeaking of; or to ſee God in ſome goſpel-truth and revelation equivalent to the promiſe. This is that knowledge of God in Chriſt, ſpoken of, 2 Cor. iv. 6. *The God who commanded light to ſhine out of darkneſs, hath ſhined in our hearts, to give us the light of the glory of God, in the face of Jeſus Chriſt:* and the glaſs wherein that bleſſed face is to be ſeen, is the goſpel-promiſe, or word of grace. When a limner draws a picture, he begins at the eye: ſo, when God draws his image on the ſoul, he opens the eyes, and diſcovers his glory in the goſpel. The child of promiſe, then, I ſay, is a ſpecial diſcerner of the promiſe; I mean, he hath got a ſpiritual diſcerning of the goſpel, and of the things of God: for, *the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God, they are fooliſhneſs to him, neither can he know them, for they are ſpiritually diſcerned.* Natural men think the goſpel fooliſhneſs, but the child of promiſe hath another kind of diſcerning knowledge of Chriſt and the goſpel.

QUEST. *How ſhall I underſtand if my knowledge of Chriſt and the goſpel, be of a ſpecial nature?*

To this I anſwer, by aſking theſe queſtions following.

1. Have you ſeen your utter *darkneſs*, that you had not a ſpark of ſaving light and knowledge, ſaying, *Once I was blind?* This is a good appearance.

2. Have you ſeen the *wiſdom* of God, in inveſting Chriſt with the office of a prophet; and that he could never have been ſo fit a Saviour, unleſs he had been a *light to lighten the Gentiles?*

3. Have you ſeen the abſolute need of *divine teaching*, and ſtill ſee it, being humbled under a ſenſe of your utter want of light, ſaying with Agur, Prov. xxx. 2. *I am more fooliſh than any man, and have not the underſtanding of a man;* and with Aſaph, Pſal. lxxiii. 22. *So fooliſh was I and ignorant, I was as a beaſt before thee;* humbled as the moſt confuſed creature, and greateſt fool in the world? Why, in that caſe, it would ſeem you are one of God's fools. *Let him become a fool, that he may be wiſe.*

4. Have you been made to cry for *light* and *knowledge*, ſaying, as Pſalm xliii. 3. *O ſend forth thy light and thy truth, and let them be guides unto me?* And do you prize every degree of light, knowing it pleaſant to ſee the ſun, pleaſant to ſee God in a promiſe; for there is the *wiſdom of God in a myſtery*, and there is all your ſalvation, all your relief?—Why, man, if you can anſwer theſe queſtions, it ſeems you are a ſpecial diſcerner of the promiſe.

2*dly*, They that are the children of promiſe, are the ſpecial *deſcendents* of the promiſe, and the free and powerful offſpring thereof. As Iſaac was a child of Abraham, not by the power of nature, but by the virtue and efficacy of the promiſe; ſo here, the child of promiſe is not ſo by works, but by grace: *There is a remnant according to the election of grace; and, if by grace, then it is no more of works, otherwiſe grace is no more grace: but if it be of works, then is it no more grace; otherwiſe work is no more work*, Rom. xi. 5, 6.

QUEST. *How ſhall I know if I be thus a ſpecial deſcendent of the promiſe?*

To which we reply; If you be a ſpecial deſcend-

fcendent of the promiſe, to be ſure, the Spirit of God hath put power into the promiſe for this end, and given the promiſe ſtrength to bring you forth; the goſpel hath been *the power of God to your ſalvation*, Rom. i. 16. *Knowing, brethren, your election of God; for our goſpel came not in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghoſt, and in much aſſurance*, 1 Theſſ. i. 4, 5. The goſpel hath come to you, not in the external objective revelation only, but in the internal ſubjective efficacy and demonſtration of the Spirit. What have you experienced of this power? If you be the children of promiſe, you have been *begotten of God's own will, by the word of truth; begotten to a lively hope*; not by the power of nature, but by the power of grace; not by the power of the law, but by the power of the promiſe.

But here again it may be urged, *How ſhall one know, that it is not by the power of the law, but by the power of the promiſe, that he hath been begotten to a profeſſion of religion?* For the law, the bond-woman, hath power to beget children, like Iſhmael, that are not the children of promiſe, or of grace. How then ſhall I know that it was not the power of the law, but the power of the goſpel-grace and promiſe that I was touched with?

Whereunto it might be replied; If you have been begotten by the promiſe, and ſo by the power of divine ſovereign grace, then you have found, that God hath ſhewn no regard either to your *good* or *evil*, in making you his child. If you be a child of promiſe, you have found he hath ſhewn no regard to your good or goodneſs; for you had no good to move him: and that he hath ſhewn no regard to your evil; for you had enough of that to hinder him. What then hath moved him? Nothing but his own free ſovereign grace; ſovereign grace is a thing that can neither be hindered by our ill, nor furthered by our good. Do you ſee it is nothing but free, free and ſovereign grace that hath done it? *Of his own will begat he us, by the word of truth.* If you be a child of promiſe, and not a deſcendent of the bond-woman, the law, then you have ſeen that your ſalvation and juſtification is wholly of grace, and not of works; *Not of works, leſt any man ſhould boaſt*, Eph. ii. 9. NOT OF WORKS; that is, neither *for* works, nor *in* works, nor *by* works, nor *according to* your works.

1. You will ſee that your ſalvation is no *for* your works, and that the promiſe comes not for your ſake; *Not for your ſake do I this, ſays the Lord God, be it known unto you; be aſhamed and confounded for your own way*, Ezek. xxxvi. 32. Tho' the Lord ſave his people to good works, Eph. ii. 10. *Creating them in Chriſt unto good works*; yet all the children of promiſe know full well, that he does not ſave them for their good works; for that is juſt the old-covenant way, which now is impaſſible: *By the deeds of the law ſhall no fleſh be juſtified.*

2. You will ſee, that as you are not ſaved *for*, ſo you are not ſaved *in* your good works: for you was juſt in your ſins when the Lord ſaved you; in the law dungeon of helliſh enmity, unbelief, and when *dead in treſpaſſes and ſins*, Eph. ii. 1. Hence your ſong will be with the church, Pſal. cxxxvi. 24. *He remembered us in our low eſtate; for his mercy endureth for ever.* When you was *in the gall of bitterneſs and bond of iniquity, in the pit wherein there is no water, he delivered by the blood of the covenant.*

3. You will ſee alſo that it is not *by* your good works; *Not by works of righteouſneſs which we have done, but of his mercy he ſaved us, by the waſhing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghoſt*, Tit. iii. 5. You will know that *by grace you are ſaved*, and not by the works of the law.

4. You will ſee that you are not ſaved *according to* your good works; *He hath ſaved us, and called us with a holy calling; not according to our works, but according to his own purpoſe and grace, which was given us in Chriſt Jeſus before the world began*, 2 Tim. i. 9. If you be a child of promiſe, then you are a ſpecial deſcendent and offſpring of the promiſe, and not a brat and offſpring of the law, the bond-woman: you will ſee and know, that your ſalvation is neither *for* works, as the cauſe; nor *in* works, as the motive and riſe; nor *by* works, as the mean; nor *according to* works, as the rule of your juſtification.

Know, Sirs, indeed, that God will *judge* all the world *according to their works*, but he will *ſave* none in all the world according to their works. God will judge the world to hell according to their works, *Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity*; and he will judge the ſaints, and adjudge them to heaven, for the perfect righteouſneſs of Chriſt, which they will be clothed with: and whatever good works the faith of that righteouſneſs influences them unto, will be made honourable mention of; and ſo far they will be judged according to their works: but as none are *ſaved according to their works*, but *according to his purpoſe and grace*; ſo, all that are the children of promiſe, will be taught this leſſon. Whereas, the children of the bond-woman, the Iſhmaelites, and legaliſts, are indocible and untractable on this head; though they may compliment grace with the name of their ſalvation, yet, in the reality of the thing, they make their works either the moving cauſe, or the meritorious cauſe, or the procuring cauſe, or the inſtrumental cauſe, of their ſalvation.—Either they make their works, I ſay, the *moving* cauſe of ſalvation, thinking that their good performances will move God to ſave them; and ſo they put their works in the room of free grace, the only moving cauſe.—Or they make their works the *meritorious* cauſe of their ſalvation, thinking their pains and endeavours will make a purchaſe of heaven for them; and ſo they put their works in the room and place of Chriſt's blood and righteouſneſs, the only meritorious cauſe.—Or they make their works the *procuring* cauſe of their ſalvation, ſaying, Well, though we cannot merit, it is only Chriſt's merit can ſave us, yet what was merited by his blood, muſt be procured by our prayers and good duties; if they cannot be *whole*, they muſt be *half* Saviours, by procuring to themſelves, by their works, what Chriſt hath purchaſed by his blood; and ſo they put their works in the room and place of Chriſt's interceſſion, which is the only procuring cauſe.—Or, finally, they make their works the *inſtrumental* cauſe of their ſalvation; why, ſay they, muſt we not do ſome good works, that we may be ſaved by them? And here they put their works in the room of faith, which is the only inſtrument for receiving Chriſt, not knowing that there can be no good works before faith;

faith; and that *without faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe God*; becauſe, out of Chriſt, and out of a promiſe, apprehended by faith, nothing will pleaſe him. And, therefore, try if you be thus the children of promiſe, by your being the deſcendents of the promiſe, the powerful and free offspring of the free promiſe, and free grace of God, in oppoſition to the works of the law; ſince ſalvation is not of works, but of grace: *By grace ye are ſaved, through faith.* Hence,

3*dly*, The third mark I give is, they that are the children of promiſe, are the ſpecial *believers* of the promiſe, and *receivers* of the *promiſe by faith*, Gal. iii. 14. Unbelief and infidelity is the ſin of ſins; faith, and perſuaſion of the promiſe, is the grace of graces, and the leading mark of the children of promiſe: for, as none can be ſaved, except they be the children of promiſe, as Iſaac; and as none can be the children of promiſe, as Iſaac, except they become the *children of Abraham*, Luke xix. 6.: ſo we cannot become the children of Abraham, but by *walking in the ſteps of the faith of Abraham*, Rom. iv. 11, 12. And the apoſtle plainly declares, that *as many as are of the faith, the ſame are the children of Abraham*, and *bleſſed with faithful Abraham*, Gal. iii. 7, 9. Therefore, as we would value the very life of our ſouls, as well as the glory of God, we would enquire into the deſcription of Abraham's faith, in order to try our faith by.

QUEST. *How ſhall I know if my faith be right, and if I be a ſpecial believer of the promiſe?*

ANSW. Try it by the *deſcription* of Abraham's faith, from the *ground*, the *battle*, the *victory*, and the *triumph* of it, Rom. iv.

1. Try your faith by the *ground* and *object* of it; and the ground and object of it by that of Abraham's. What was the *matter* whereupon Abraham's faith did reſt? It was the *promiſe* of God concerning ISAAC, and CHRIST in him, Rom. iv. 16, 17. God promiſed to him a numerous ſeed; and Abraham ſaw and felt both in himſelf and in his wife nothing but barrenneſs: but yet that was nothing, conſidering in whom Abraham believed, even *the God who quickens the dead, and calls thoſe things that are not as though they were*: even ſo, the immediate object of faith, is God's promiſe; the word of a powerful God, that can give a being to his word.

2. Try your faith by the *battles* of it. And what was the battle of Abraham's faith? Why, the order of nature, and ſenſe and reaſon, grounded upon natural cauſes, did ſhow a flat contrariety to, and impoſſibility of the matter promiſed: againſt which his faith oppoſed the mere word and power of God that ſpake. And this battle of faith is expreſſed, ver. 18. *Againſt hope, he believed in hope;—according to that which was ſpoken.* AGAINST HOPE; that is, againſt the hope which he might conceive by the conſideration of natural cauſes: *he* BELIEVED IN HOPE; that is, in the bope which he did conceive by the conſideration of the power and promiſe of God. So, where faith is, there will be a battle of hope againſt hope; againſt *natural* hope, there will be a believing in *ſpiritual* and *ſupernatural* hope, grounded on God's word.

3. Try it by the *victory* of faith. And what was the victory of Abraham's faith? It lay in the neglecting of the conſideration of, and overlooking the order of nature and natural cauſes, and all things that, to ſenſe and reaſon, ſight and feeling, ſhow a contrariety and impoſſibility in the matter promiſed; and a reſting wholly and only upon the word, promiſe, and power of the God that ſpeaks: whereby viſible things, that to reaſon are contrary to the promiſe, do become as things of nothing, and as it were having no being; and inviſible things, ſpoken by God, become the only things that have a being and foundation with us. This victory of faith you ſee expreſſed, ver. 19. *And being not weak in faith, he conſidered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadneſs of Sarah's womb.* Thus it is with true faith in the divine promiſe: whatever the man beholds in and about himſelf, that is againſt, and contrary to the accompliſhment of God's promiſe, that he does not conſider; but, giving place to the truth and power of God, the man forgets himſelf, as it were, and withdraws his mind from all things that he ſees and feels in himſelf to be contrary to the promiſe, be it felt deadneſs, barrenneſs, nothingneſs, emptineſs, ſin, and guilt, and whatever elſe, all that is buried in oblivion, and the ſoul ſwallowed up in the conſideration of nothing but God's promiſe and power. The man believes things that are impoſſible to nature, ſenſe, and reaſon; yea, and contrary thereunto; becauſe he believes the word of that God that *quickens the dead*: he conſiders God's word, and drops the conſideration of all things elſe.—See if ever your faith acted thus upon a promiſe.

4. Try it by the *triumph* of faith. And now the triumph of Abraham's faith here, is his yielding unto God the glory of his truth and power, ver. 20, 21. *He ſtaggered not at the promiſe of God through unbelief; but was ſtrong in the faith, giving glory to God: And being fully perſuaded, that what he had promiſed, he was able alſo to perform.* And compare this with the account of Sarah's faith, Heb. xi. 11. *Through faith alſo Sarah herſelf received ſtrength to conceive ſeed, and was delivered of a child when ſhe was paſt age, becauſe ſhe judged him faithful who had promiſed.* Faith triumphant over all its enemies, does, in ſpite of ſenſe and feeling, reaſon, and outward appearance, give God the glory of his truth and faithfulneſs. Hereupon faith believes things that to nature are impoſſible, and to carnal reaſon incredible: it marks what ſenſe and reaſon ſay, but ſcores it by, and believes quite contrary. How? even by removing, what they pretend, out of ſight and mind; as Abraham did the deadneſs of his body, and the deadneſs of Sarah's womb, not conſidering the ſame, but truſting in the word of God alone, even though God himſelf, in his providence, ſeem to ſpeak otherwiſe than the word, as Chriſt dealt at firſt with the woman of Canaan; and though all the creatures ſpeak otherwiſe than the word ſpeaks: which indeed may make the ſtouteſt believer ſtumble at the firſt view, till he mind what God ſays, and forget what other things ſay. Thus Sarah ſtumbled at the firſt, but at length got the victory over her doubting, by forgetting her barrenneſs and old age, that pretended impoſſibility, and by *judging him faithful that had promiſed.*

But, to prevent miſtakes, there is a fourfold faith that will not amount to this which the children of promiſe have, namely, 1. A natural faith. 2. An opinionative faith. 3. A rational faith. 4. A temporary faith.

(1.) Some have a *natural* faith, which they brought

brought from the cradle with them. They have always believed, they ſay; and there is no perſuading them but they believe well enough. This faith grows upon a bad ſoil, even a corrupt unrenewed nature: it is not a faith of God's planting; it grows of its own accord: it is not a faith of God's watering, nor keeping alive by influences from heaven; it does not hold its life, nor its all of Chriſt, but carries the ſoul ſtraightway to God's mercy, without ever owning Chriſt. Yea, this faith is rooted in groſs ignorance of God: and as the tree is, ſo is the fruit; not the fruit of true holineſs, but the fruit of formality and indifferency about ſalvation, and about the glory of God; fruits that will ripen unto damnation. This natural faith is not the faith of the children of promiſe.

(2.) There is an *opinionative* faith; that is, a faith or credit founded upon probability and opinion. Some men have an opinion, or probable gueſs, that the goſpel is the ſound way to ſalvation; but this is no laying hold upon the goſpel as an infallible truth: yet many ſnapper into this by-road, making the goſpel a probable problem. There is an opinion that is very probable, ſay they; and there they hold, till another come and contradict it. Why, ſays the man, Indeed that is very probable too; and ſo he wavers too and fro, *carried about with every wind of doctrine*. He takes the one end of it this day, and the other end of it the other day; and, ſo he that offers laſt carries away the prize. The Sceptics, and probable opiniators, are not among the number of believers, nor reckoned in Chriſt's roll; for the goſpel was never fathomed by them as an infallible truth, nor rooted in their heart and mouth. The goſpel to ſuch is not *Yea*, as the apoſtle ſays, 2 Cor. i. 18.; but *Yea* and *Nay*: the one day *Yea*, and the next day *Nay*. Theſe are *clouds without water, carried about of winds; trees whoſe fruit wither; raging waves of the ſea, foaming out their own ſhame; wandering ſtars, to whom is reſerved the blackneſs of darkneſs for ever*, Jude ver. 19. if they come not to a ſolid faith.

(3.) There is a *rational* faith. The former two take place, eſpecially among the more ignorant ſort of people, and this takes place among the learned: they ſearch into the reaſons of things, and what they ſhould believe; which is ſo far well done: they will not receive the truth upon truſt from others, but they ſearch into it themſelves, that they may give their aſſent upon rational grounds; and this they take for ſaving faith: yet they are deſtitute of the Spirit of faith; this is not the faith of the children of promiſe, it is at beſt but a faith founded upon rational grounds, and hiſtorical evidence. They ſeem to take a better grip of the goſpel than the former, yet not firm enough: for their credit is only grounded upon ſcience, or natural reaſon; they lay down ſome ſuppoſitions by way of demonſtrations, and from thence draw concluſions, which they think cannot but hold their feet. But there is an error in the firſt building; therefore, all that they build becomes ruinous, and cannot but totter when it gets a ſhake: for, in comes a better ſpeaker, with a ſyllogiſm; and, by way of demonſtration, overturns the foundation he ſtood upon, and there lies he: ſo that he, who embraces the goſpel by way of ſcholar-craft, or philoſophy, quits it again. Natural reaſon and philoſophy brings him to it, and natural reaſon and philoſophy robs him of it again; for, whenever the merely rational foundation, on which his faith is built, comes to be ſhaken and overturned, then his faith built upon it fails: give ſuch a man an anſwerable temptation, or a plauſible argument, and he will deny even the divinity of Chriſt, as many are doing at this day, and turn where-away you will; but divine faith ſtands upon a divine teſtimony.

(4.) There is a *temporary* faith, that goes beyond all the former, and is effected by the common operation of the Spirit of God: nor is it merely taken up with the truth of the goſpel, but alſo hath ſome reliſh of the goodneſs and ſweetneſs of it; and hence the ſtony-ground hearers are ſaid to *receive the word with joy*, Mat. xiii. 20.; yet this belief hath no root, no abiding principle: it is not the faith of the promiſe that takes place in the children of promiſe. Here is the moſt ſubtile deceit in the matter of faith: ſome people may take hold of Chriſt, as it were, and really get ſome ſap and virtue from him, for their refreſhment, and yet never get in to him. They are like the ivy, that grows up by the tree, and claſps about the tree, and draws ſap from the tree, and yet grows upon its own root, and is never one and the ſame with the tree: ſo here, ſome profeſſors may receive Chriſt, in the promiſe, by a temporary faith, they claſp about him cloſely, and draw ſome ſap and virtue from him; but ſtill they are never rooted in Chriſt, but rooted in the old Adam; ſtill rooted in the old covenant, were never cut off from the old root, and ingrafted into Chriſt, but only draw virtue from Chriſt to maintain their old-covenant fruit. I imagine it will be a hard chapter for ſome here to read, How ſhall I know but I am one of theſe that have only that faith which takes hold of Chriſt, like an ivy to the tree, drawing ſap from him, without ever being rooted in him? I ſhall offer you but one key for the opening of this difficulty, and you have need to have it opened; for it is as much as your eternal ſalvation is worth, to miſtake here. If you have no other but that temporary faith, you may believe and be damned with the devil, but cannot believe unto ſalvation.

The key for opening the matter, then, is this queſtion, *What know you of the difference betwixt righteouſneſs* IN *Chriſt, and righteouſneſs* FROM *him?*

Temporary faith may ſay, FROM *the Lord I have righteouſneſs and ſtrength*; but true faith ſays, IN *the Lord have I righteouſneſs and ſtrength*. — Temporary faith may get *many* things from him, but true faith gets *all* things in him, and is complete in him. — Temporary faith, being without root, never rooted in him, hath *nothing in* him, but *from* him; but true faith, being rooted in Chriſt, whatever it gets *from* him, it reſts not there, but looks to what is *in* him, and glories in that; *In him ſhall all the ſeed of Iſrael be juſtified, and ſhall glory*. See Iſa. xlv. 24, 25. 1 Cor. i. 30, 31. What think you the Popiſh way of believing unto ſalvation is? Indeed the refined of them go as far as ſome profeſſed Proteſtants: they own there is no ſalvation but by Chriſt; and though they do not believe, with application, that they have any righteouſneſs in him, yet they build upon a righteouſneſs from Chriſt, ſaying, "It is he that gives a man "power to do, and then ſprinkles the man's "doings

" doings with his blood, upon which he merits " their life and salvation." So many such papists amongst us, they believe that Christ only can save them, and they go to him to be saved from sin, and for grace to do better; and if they find power to do better, then they hope they shall be saved; while yet they may be damned, and go to the devil, though they should escape all the pollutions of the world, and that even through the knowledge of Christ, not from their own strength, but from the strength and virtue of the knowledge of Christ, 2 Pet. ii. 20. But true faith comes first to Christ for righteousness, and gets a righteousness in him for justification and eternal salvation: and, being rooted in Christ, grows up in him, and hath all in him; and hence can rejoice in him, even when it finds nothing but emptiness in itself: for, it is the nature of it, to go out of itself to Christ in the free promise.—Hence also temporary faith receives Christ *conditionally*, but true faith receives him *freely* as he is offered. Temporary believers take him for a Saviour; but, how? even in this conditional way, if I be a servant to him, he will be a Saviour to me; and so he serves him, and thereupon expects salvation from him: thus he bears the root, and the root bears not him. But true faith receives Christ freely for righteousness and strength both, saying, Even so I take him, both for righteousness, that he may be a Saviour to me; and for strength, that he may make me a servant to him, to serve as a son, not as a hireling. —Temporary faith and legal faith believes Christ will save me upon condition of my good behaviour for the time to come; in case I serve him, then he will save me: but gospel-faith takes Christ upon gospel-terms, as he is exhibite in the gospel-promise, saying, O I dare not promise any thing to him, but I take him as promising all things to me: and, blessed be sovereign grace, that all is in the promise; for, if any thing depended upon my good behaviour and future service, I fear all would be cast loose; therefore I take a Christ for all, and a promise for all: and, O well is me, that he hath promised all, for I can promise nothing; therefore, I will rely upon the promise of salvation, I will rely upon the promise of sanctification. And, in this way of taking the promise freely, he comes to be furnished for a better behaviour than all the legal and conditional believers in the world; for, as he believes the promise, so he lives upon it.——And this leads me to another mark of these that are the children of promise: not only are they believers of the promise, but,

4*thly*, They are *livers* upon the promise, they are dependents upon the promise; this is called a *living by faith on the Son of God*, Gal. ii. 20.; that is, a living upon the Son of God as held forth in a promise. As children live upon their mother, and babes upon the breast; so the children of the promise live upon the promise, and suck the milk that is in the breast thereof. They trust to his word; and, being persuaded, will embrace the promise, and hing upon the breast all their days. Some will say, perhaps, they believe the promise: well, but do they live upon it? Nay, but if they live not here, it shews they never truly believed. They are good believers; but are they good livers too? No indeed. It is a common word among you, Sirs, such a man is a good liver, such a woman is a good liver, if they be sober, and civil, and morally honest. Well, indeed these people are good to live with, and it is sad when there is so little morality among Christians, and that there is more of it among some Pagans: but withal, Sirs, consider who are good livers in God's account and reckoning; it is these that live upon the promise, and live by faith.

QUEST. *How shall I know if I be one of these that live by faith upon the promise?*

ANSW. 1. If you be living by faith on the promise, then you will find the promise to be the *mean* of *exciting* faith, as well as it was the mean of *creating* faith at first, or begetting it. The believer is in every respect a child of promise; his grace of faith is a child of promise, and his life of faith is a child of promise. The faith that believes the promise, is begotten by the power of the promise; and the faith that lives upon the promise, is also begotten by the power and virtue of the promise, and is cast forth out of the womb thereof. The promise that is the food of faith, on which faith lives, is always the seed of faith from which faith springs; therefore, the gospel is called *the word of faith*, in which believers are nourished up, 1 Tim. iv. 6. *Thy word hath quickened me*, saith the psalmist: and the gospel is said to be *the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes*. The same power that begets faith, is necessary for the increase thereof, and for drawing forth every act thereof: it is always, like Isaac, a child of promise; for it is a faith of God's operation. Grace, and virtue, and fire come out of the promise, and kindle it. I do not assert, that there is constantly a felt virtue coming from the promise, or a sensible power felt at first; for sensible feeling follows believing: but there is a secret, ineffable, insensible power, while the man is, perhaps, but musing and meditating upon the promise; and thereupon the sensible power and fire follows: *While I was musing the fire burned.* Hence the believer finds faith, both in the beginning, and all the actings thereof, to be both the most difficult and the most easy thing: so difficult, that it is just impossible for him to believe, till power and virtue come out of the promise in some secret and insensible manner, while he is stretching forth the withered hand; and yet so easy a thing, that when he is under the powerful influence of the grace of the promise, making him to roll himself upon Christ, as if he were carried on a wave of the sea, or hurled towards him in a chariot paved with love.

2. If you be living by faith on the promise, then you will find your faith *maintained by prayer*, or in a way of praying, saying, *Lord, I believe, help my unbelief; Lord, increase my faith.* This follows upon the former; for these prayers for faith in the increase thereof, say plainly, that no man can believe when he will, and as much as he will: for, if a man may believe when he will, and as much as he will, what needs him go to God, in Christ, by prayer for the increase of faith? Nay, *It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy. Faith is the gift of God*, and Christ is the *author and finisher of faith*; therefore prayer must be made to him for it, and for the increase of it. Yea, this prayer, *Lord, increase our faith*, plainly says, that they who pray so, must have faith; otherwise they but mock God, to seek more of that which they never had. Yet many will say,

say, O my faith is weak, Lord, increase it; while yet they never had knowledge or faith either. Faith is a fire, and prayer is like a pair of bellows to increase and blow up the fire: but where there is no fire, the bellows will never blow it up; but where the grace of faith is, it is usually blown by the prayer of faith. Many believe when they will, even as they can eat, and drink, and sleep, though they pray not for strength to do these things; but true faith waxes and wanes, according as the Spirit of prayer is up or down: and they that think they live by faith, and yet their faith not maintained by the means of importunate prayer, it is to be feared they will be ashamed of their faith, ere all be done.

3. If you be living by faith on the promise, then you will find *satisfaction to your soul* in the milk of the promise, and nowhere else: even as the child that lives upon the milk of the breast, finds satisfaction therein, and cannot be at rest without it; yea, the child is not content merely with the breast, unless it can find milk in the breast: even so the child of promise cannot find soul-satisfaction but in the promise; nor in the bare promise, unless he find the milk in that breast. What is the milk of the promise? Indeed it is *Christ*, and the child of promise lives upon Christ in the promise. It is not the word alone that satisfies him, but Christ in the word; it is not the ordinance alone, but Christ in the ordinance. The promise is the vessel or cup, Christ is the liquor that is in the cup, the living water that is in the vessel: and when one believes, and lives by faith, he does not take the vessel or cup only in his hand; nay, that would not satisfy his thirst, nor feed him; but drinks Christ out of that cup; he takes the living water out of it: and thus he is nourished, and refreshed, and satisfied. They that find soul-satisfaction elsewhere, are not living on the promise by faith. Some find satisfaction to their hearts in the world, and satisfaction to their conscience in their duties; but they are strangers to true satisfaction in Christ to heart and conscience both: but here it is that the child of promise rests satisfied, when out of the gospel-breast he gets the milk of consolation; Christ, the *consolation of Israel*, for *wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.*

4. They that are living by faith on the promise, are always *poor* and *needy*, kept from hand to mouth while here, that they may never cease living on the promise, and Christ in it. Though they get satisfaction here, and nowhere else: yet as the stomachs which we seem to satisfy just now, as I noticed on another occasion, yet within a few hours they are empty and craving; so it is with respect to the believer. And as the vessels which we fill to-day, require a new filling to-morrow; so the believer's spiritual wants still increase, and renew themselves: but though the vessel may be dry, yet the fountain is not; though the vessel may be empty, yet the fountain is full, and still streaming. The goodness of God in Christ is a living fountain, and his promises are a perpetual bond, a perpetual fund for the maintenance of the believer all his life-time, from the first moment that he is born and brought forth out of the womb of the promise, to the last moment of his age; *Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob, all the remnant of the house of Israel, which are born by me, from the belly, which are carried from the womb. And even to your old age I am he, and even to hoar-hairs will I carry you: I have made, I will bear, even I will carry and will deliver you*, Isa. xlvi. 3, 4. They that are *full, and rich, and increased with goods*, full of self-wisdom, self-righteousness, they live upon themselves, but not upon the promise: but the child of promise is a poor and needy, empty, hunger-beaten, starving creature, that sees need of depending constantly on a promise, and so receives out of Christ's fulness daily *grace for grace*. Try then if you be living on the promise, and laying God's promise and your condition together, studying his promise and your case together: for they that study their case, without studying the promise, are ready to despair; but they that study the promise, without studying their case, are ready to presume.

5. They that are the children of promise, are *lovers* of the promise, lovers of the gospel, and of the word of grace, saying, *How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, that bring glad tidings of good things!* Rom. x. 15. And again, *How sweet are thy words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!* They are the posterity of Ishmael that do not love the promise; all that are, as Isaac, the children of promise, are lovers of the promise. But some may deceive themselves, and think they are lovers, that are yet haters in reality. Therefore,

QUEST. *How shall I know if I be a true lover of the promise?*

ANSW. (1.) True lovers of the promise of the gospel, are persons that *understand the command* and *threatening of the law*, so as to know there is no dealing with God therein, the *law being weak through the flesh*, unable to save them, and only able to destroy them.

(2.) The true lovers of the promise, are persons that have *seen God in the promise*, by seeing his mercy, grace, and good-will through Christ held forth in the promise, for their ground of hope; and thereupon have been *begotten to a lively hope* by the means thereof.

(3.) The true lovers of the promise, are true lovers of all the *commands of God*, as they are a rule of holiness, wrapt up within the bosom of the promise. The command without a promise is terrible to them, it is a covenant of works; but the command within the promise, or the command in Christ as the *Lord our righteousness and strength*, this is lovely to them: and thus they regard all his commands. Hence,

(4.) The true lovers of the promise are *true lovers of Christ*: they that *love not our Lord Jesus Christ, are cursed*; they that love Christ are blessed.

QUEST. *How shall I know if I be a true lover of Christ?*

ANSW. [1.] The true lovers of Christ are pleased with a *whole Choist*; Christ is in every respect precious to them: not this part of Christ, and that part, but a whole Christ; as a King, as well as a Priest; in his lowest circumstances, as well as the highest; the very cross of Christ; yea, an absent Christ, as well as a present. It is the property of a believer, to be either rejoicing in Christ's presence, or lamenting his absence. Christ's absence is not uneasy to them that love him not, but lovers think the time very long when he absents. Psal. xiii. 1, 2. Four times he cries, *How long?* They cannot rest while he is absent. Indeed, there may be a spiritual lethargy that may seize the lovers of Christ;

Christ; but whenever they are awakened, Oh! they think every minute long till he appear. They love his word and ordinances, and esteem them sometimes more than their ordinary food. Can they that undervalue ordinances, and make little use of the Bible, be lovers of Christ? No, by no means. Enquire what esteem you have of a whole Christ, in all his offices, in all circumstances, in all things that appertain to him.

[2.] The true lovers of Christ will *prize his image*, where-ever they see it, were it in a beggar, as well as a prince; yea, a beggar on the dunghill, that hath Christ's image, will be more prized by such, than a king upon a throne that wants it. Indeed, if you do not love his image, you do not love himself; for, *He that loves not him that begat, how shall he love him that is begotten of him?* Do you reckon the saints *the excellent ones of the earth, in whom is all your delight* in this world, even when they are stript of all earthly things, riches, honours, and even other accomplishments of mind, and considered simply as having the image of God? Why then, *by this you may know you are past from death to life, because you love the brethren.*

[3.] True lovers of Christ are *haters of his enemies* within and without, Psal. cxxxix. 21, 22. especially his enemies within doors, I mean sin; they cannot allow of a competitor with Christ.

[4.] True lovers of Christ will desire and endeavour to *recommend Christ to others*, that others may love him also: it will be the desire of their heart, that others may behold his glory, and that he may be glorified and magnified in the salvation of others. Christ will be, therefore, much in their mouth, as well as in their heart; for, *Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.* You will desire to transmit the knowledge of Christ to your posterity after you, and that Christ may be your children's portion, though they should beg their bread. Though you had thousands a year, yet if you have a due esteem of Christ, you would wish your children to be beggars all their lifetime, rather than strangers to Christ; and you will endeavour to bequeath grace to them, rather than the richest earthly inheritance.

[5.] In a word, they that are true lovers of Christ, they are lovers of the *place where his honour dwells.* Where-ever he dwells in earth, they love that place, that person, that society; and where he dwells in heaven, they love heaven, and long to be there. Indeed, they that are not lovers of Christ, they cannot love heaven; they love this earth a thousand times better. It is true, heaven may be considered either *privatively*, as a place of freedom from wrath; or *positively*, as it is a place of perfect conformity to God: In the former sense, an unregenerate man may love heaven, because he hates to be damned, though he loves the way that leads to damnation; but, in the latter sense, none but saints can love and desire it: no unregenerate man can truly desire heaven as it is a place of perfect holiness. Oh! Christless sinner! you cannot so much as desire to be in heaven, you could not delight in heaven, no more than a swine in a palace, nor a debauchee ranting among his gossips, could delight in a company that are praying, and praising God in the most spiritual manner. What! you may as well kill a carnal man, as confine him to prayer and preaching; he knows not what it is to take real pleasure in spiritually heavenly work; and how can he love heaven itself? They that are lovers of the promise, cannot but be lovers of Christ, *in whom all the promises are Yea and Amen.*

6thly, They that are children of promise, are *partakers* of the promise, and of the virtue thereof, in its powerful effects. Not only are they begotten to a new and lively hope, and brought to live thereby; but their life is maintained by the power and virtue of the promise: not only have they all the promises made over to them in Christ, but they have some of the promises made out to them in the accomplishment thereof. Try then if you are such a partaker of the promise, as hath had the experience of the accomplishment of some substantial promise of the covenant to you, insomuch that you are in case to say, with the psalmist, Psal. xlii. 5, 6. *Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance. O my God, my soul is cast down within me: therefore will I remember thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar.* How dead, and dark, and dull, and discouraged I be at present; yet I remember certain times and places, wherein some promises were so accomplished to me, that I met with God, and he met with me; and my mind was enlightened, my heart was enlarged, my soul was comforted, my diseases were healed, my lusts were knocked in the head, my foes were conquered, my fears and doubts were dispelled, and all my bonds were loosed: I was made to run in the way of God's commandments with delight; the love of God was shed abroad upon my heart; a glance of glory was let in upon my soul, that made me merrier than if I had been a monarch on a throne, and more glad than ever the bird that sang upon the bush; for I got the lively faith of the favour of God in Christ; the joy of the Lord was my strength, and the strength of the Lord was my joy; and this drove the bottom out of all my discouragements. They are partakers of the promise, and have had the accomplishment of some special promise of the covenant.

But more particularly, for trying if you be the children of the promise, by the participation of the promise, that I may not miss some of the most substantial promises of the covenant in making this enquiry; examine if you be a partaker of the promise relating to God, the promise relating to Christ, and the promise relating to the Spirit. And,

1. Try if you be a partaker of the promise relating to GOD; for they that are the children of promise, they are partakers of the promise so far as that they are partakers of God by the promise; *Whereby are given to us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature*, 2 Pet. i. 4. The children of promise then have the image of the promising God stampt upon them, having a new divine nature: whereas by virtue of their union with the first Adam, according to the old covenant of works, they did partake of the very nature of the devil, and had the picture of hell upon them; now, by virtue of their union with Christ, the second Adam, who became a partaker of our nature, they are, in some sort, partakers of the divine nature. Now, what know you of this participation of the divine nature by the promise? This is indeed a great matter.

matter. I shall explain it to you in a few particulars.

(1.) To partake of the divine nature, is to partake of the *divine light*; for, *God is light*, 1 John i. 5. And if you partake hereof, you are *brought from darkness to light*; and are *children of light*; *light in the Lord*, so as *in his light* you will *see light*. It is not the light that beasts have, as well as men; they have the light of the sun: nor such light as men have, who have the light of reason and natural understanding: nay, it is a light wherein God makes a man partaker with himself, so as to see things in God's light; in the light wherein God sees them. Do you thus see the evil of sin, the glory of God, the excellency of the saints, the beauty of holiness, the beauty of God's way and of his work, his word, his ordinances? *etc.*

(2.) To partake of the divine nature, is to partake of the *divine life*. It is said of natural persons, that they are *alienate from the life of God*: what is that, the *life of God?* who can define that? None but God himself. I shall only say, As God lives in himself, so the believer, as far as he partakes of the divine nature, lives *in* God; *Your life is hid with Christ in God*, Col. iii. 3. And as God lives *of* himself, and *to* himself; so they hold their spiritual life *of* him, as the efficient cause; and it is *to* him, as the final cause: *of* him, as the author; and *to* him as the end: and they find it wholly of him; and that they are not sufficient of themselves to produce a good thought, a good desire, a good affection or action, a good word or work. This sufficiency is of God.

(3.) To partake of the divine nature, is to partake of *divine love*; for, *God is love; and he that dwells in love, dwells in God*, 1 John iv. 16. God in Christ is all love; and how he manifests his love, you see, ver. 10. *Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins*; and to be a sacrifice to incensed justice for our sins. Now, as God in Christ is all love to his children, so the believer in Christ is all love to God, and to the children of God, as far as he is a believer, and hath the image of God's love on him. Believers are *kindly affectioned one to another*; the word imports such a love as the dame hath to her young, and it is a fruit of that love that Christ hath to his children. There are some birds, when there is a moorburn, they will flutter over their young, when they are in hazard of being burnt, even till they burn themselves. O Sirs, sin raised a great moorburn, a great fire, the fire of hell, the fire of God's wrath; all the children of promise, as well as the rest of the world, were like to be burnt in that moorburn: Christ came down flying on the wings of love in our flesh, and fluttered over his young, till he was burnt to death in the fire; but, being God as well as man, he rose again, and brought all his children out of the fire with him: and now, all that are actually children of promise, have such an impress of this love stampt on them, that they have some conformity to him in his love. Whatever is the object of God's love, is the object of their love; and the special objects of God's love, are the special objects of their love; particularly the children of God: they are willing to spend, and be spent, to do them service.

(4.) To partake of the divine nature, again, is to partake of the *divine holiness* and *righteousness*, and to be *holy as God is holy*: not that the saints on earth are either freed wholly from sin on earth, or from a sense thereof; but they that partake of the divine holiness, are sensible of their own unholiness, and that they have no holiness of their own, but what he imparts to them: they are habitually inclined, and sometimes actually, to every duty of holiness and righteousness, conform to the first and second table of the law; insomuch that it is impossible for a true believer to be an Antinomian; that is, an enemy to the law, as it is a rule of holiness: for the law is written upon his heart, in such a manner, that what the law says, his heart says; what the law commands, his heart commands; what the law forbids, his heart forbids: not in a natural way, as every one hath a natural conscience, accusing and excusing, upon doing good or evil; but in a spiritual evangelical way, and by virtue of a new nature given him of God; for, he is *created in Christ Jesus unto good works*; not to be saved and justified thereby, but only to witness, by the effects of thankfulness, that he is saved and justified. In a word,

(5.) To partake of the divine nature, is to partake of *divine happiness* and *rest*, as well as of the divine holiness and righteousness. We have a word, Heb. iv. 1. *Let us fear, lest a promise being left of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short.* Believers enter into his rest by faith: and, as perfect holiness hath perfect happiness; and God, being perfectly holy, is perfectly happy; so, according to the measure of holiness in the saints, such will be the measure of happiness: therefore their happiness and rest here is imperfect. But as God is happy in himself, and rests in himself; so they, according to the measure of faith, are happy in him, and rest in him as a holy God. It is true, there is a rest of justification in Christ, as their righteousness; and a rest of sanctification in Christ, as their strength: but both these tend to advance this rest in God as a holy God. Rest to the conscience in Christ, as our righteousness, is the way to bring in rest to the heart in him as our strength; and the right improvement of Christ, for righteousness, is in order to improve him for sanctification; and so in order to win to the enjoyment of God as a holy God, and to rest in him, and thus partake of his happiness.

2. Try if you be a partaker of the promise relating to CHRIST, for the children of promise are also partakers of Christ by the promise; Heb. iii. 14. *For we are partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end*; that is, if we be true believers, and live by faith on the promise, we are made partakers of Christ thereby. Try then if you be a partaker of Christ.

(1.) In his *death*, or in the fellowship of his *suffering*, Phil. iii. 10. Do you look upon yourself as crucified with Christ; as having satisfied the law and justice in him; and as having nothing to do either with the law, as a covenant, or justice, as an enemy? I speak of what the believer does as a believer, and when he speaks the language of faith, and not of unbelief; for, when unbelief and the legal heart speak, it is just the reverse of what I am saying. The language of faith is, *I am crucified with Christ, who loved me, and gave himself for me*; and, *God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Christ. And what a glory is it to be conformable to his death, who is the *Lord of life?* Do you suffer with Christ, and share of the virtue of his death and suffering, by getting sin slain, not only in its condemning power, but also in its commanding power, by the faith of his death and suffering? Do you find the enmity slain, and the flesh crucified, with the lusts and affections? And does the sense of pollution lead you to his blood as your daily laver for cleansing? Again,

(2.) Try if you be a partaker of Christ in his *life;* I mean, his resurrection, ascension, and sitting at the right-hand of God, executing his mediatory office, and communicating of his fulness. Know you what it is to be *begotten again to a lively hope by the resurrection of Christ from the dead, who,* as he *was delivered for our offences,* so he *was raised again for our justification?* Know you what it is to be *convinced of righteousness, because he hath ascended to the Father,* thereby declaring that everlasting righteousness, for our justification, is wrought out by him to his Father's satisfaction? Know you what it is to be *risen with Christ,* and to have your *affections set on things above, where Christ sits at the right-hand of God,* and so to share of the drawing virtue of his resurrection, ascension, and intercession? Again,

(3.) Try if you be a partaker of Christ in his *righteousness,* saying, *Surely in the Lord have I righteousness.* It is not in myself, in my duties, nor in my graces, nor in my prayers, nor in my good meanings and intentions; but *in the* LORD *have I righteousness.* This is what the apostle desires to be more and more *found in, not having his own righteousness, which is of the law, but the righteousness which is of God by faith.* Can you look upon yourself, however vile and polluted in yourself, yet as beautiful and perfectly righteous in Christ; righteous, I say, *even in the sight of God, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to you?* This is a mystery that none is acquainted with but a believer: none have such an inward sense of corruption as they have; and yet none have such an inward faith, to see that God takes no advantage against them because of it, as they do. Can you put honour upon Christ, so as, even under a sense of sin, wants, weakness, wickedness, and vileness, to wrap yourself in the righteousness of a God-man; and thus covered, to go boldly to the throne of grace? This is a very great honour done to Christ, to attribute so much to his righteousness, that being clothed therewith, you can boldly break through the fire of God's justice, and all these attributes, when you see them all fully satisfied in Christ: for Christ, with his righteousness, could go through the justice of God, having satisfied it to the full for us; and we, being cloathed with this his righteousness and satisfaction, may go through too. What know you of this mystery to your experience? Again,

(4.) Try if you be a partaker of Christ in his *strength.* Can you say, *In the Lord have I righteousness, and strength* also? Christ's strength, as Mediator, is not only for himself, no more than his righteousness; but all that have union with him by faith, do participate with him of his strength, in so much that they can say, *I can do all things through Christ strengthening me.* Indeed, I can perform no duty, I can bear up under no difficulty, no not the least, any more than the greatest, in my own strength; but seeing his *strength is made perfect in my weakness, most gladly,* therefore, *will I glory in mine infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.* Again,

(5.) Try if you be a partaker of Christ in his *boldness.* Christ, as our intercessor in heaven, hath *access to his Father with boldness;* to his FATHER, I say, who *hears him always:* And believers, in him, *have boldness, and access with confidence, through the faith of him,* Eph. iii. 12. They come boldly to the throne of grace to plead, and they have the same foundation to plead upon: he pleads upon the sacrifice he hath offered, and the blood he hath shed; and so believers *have boldness to enter into the holiest of all by the blood of Jesus.* What know you of this bold approach to God, upon the ground of the Mediator's blood and righteousness, and all-powerful, ever-prevalent intercession?

3. Try if you be a partaker of the promise relating to the SPIRIT, for the children of promise are partakers of the *Spirit of promise,* Eph. i. 13.; and they *receive the promise of the Spirit through faith,* Gal. iii. 14. Here then is one of the most notable ways for knowing if we be the children of promise, *viz.* by our partaking of the promise of the Spirit; for, all the actual children of promise, they have the Spirit of promise: and, *If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.*

QUEST. *How shall I know if I have the Spirit of promise?*

ANSW. The Spirit is compared to a *well of water;* and how shall you know a spring-well, but by the bubbling up of the water? *The water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up to eternal life.* Here I might speak of the various operations of the Spirit. I need not here speak of that dispensation of the Spirit, as a *Spirit of bondage;* this is supposed in what I touched at the beginning of this use. I will offer a few properties of the *Spirit of promise,* where he is.

(1.) Where the Spirit of promise is, he will be a *Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ,* Eph. i. 17. Ask your own soul then, Hath he come and *glorified Christ,* by *receiving the things of Christ, and shewing them unto you?* Hath he come, now or formerly, and made Christ more glorious to you than all the mountains of prey, more precious than thousands of worlds, more to be esteemd than all things, being the *Prince of the kings of the earth, altogether lovely?*

(2.) Where the Spirit of promise is, he will be a *Spirit of grace,* Zech. xii. 10. You read of the *graces* and *fruits of the Spirit,* Gal. v. 22, 23. If you be utterly destitute of these, and have nothing of the Spirit of faith, the Spirit of love, the Spirit of repentance, the Spirit of humility, how can you have the Spirit of promise? But, that you may not mistake, I must tell you, that the Spirit of faith makes a man see his unbelief; the Spirit of love discoves enmity; the Spirit of repentance discovers hardness and impenitency; the Spirit of humility discovers pride, and humbles the man for the pride of his heart.

(3.) Where the Spirit of promise is, he will be the *Spirit of glory,* 1 Pet. iv. 14. *If you be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth on you.* And where the Spirit of glory is, he will fill with the thoughts of glory, with the hope of glory, with

with the faith of glory, with the desire of glory, with a longing after glory and perfection, expecting the coming of Christ in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory, to destroy this world, and bring his people to glory; yea, the Spirit of glory fills a man with glory, makes him *all glorious within.*

(4.) Where the Spirit of promise is, he will be the *Spirit of prayer and supplication*, Rom. viii. 26. *The Spirit helpeth our infirmities with groanings which cannot be uttered.* Know you what it is to go beyond words and expressions in your confessions, in your petitions, in your prayers? Know you what it is to have the Spirit as a *Spirit of adoption, crying*, ABBA, *Father*, Rom. viii. 15. Gal. iv. 6.? and, with tears of joy, to cry out, *Father, Father?*

(5.) Where the Spirit of promise is, he will be a *Spirit of consolation*; hence so frequently he is called *the Comforter*, John xiv. and xvi. chap. What know you of the joy of the Holy Ghost? At certain times, it is true, the stony-ground hearers may *receive the word with joy*, yet *they have no root*; but the joy of true faith is, *joy unspeakable and full of glory*, 1 Pet. i. 8. As the groanings of the Spirit are unutterable, so the joys of the Holy Ghost are unutterable; and there is a glory in them, surpassing the glory of the sun, moon, and stars; yea, beyond all created glory; for, the view of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, is the root of it. It is a humbling and strengthening joy; *The joy of the Lord is their strength.*

(6.) Where the Spirit of promise is, he will be a *Spirit of warfare* and *mortification*; Gal. v. 16. *The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these two are contrary the one to the other.* You will now proclaim war against all Christ's enemies; his friends are your friends, and his enemies your enemies. If the Spirit of Christ be in you, you will, through the Spirit, *mortify the deeds of the body.* Let not the man think he hath the Spirit of Christ in him, that is not *walking in the Spirit*; and let none think they are walking in the Spirit, who are not walking over the belly of their own lusts, and killing sin by the way. Indeed, we need not desire you who are without Christ, and in a state of nature, to war against your lusts, and mortify them; for, though it be your duty, yet you may easier see without eyes, speak without a tongue, work without hands, and walk without feet, than you can mortify one sin without the Spirit: therefore, though it be your duty, yet it is not your immediate duty; your duty, in the first place, is to come to Christ for the Spirit of promise. If you desire your servant go pay such a sum to your creditor, but by the way to go to such a friend to get the money; it is his duty to pay that sum of money to the creditor, and you may blame him if he do it not; yet it is not his immediate duty, he should first go to that friend by the way, that he may lift the money wherewith he may pay your debt: even so here, sin is to be mortified, but some thing is to be done in the first place to enable you thereto. Some are taken up in warring against this or that lust, but in vain, while they never strike at the sinful nature that is in them: but you may beat down the bitter fruit of an ill tree till you be weary; but while the root is never touched, it will bring forth more; if the tree be not made good, the fruit will never be good: it is the good Spirit of God that makes a good tree. Do not think, that when you bear down a particular lust for a while about a sacrament, that you are a mortified man: nay, it is but like the making a dam against the water; it may silence the noise of the stream for the small space of time that the dam is a gathering, but it increases upon your hand, and will come down afterwards with the more violence: so here, there will be but little success in subduing particular sins, and mortifying certain individual lusts, while the fountain of all corruption remains unstruck at, and unmortified; for, though particular sins may be silenced for a time, yet, while the seed of all corruption lies in the heart, it will afterwards flow out with a more forcible eruption. True mortification and warring against sin differ as much from that, as the sun painted on a wall differs from the sun in the firmament. The spirit of warfare is so contrary to the flesh, that he is destructive to the quiet and thriving of indwelling sin itself; and he is that fire that burns up the very root of lust. Even though sin prevail sometimes in a child of God, yet the very prevalence of sin, through the Spirit of warfare, is the mean of the destruction of sin; even as the snapper of a horse makes him run the faster, so the very fall of the godly makes him run the faster afterward; and every defeat that he gets makes him fight the better afterward.

(7.) Where the Spirit of promise is, he will be the *Spirit of holiness* and *sanctification*; not only of privative holiness, in the mortifying of sin, 2 Cor. vii. 1.; but positive holiness, in the quickening of grace, and giving the man new life, new power; *I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes*, Ezek. xxxvi. 27. Here is not only positive holiness, in the principle of it; but active holiness: both internal, in the exercise of grace; and external, in the performance of duty.

(8.) Where the Spirit of promise is, he will be a *Spirit of power*; 2 Tim. i. 7. *For God hath not given you the Spirit of fear, but of power, love, and of a sound mind.* And, indeed, these effects that I have already mentioned, require no less than the power, the almighty power of the eternal Spirit: all attempts to mortify sin, to war and struggle with it, without this power of the Spirit, is like a flie struggling beneath a mountain; but upon the Spirit's coming, *the mountains flow down at his presence*, and melt under his warm influences. Indeed, if you know any thing at all of religion, you know this, that almighty power must be exerted and let forth for every part of the spiritual exercise. There is no believing without power, no repenting without power, no praying without power, no right hearing without power, no right reading without power, no right communicating without power. If you think it an easy thing for you to read, and pray, and communicate; believe it, man; in God's name, I tell you, you have not learned the art of doing any of these to this day: you have not yet got your finger in the loop of religion; you have not fallen upon the lith to this good hour. As the whole purchase of salvation is by the price of the Mediator's blood, so the whole application of every part of it is by the power of his Spirit. Let Arminians boast of the free-will of man, we will boast of the free-

free-grace of God, and of the powerful arm of JEHOVAH, without which no ſoul can have ſo much as a will to come to Chriſt; *Thy people ſhall be willing in a day of thy power.* All mens religion is but a kind of forced work, either from ſome outward excitement, or from a ſpirit of fear, till the Spirit of power come to make him willing: it is power that begets, and power that carries on, and power that completes ſalvation-work; even *God's working in us both to will and to do of his good pleaſure.* What know you, man, of this Spirit of power, and of the promiſe applied with power, and of the goſpel *coming not in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghoſt, and in much aſſurance;* and of the need of the conſtant egreſs of divine power, and of the finger of God to caſt out the devils that are in you; and that the hand of Zerubbabel, that laid the foundation of the ſpiritual temple, finiſh it, *and put the cop-ſtone thereupon, with ſhoutings of Grace, grace unto it?*

(9.) Where the Spirit of promiſe is, he will be a *Spirit of praiſe and gratitude:* PRAISE YE THE LORD, is the motto of the goſpel-ſpirit. Gratitude and thankfulneſs is the diſpoſition of theſe who are under the influence thereof; *This people have I formed for myſelf, they ſhall ſhew forth my praiſe,* Iſa. xliii. 21. Goſpel-ſervice is grateful ſervice; *Offer to the Lord thankſgiving; pay thy vows unto the Moſt High,* Pſal. l. 14. Herein lies the myſtery of right vowing and true perſonal covenanting: it is not the act of graceleſs unregenerate men, vowing againſt this or that ſin; for, that is like lopping off the branches, while yet the ax is never laid to the root of the tree. To vow and reſolve againſt ſin, without getting firſt an intereſt in Chriſt, and without having his Spirit; it is like a man building a great fabric, without taking any care of the foundation; no wonder then, what he build to-day, fall down to-morrow. Some convinced perſons go on ſtill in this method: even though they plainly ſee that what ground they get againſt ſin one day, they loſe another; yet ſtill, upon a new conviction, they take the ſame road again, and ſo fall into the ſame pit and ſnare a-new. Yea, to put a man upon this exerciſe, is like the driving of an enemy out of the open fields into an impregnable caſtle, where there is no prevailing againſt him, no dealing with him for his conviction or converſion. Why, ſays the man, I hope I am a Chriſtian good enough, for I vow againſt my ſins; and though I break them many times, yet the beſt of ſaints have their daily failings, as well as I: and thus he is impregnable and hardened againſt all the calls to come to Chriſt; for he is, in his own opinion, a Chriſtian already.—Thus his vowing againſt his particular ſins is his ruin, while the foundation was never laid.

Well, ſay you, what would you have unregenerate men to do? Shall they give themſelves looſe reins, and give their luſts their ſwing, and not vow againſt them? Surely, if you call us off from that duty, you are an enemy to holineſs. What, man! would you think him an enemy that would call you off from mending a hole in the roof of your houſe, in order to come down and quench a fire that is conſuming the whole building? Your vowing againſt your particular ſins, man, and promiſing amendment, is but the mending of a hole in the roof of the houſe, and laying a fagot on it; but there is a fire at the foundation, man, that muſt be quenched with the blood of Chriſt; there is a burning furnace of corruption in your nature, that muſt be extinguiſhed with the flood of the Spirit's influences and operations, otherwiſe you are undone for ever. Your vowing againſt this or that particular ſin, without conſidering that you are nothing but ſin, is like a being careful about a ſore finger that is paining you, without being careful about a hectic-fever that is killing you. Your vows and reſolutions may give your natural conſcience a little eaſe, but it will not cure your diſeaſe, but rather make you ſlight and neglect the right cure: like a man in a great fever, complaining of a heat in his ſkin, particularly a heat in his face; he may get a little eaſe by caſting a little cold water on his face, but will that cure the heat of the liver, which is the cauſe and ſpring of the outward heat? No, no: the blood muſt be rectified, and the ill blood let out, either by a natural courſe, or artificial lance, or ſome purgative means: even ſo here, your vows and reſolutions, againſt particular ſins, it is but a throwing of ſome cold water upon the face of a burning luſt; it may give natural conſcience ſome eaſe for a little, but, alas! there is a heat in the liver that muſt be abated: your blood muſt be rectified, by the application of the blood of Chriſt, and the operation of the Spirit of Chriſt, otherwiſe all is vain work.

But the myſtery of right vowing and covenanting is here; it is the buſineſs of one that hath an intereſt in Chriſt, and that, under the conduct of the Spirit of promiſe, as a Spirit of praiſe and gratitude, *offering to the Lord thankſgiving, and paying his vow to the Lord;* through grace vowing a grateful ſervice, in heart, lip, and life, to the Lord, that hath ſaved him from the guilt of ſin, the wrath of God, and the power of corruption: the man's reſolving hereupon thankfully to give to the Lord the love of his heart, the calves of his lips, and the obedience of his life. There is here,

[1.] *Heart-gratitude:* the man exalts and extols Chriſt in his heart, and eſteems him to be every way *precious*, and *altogether lovely*: he exalts and extols the grace of God in his heart; and hath a high thought of the whole contrivment of ſalvation. Here is the work of the Spirit of praiſe and gratitude.

[2.] *Lip-gratitude:* the thankfulneſs and gratitude of the heart vents itſelf in words; *For, out of the abundance of the heart the mouth ſpeaketh.* The man hereupon ſpeaks to his glory, and ſpeaks of his glory: *In his temple ſhall every one ſpeak of his glory.*

[3.] *Life-gratitude:* and here comes in the ſhining converſation, according to that rule, *Let your light ſo ſhine before men, that others ſeeing your good works, may glorify your Father that is in heaven.*—Indeed none but theſe that have God for their Father in Chriſt, and have ſome meaſure of the faith thereof, can engage rightly unto this grateful ſervice.

O Sirs, pray that God may graciouſly covenant with you, otherwiſe you will never gratefully covenant with him: your covenanting will be vain, till he come and diſcover to you the nature, freedom, and fulneſs of the covenant of grace, that ſtands faſt with Chriſt. And let believers themſelves remember always that they never go to confound God's covenant of

grace

grace with their covenant of gratitude: for your covenant of gratitude, even when entered into rightly upon the main, yet may be a thousand times broken; but, wo would be to you for ever, if the covenant of grace could be once broken: nay, but that is impoſſible; for it ſtands betwixt two unchangeable parties, God and Chriſt. However, as the Spirit of gratitude is neceſſary before there can be any perſonal covenant of gratitude; ſo I deſpair of ever ſeeing the National Covenant rightly renewed, till the Spirit of praiſe and gratitude be poured out: therefore, if you would wiſh for a great reformation-day, a covenanting day, O cry for the return of the Spirit of promiſe, as a Spirit of praiſe and gratitude! Though the Lord owned our ſolemn covenanting days, however many make a jeſt of them now-a-days, and though ſome did enter into theſe Covenants under the influence of the Spirit of gratitude; yet the general want of this Spirit, even in theſe that thus covenanted with the Lord, may be one of the cauſes why our Covenants were afterwards ſo fearfully broken and burnt.

I knew once a gentleman, who, after his firſt conviction, made a covenant, and wrote it, ſigned it, and laid it up in his cheſt; but afterwards turned more looſe than ever, till, caſting off all bonds, he went home one day, and burnt his covenant with God: whereupon he took looſe reins to his luſts for a time, till the Lord accidentally ordered his hearing another ſermon; the miniſter was directed to ſpeak to the following ſtrain, though he in the mean time was reſolved to be hardened againſt all that the miniſter ſhould ſay: Well, but the Lord put theſe or the like words in the miniſter's mouth, namely, "Perhaps there is ſome one here, that "under convictions formerly hath made a co"venant, and he hath afterwards gone to ſuch "a height of wickedneſs, that he hath burnt "his covenant." The poor gentleman knew that none in all the world but God and his conſcience were privy to that ſtory, and therefore he was obliged to acknowledge it was God himſelf ſpeaking to him; then began a ſound work of conviction, and thereupon a diſcovery of Chriſt to his converſion; then he knew how he was to dedicate his life to the Lord, under the conduct of a Spirit of gratitude.

I apply this to the caſe of Scotland, though it may be applied to all perſonal caſes: Scotland entered into covenant with God; but though the Lord helped ſome of our forefathers to act honeſtly, and from a Spirit of gratitude, yet the moſt part of theſe generations, as well as their poſterity, were ſtrangers to the Spirit of gratitude: and what came of the covenant? Behold, it was not only broken, but burnt; and God is ſaying to Scotland, O Scotland, Scotland, you have broken covenant; you have forgotten the covenant; *you have played the harlot with many lovers;* yea, you have burnt the covenant of your God! And, till God ſend the Spirit of conviction diſcovering our ſin, and thereafter the Spirit of gratitude making us regularly to engage unto duty, like children of promiſe, that have got the Spirit of promiſe as a Spirit of gratitude, there is little hope of powerful covenanting days. O cry for the return of the Spirit for this end.—Mean time, I ſay, the Spirit of promiſe will be a Spirit of praiſe and gratitude.

(10.) Where the Spirit of promiſe is, he will be a Spirit of *liberty*, goſpel-liberty, 2 Cor. iii. 17.; and particularly liberty from the law as a covenant of works, which is the diſtinguiſhing mark of the child of promiſe, as Iſaac, or of the free-woman, in oppoſition to Iſhmaelites, the children of the bond-woman: hence the children of promiſe will have a goſpel-ſpirit, in oppoſition to a legal ſpirit. Examine, therefore, what is your frame and diſpoſition of ſpirit: Have you diſcovered the glory of the goſpel? and are you thereby *transformed from glory to glory by the Spirit of the Lord?* Have you not the image of the goſpel? are you caſt into the mould of the goſpel, and ſo got a goſpel-ſpirit, which is a Spirit of liberty, in oppoſition to a legal ſpirit? What is that? even the ſpirit of bondage, belonging to the children of the bond-woman; the legal ſpirit is a ſpirit of ſlavery, a frightful and a fretful ſpirit, a terrified and melancholy ſpirit; a hand and foot-bound diſpoſition, wherein the man hath no heart for God and Chriſt. But what is a goſpel-ſpirit? it is even a holy goſpel-liberty, and free diſpoſition, wherein the man is ſet at liberty both as to his ſtate and frame; his countenance is lifted up, he comes to have ſpiritual joy. A goſpel-ſpirit is a frank ſpirit, a joyful ſpirit, a free ſpirit; *If the Son make you free, then you are free indeed.* It is true, the child of promiſe, that is married to Chriſt, and divorced from the law, may ſometimes, through unbelief, go to his old huſband, by reaſon of a legal diſpoſition that remains, and is not wholly mortified in him, and then he finds his fetters faſt, he cannot ſtir in the way of duty. But, believer, you will find that whenever your bonds are looſed, it will be in the way of returning unto your firſt Huſband; I mean, to the Lord Jeſus, held out in the goſpel-promiſe; and that you muſt juſt come back again where you began. The promiſe that is the mean of quickening you at firſt, and of begetting you to a new lively hope, it will ſtill be the door of life, and liberty, and quickening to you; you cannot find it in the law, but in the promiſe. All that you have wrought upon the loom of the law of works, through a legal unbelieving heart, muſt be unwrought, and undone, and opened out again, that you may begin a-new upon the goſpel-loom; for, the Spirit of liberty is not received by *the works of the law*, but by *the hearing of faith*, Gal. iii. 2. Try then if you be free-born, at liberty from the law; not from obedience to it, but from bondage to it, either as to obedience or ſatisfaction.

[1.] As to *obedience*. If your obedience to the law be a *bondage* to you, you are ſo far acted with a ſpirit unſuitable to a child of promiſe, like a child of the bond-woman; but when your obedience to it is no bondage, no grievance, then you are only *under the law to Chriſt*, or to God in Chriſt, whoſe *commands are not grievous*. I muſt tell you, that ſo far as you are a child of promiſe, you do not owe the law ſo much as a grain-weight of grievous, hard, and conditional obedience; for Chriſt bore all that weight. It is only the law as a covenant of works, that brings in weighty, heavy, grievous, and conditional obedience: but Chriſt bore all that burden; therefore you owe no obedience to the law but that of love, and love makes it *the law of liberty*, Jam. ii. 12.; and a very light-ſom yoke. When the law comes to command the

the believer ſome heavy duty, he may tell it, I am not obliged to take a lift of it as a burden; for Chriſt bore all the burdenſom and heavy part of it, and left nothing to me but the light and eaſy part of it; Mat. xi. 30. *My yoke is eaſy, and my burden is light.* If you be a believer, you will find it to be ſo. Sometime, when under the influence of the ſpirit of liberty, your heart is lifted up in the way of the Lord, and in the duty of praying, hearing, communicating, or wreſtling with God alone; O ſays the heart of the man then, I am ſo far from wearying of this work, or thinking it a burden, that it is a burden to me to think of giving it over. Oh! I cannot think of going away from the throne; I cannot think of going back to the vain, filthy world again. The man that is under the law, on the contrary, Oh! the ſermon is a burden, the ſacrament is a burden, long Sabbath, long ſermon; *when will it be over?* If any duty of the law be uneaſy to you, it is not Chriſt's yoke you are bearing, but ſome of the old-covenant yoke, through the remainder of that covenant in you: but when you are doing duty, not like a conditional taſk, but in a way of flaming love, making your duty your element, and gratitude the ſpring, then you are acting ſo far like a child of promiſe; your obedience will be child-like, knowing that there is nothing you are obliged to do, but what the promiſe is engaged to do for you, and in you.—Thus, if you be a child of promiſe, you will have the ſpirit of liberty, and be free from the bondage of the law, even in reſpect of obedience: not free from obedience, unleſs it be the old-covenant heavy obedience; but free to obey, ſaying, *Truly I am thy ſervant, thou haſt looſed my bonds;* particularly, the bond of obligation to all heavy and uneaſy obedience, is torn to pieces, that you may ſerve in a way of love and liberty.

[2.] As to *ſatisfaction* and *ſuffering*, you are free from *bondage* to the law, ſo as you cannot incur the penalty of death and the curſe for not obeying. As you who are believers owe not a cup of cold water, as I ſaid before, to the command of the law as a covenant, ſo you do not owe a drop of warm blood to the threatening of it: not a ſtroak of vindictive juſtice or wrath can fall upon you; for it hath fallen by you, and lighted on your Surety with a vengeance, to God's full ſatisfaction: ſo that *there is now no condemnation to them that are in Chriſt.* Hence, ſo far as you are under the conduct of a goſpel-ſpirit, or a Spirit of liberty, you cannot, you will not ſerve and obey from a principle of any ſlaviſh fear of hell and wrath. You may, indeed, fear your diſobedience provoke your Father, and that you ſuffer fatherly chaſtiſements; this is conſiſtent with your ſtate that art a believer: but if your faults and infirmities, whether more or leſs groſs, fill you with the fear and dread of hell, then you act more like a child of the bond-woman, than a child of promiſe. Unbelievers ought, indeed, to fear hell, and to fear vindictive wrath, becauſe they are liable to it, being *ſtrangers to the covenant of promiſe:* but for you, believer, to fear God's everlaſting wrath, as if God would demand ſatisfaction again of you, which he hath taken to the full of Chriſt, is diſhonourable to the Lord Jeſus, as if he were not a complete ſacrifice to ſatisfy divine juſtice; yea, and an affront to God's juſtice, by making him unjuſt to demand more ſatisfaction than due: juſtice having got all its due from Chriſt, to ſeek more would be injuſtice. And beſides, ſuch a ſlaviſh fear would be unlike a child of God, that hath God for his Father; or a child of promiſe, that hath the promiſe for his ſecurity, and the promiſe ſealed by the juſtice-ſatisfying, and hell-quenching, as well as heaven-purchaſing, and God-glorifying blood of Chriſt.

In a word, There are two things that the children of promiſe, who, having the Spirit of promiſe as a Spirit of liberty, are ſet at liberty from, in the courſe of their walk; by which you may try yourſelves. 1. From the legal *power* of ſin. 2. From the legal *penance* of works.

1. I ſay, from the *legal power of ſin.* Sin hath a legal power over all that are the children of the bond-woman: ſin hath a kind of right to reign and domineer over theſe that are under the law; the law of works that they are under, is *the law of ſin and death*, Rom. viii. 2.; and *the motions of ſin are by the law, bringing forth fruit unto death*, Rom. vii. 5. And hence they are under the dominon of ſin, becauſe they are *not under grace, but under the law*, Rom. vi. 14. But believers are free from this legal power of ſin; *The law of the Spirit of life in Chriſt Jeſus hath made me free from the law of ſin and death*, Rom. viii. 2. *Sin ſhall not have dominion over* them, *becauſe* they *are not under the law, but under grace*, Rom. vi. 14. Though ſin therefore, may have ſometimes a prevailing power, a tyrannizing power, an uſurped power over them; yet it hath no legal rightful power, for they have caſt off the authority of ſin, and have no king but Chriſt. Hence the believer complains of ſin's uſurpation and oppreſſion; and, upon his complaining of it to his righteous God and Father, he finds the actual power of ſin gradually broken: for he goes to God, as Bathſheba went to David when Adonijah uſurped the kingdom; *My lord, haſt thou not ſaid that Solomon ſhall reign? and behold, Adonijah reigns*, 1 Kings i. 17. So ſays the believer, Lord, haſt thou not ſaid that grace ſhall reign? And haſt thou not promiſed that ſin ſhall not have dominion? and yet, behold, ſin uſurps the throne; O righteous Lord, ſee to it: and in this way he gets ſin brought down, and grace mounted on the throne.—Thus the believer is free from the legal power of ſin. But then again,

2. From the *legal penance of works.* The believer in Chriſt is the moſt buſy man about works, and yet the moſt free in all the world, in ſo far as he is a believer, and a child of promiſe, or of the free-woman. There is in the works of the believer ſomething common, and ſomething ſingular: ſomething common to all that can be called good works, and that is their *conformity* to the law as a *rule;* but there is alſo ſomething ſingular, and that is their *diſconformity* to the law as a *covenant.* Hence nothing like penance in them; for, in this reſpect, ſo far as they are believers, they have *ceaſed from their own works:* you have the expreſſion, Heb. iv. 10. *He that is entered into his reſt, hath ceaſed from his own work, even as God did from his.* They that have come to Chriſt, and ſo entered into their reſt initially, they have ceaſed from their own work; they are *dead to the law,* and *married to Chriſt,* that they may *bring forth fruit unto God;* not to the law as a covenant, but to their new Huſband. And, as the Spirit of God ſays in another caſe, *Bleſſed are the dead that*

die

die in the Lord; for they reſt from their labour, and their works follow them: ſo may I ſay, Bleſſed are the dead that are dead to the law, and married to Chriſt, for they reſt from their legal labours, and their works follow them; for they are *created in Chriſt Jeſus unto good works.* But they have ceaſed from their own works: legal works are our own works, done for our own juſtification, and done by our own ſtrength; but goſpel-works are not our own. And true believers have ceaſed from their own works, both in point of juſtification and ſanctification.

(1.) In point of *juſtification*, they have ceaſed from their own work; that is, they work none at all, that they may get life and juſtification and acceptance thereby; they that work, for that end, they work their own wo and damnation, and take Chriſt's work out of his hand, and fruſtrate the end of Chriſt's death to their own deſtruction; for, *If righteouſneſs come by the law, Chriſt is dead in vain*, Gal. ii. 21. *By the deeds of the law no fleſh can be juſtified.* Juſtification is *to him that worketh not, but believes on him that juſtifies the ungodly*, Rom. iv. 5.

(2.) In point of *ſanctification*, they have ceaſed from their own work, in ſo far that they dare eſſay nothing in their own ſtrength; but, having cloſed with Chriſt, as their righteouſneſs for juſtification and acceptance, they cloſe with him alſo as their ſtrength for ſanctification and aſſiſtance: and hence they acknowledge they have no ſtrength of their own, yet they are *ſtrong in the Lord, and in the power of his might*; and that they have no grace of their own, but they are *ſtrong in the grace that is in Chriſt Jeſus.* They have ceaſed from their own work, and then they work to purpoſe, while, coming off from a covenant of works, they come in to Chriſt, who *works in them both to will and to do.* Therefore, whatever they have ado, they put it in his hand, without whom they can do nothing, ſaying with David, Pſal. lii. 2. *I will cry unto God moſt High, unto God that performs all things for me.*

Thus, in the tenor of their walk as children of promiſe, they are free and at liberty both from the legal power of ſin, and the legal penance of works: here is a great part of their preſent liberty, who have the Spirit of promiſe as a Spirit of liberty, which all the children of promiſe according to their meaſure have. By theſe things you may try yourſelves.

Some of theſe marks, perhaps, will be more clear to believers themſelves than others, and ſome of them more cloudy: may be one mark lifts you up, and another mark caſts you down; one mark you take to yourſelf, and another mark you dare not take. Why? this evidence, you think, is what belongs to you, the other is what belongs not to you; and ſo you remain in a dubiety. Indeed, none ought to be raſh in concluding concerning their eternal ſtate; ſome take what belongs not to them, others reject what belongs to them. I know not how it is with the generality of you; I am a ſtranger to the caſe of your ſouls: but what I have ſaid from God's word to you, I leave it to God's Spirit to make the powerful application, for ſearching you out, whether you be a child of promiſe or not.

One reaſon why unbelievers are ready to miſtake, and think they are the children of promiſe, is, becauſe they are filled with ſelf-conceit: like a man looking through a green glaſs, all things appear green to him; ſo the hypocrite looking on himſelf through the fair ſpectacles of ſelf-love and ſelf-conceit, he looks upon every thing in himſelf to be fair; whereas, if the falſe glaſs were removed, and that he noticed himſelf in the true glaſs of God's word, he would ſee himſelf in the *gall of bitterneſs.*

One reaſon alſo why believers are ready to miſtake, and doubt of their being the children of promiſe, while one mark is clear and another cloudy unto them, is, becauſe they are apt to judge of themſelves by their preſent feeling, the man apprehending theſe things belong not to him, which he does not find in himſelf at preſent: for, as we ſay of the church univerſal and inviſible, the catholic church, it is not what it is for the preſent in exiſtence, through the world, but the univerſal church is that ſociety which hath been, is, and ſhall be; ſo a believer is not to be meaſured by what he is at preſent, but what he hath been, is, and ſhall be. You ſhould try if ever there was a time when you found theſe things in you, though you find them not at preſent; or, if there be ſome of theſe, and the like marks, that you have found, and others that you have never found, you ſhould leave room for what God is yet to do before you go to heaven: for, if there be one ſubſtantial mark of a child of promiſe, that belongs to you, as being already wrought, another not yet wrought, you may be ſure he that hath begun the good work, will complete it; if it be a thing abſolutely neceſſary, it is what he hath promiſed to work: therefore, bleſs him for what marks you have, and wait on, in his own way, for what you want; and, the longer you go on in the Lord's way, the more will you come to diſcern all the marks in the way. If you be going along a way, and taking the marks of the way; perhaps, there is at ſuch a part of the way a mountain, at another part of the way there is a water, at a third part of the way there is a bridge, and at another part there is a houſe, and ſo on; you take theſe for the ſeveral marks of the way. Well, ſuppoſe a man ſets out to the way with theſe marks given him, and he comes accordingly firſt to the mountain, and then to the water-ſide, and ſo far he judges he is in the way: but ſhall he ſtand ſtill, and doubt if he be in the way, becauſe he is not yet come to the bridge, and to the houſe? Nay, he goes forward, and then he comes to theſe alſo: ſo here, in the examining the ſtate of your ſouls, though you ſhould be in ſome ſuſpence in applying to yourſelves ſome of the characters aſſigned of the people of God; yet neither give way to diſponding fears, nor ſlacken diligence in the way of commanded duty: go forward, and you will come to the reſt of the marks in due time. Mean time, if you have no ſubſtantial mark at all as yet, of your being a child of promiſe, you have no right to a communion-table, which is for ſealing of the covenant of promiſe.—May the Lord give you underſtanding in all things. Pray to him to ſearch and try you; for no mark will find you out to purpoſe, unleſs the Lord himſelf apply it powerfully to you. *

Uſe 3. I come to a *cautionary uſe* and application of this doctrine; and it may be followed forth in the ſhort reſolution of ſome *caſes*, which

* It is probable this is the end of Serm. XXXVI. preached on the Saturday.

which the children of promise may be exercised with, concerning the right use, improvement, and application of the promise.

FIRST CASE. *Whether or not* SINNERS, *as sinners, have any right to the promise? and what sort of right they have thereto?* This is a case frequently exercising, even to the children of promise; for, though they be saints, they are always looking upon themselves as *sinners*, and the *chief of sinners*, and thereupon are ready to exclude themselves from the benefit of the promise, through their unbelief.

ANSW. The promise is just a door of hope to a sinner; the gospel is the good news of Christ coming to save sinners: now, the gospel, and the promise, is one and the same thing; the promise of pardon, respects guilty sinners; the promise of cleansing and purifying, respects filthy and polluted sinners; the promise of taking away the heart of stone, concerns hard-hearted sinners. Hence the sinner may conceive hope: it is the like of me that the promise looks to; therefore I will look to the promise, and lay stress upon it, and upon a God that promises. Then is faith wrought by the mean of the promise; and the man becomes a child of promise, being *begotten thereby to a lively hope.* Hence the promises are declared to belong to a *visible church*, Rom. ix. 4. And Peter, in his sermon to the crucifiers of Christ, says, Acts ii. 39. *The promise is to you and to your children, and to as many as the Lord our God shall call.* Even so say I, the promise is to you, man, to you, woman, to you, sinner; be who you will, you have such a right of access thereto, that it is lawful and warrantable for you to embrace the promise; yea, you are commanded to believe it unto your salvation.

SECOND CASE. *Are not the promises only made to* BELIEVERS *and* SAINTS? *Therefore I may have no right to meddle with them?*

ANSW. These that are actual believers and saints, they have a right of actual possession of the promise; but their right is not privative, excluding the right of access and warrant to believe and embrace the promise, that unbelievers and ungodly persons have, who hear the gospel, and have the promise set before them as the door of hope, and the ground of faith. Believers have the promise already in its begun accomplishment; yea, in Christ, they have all the promises, and all that is promised; and so the promise cannot be so properly said to be to them, for then it would be to promise them what they have already: but more properly the promise of any thing is made to the man that wants it, and as he is a wanter. They who have all their wants supplied, have no need of a promise, such as the saints in heaven; and believers on earth would have no need of a promise, if they were not partial wanters in themselves, though they have all in Christ. But, as a Saviour and a sinner are relatives; insomuch, that there would be no need of a Saviour, if there were no sinners: so a promise and a wanter are relatives; insomuch, that there would be no need of a promise, if there were no wanters. The great promise, *I will be thy God*, relates to these that want God, as we do all by nature; the promise of Christ, relates to them that want Christ; the promise of the Spirit, relates to these that want the Spirit; the promise of making a people willing, relates to them that want a will; the promise of faith, relates to them that want faith, and are unbelievers; the promise of repentance, relates to them that want repentance, and are impenitent; the promise of forgiveness, relates to the guilty; the promise of holiness, relates to them that are unholy, and ungodly, or that want holiness. Let sinners then, as sinners, be who they will, put in for a share of this grace.

THIRD CASE. *If the promises are made to sinners, as such, then it must be to* ELECT *sinners, to whom only God intends to give what is promised: and I know not if I be an elect, therefore I cannot believe.*

ANSW. That the *elect only shall obtain*, is true; and that *as many as were ordained to eternal life, shall believe*, and embrace the promise is also certain: but that is so far from being a ground of discouragement from believing, that it is rather an argument to believe the promise, that thus your *election may be sure.* Know, Sirs, that your election is not the first object of faith; nay, you are discharged to meddle with it, because it is a secret thing that belongs to God: the ground and object of your faith is the promise, or the gospel-declaration. Know, that the design of the Promiser is one thing, and the design of the promise is another: whatever be the design, end, and intention of the Promiser, with respect to some, an inhibition is served, discharging you to meddle with that: but the end and design of the promise, and gospel-declaration, which respects all sinners, this you are concerned with, and all that hear this gospel, by virtue of the divine command, to believe the gospel with particular application; namely, *that Jesus Christ came to save sinners.* Glorious is that wisdom of God, that brings about the design of his particular election, by such a general offer and invitation, so that none shall have any to blame for their perdition, but themselves, and their own wilful enmity, in rejecting the Saviour, and salvation offered through him; for, *Whosoever will*, are warranted to *come, and take of the waters of life freely.* May we not say with the apostle, *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!* Rom. xi. 33. And since Christ hath declared, that as *all that the Father hath given him shall come to him*; so, *him that comes he will in no wise cast out*; and that he gathers his elect by this gospel-trumpet: then put your election out of doubt, by coming to Christ, and laying hold on the promise at his call.

FOURTH CASE. *But what if I have not the inward call of the Spirit in my heart? May I come to the promise, and rely on it, before it come to me with power? If so, then I fear I will presume, and believe in my own strength.*

ANSW. 1. The *rule* of faith, is God speaking in the word, and not in the heart; the *object* of your faith, is the gospel-declaration, and not the Spirit's operation.

2. You are carefully to distinguish betwixt your *warrant* to believe, and *power* to believe: your *right* and *warrant* to believe, is grounded on the *gospel-offer* and *promise*, together with *God's command* to you to believe, which constitutes your duty to believe, and makes unbelief your sin: but *power* to believe, is indeed from the SPIRIT of God, in his saving operation; therefore you ought to cry for the Spirit of power to accompany the dispensation of the word.

3. Though you do not *feel* this power exerted, yet

yet that not being your warrant, but the *word* itſelf, you ought, at the call of God, to eſſay believing, and ſtretch forth the withered hand; and, in the act of ſo doing, you may find power at hand for ſtrengthening you: but while you wait for the feeling of his power, you delay the believing of his word, which is dangerous. Feeling is not believing; a feeling of his power, is not a believing of his promiſe: and there is much deceit in ſaying, you will not *believe his promiſe*, till you *feel his power*; for though divine power be neceſſary to believing, yet the feeling of his power is not neceſſary. Therefore,

4. Diſtinguiſh carefully betwixt *real* power, and *felt* power: If, upon the call of God, you be determined in heart to embrace the promiſe, and accordingly eſſay it, there is real power, though not felt till afterwards; as it was with the woman with the bloody iſſue, of which before.

As to the fear of preſuming in this matter; why, it is no preſumption to do what God bids you, and to take what God gives you; and he gives Chriſt and the promiſe to be taken. It is indeed preſumption, to think of believing the promiſe in your own ſtrength: and therefore it is one act of preſumption, among others, that you are not aware of, for you to delay believing, till you find you have ſtrength in yourſelf to believe; becauſe that you will never find; for, when a man is enabled to believe, his faith never ſays, Now I have ſtrength in myſelf, therefore I will go and believe in this ſtrength received; nay, but it rather ſays, Oh! I have no ſtrength, any more than I have righteouſneſs; therefore I will go out of myſelf, and take God's word of promiſe, and Chriſt therein, for ſtrength and righteouſneſs both: I will take hold of his ſtrength promiſed, and *go in the ſtrength of the Lord.*

FIFTH CASE, Concerning the promiſe, with which the children of promiſe may be exerciſed, is, *Whether the* ABSOLUTE *promiſe, that is preſented to ſinners to be believed, does preſuppoſe the* CONDITION *of faith? and if faith itſelf be promiſed, how ſhall the faithfulneſs of God be cleared, in not accompliſhing the promiſe unto all ſinners that hear the goſpel?*

ANSW. 1. Faith itſelf is abſolutely promiſed, in that word, *When I am lifted up, I will draw all men after me: They ſhall look to me whom they have pierced, and mourn: They ſhall be willing in the day of thy power:* yea, and the promiſes, of *giving a new heart, and a new ſpirit*, are promiſes of faith; and ſeeing faith is abſolutely promiſed, it cannot be the *condition* of the *abſolute* promiſe. Nay, the grand condition of all the promiſes, and of that promiſe of faith among the reſt, and upon which it is to be obtained, is Chriſt's obedience and ſatisfaction, 2 Pet. i. 1. There *precious faith* is ſaid to be *obtained through the righteouſneſs of God, even our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.*

2. Theſe abſolute promiſes, as given forth in the goſpel-diſpenſation, are *general* and *indefinite*, unto ALL; not *particular* and *definite*, unto ANY: it is a blank bond, or an indefinite obligation to blank perſons; whoſoever will, may come, and ſign, by giving the cordial aſſent of faith thereunto. Thus it is a ſtanding claim to all ſinners of mankind to whom it comes, and warrants their believing. In this reſpect it is given forth generally and indefinitely: but here ſinners in general are only named; no perſon's name in particular is inſerted therein, unleſs they ſign the blank bond, and fill up their name by the cordial aſſent of faith; then the bond gives right to that perſon in particular; and then, and not till then, is the faithfulneſs of God obliged to accompliſh to that perſon all that is contained in the bond of the promiſe.

Why then, ſay you, *Still faith is the condition.*

I *anſwer*, No; for faith gives no right to what is in the bond, but only takes the right which the bond freely conveys, and takes the promiſe which God freely gives; *He that believes ſhall be ſaved.* Why? not becauſe faith gives a *right* and *title* to that promiſed ſalvation, but only it *takes* that ſalvation which God freely gives in the promiſe of the goſpel; and to which he gives a right and title through the righteouſneſs of Chriſt. Therefore, although it be true, that till the man believe he hath no *actual* right to the thing promiſed; yet it is no proper condition of that promiſed thing, becauſe it does not give any right thereunto by way of *moral conditionality*, but only takes the right thereunto by way of *phyſical inſtrumentality.* If you ſhould promiſe a man a great eſtate which you are able to give him, or give him your bond; if he accept, your credit is obliged to make it out: but if he will not take your promiſe or bond, you are under no obligation to make it out, notwithſtanding that your promiſe and bond remains ſtill free and abſolute: even ſo it is here, they that will not take what God is giving them in the promiſe, cannot charge God with unfaithfulneſs, in not making out what he hath ſaid. If they take his word, truly then his faithfulneſs is engaged; but if not, he is engaged, on the contrary, to deſtroy them, becauſe, through unbelief, they *make him a liar*, 1 John v. 10. However, the promiſe is preſented to them generally for a warrant of faith, only it is not applied to them particularly and powerfully for the creating of faith; this God does, when, and to whom he pleaſes.

SIXTH CASE. *If the promiſe be not* PARTICULARLY *to me, what the better am I of the general indefinite promiſe, which God is not obliged to make out to every one? What advantage have I thereby?*

I *anſwer*, with Paul, Rom. iii. 2. *Much every way;* becauſe you have a claim and warrant to believe and take poſſeſſion of the promiſe, which, in itſelf, is a great mercy; yea, even though not yet particularly applied to you by the Spirit in a day of power. Yea, a general promiſe to ſinners preſented to you, with a particular command obliging you to take it to yourſelf, is as much as if it were particular, running in your very name. Beſides, you cannot be wronged here; for, if you will have what God is offering, you ſhall have it; *Whoſoever will, let him come:* but if you will not have what he offers, then your ſinful refuſal ruins you, you wrong yourſelf; *Why will you die?*

But, ſay you, *God can conquer me, and make me willing.*

ANSW. 1. Indeed ſo he can, though he be not *obliged* by any law but his own ſovereign will and grace, which will make him conquer and make willing all whom he hath appointed unto life. But,

2. As he is not obliged to make you willing; ſo, if he ſhall not do it, ſurely you have no cauſe to complain; ſeeing, while you are unwilling, you deſpiſe his goodneſs, and care not for his grace.

3. Seeing

3. Seeing none are willing to take the promiſe in Chriſt till God make them ſo, he thus makes it evident, that all who are damned, are damned by an act of holy juſtice, and their damnation is of themſelves; ſo all that are ſaved, are ſaved by an act of mercy in Chriſt, and their ſalvation is of grace.

4. If you be one that would deſire to be made willing, the caſe alters; there is ſome will there already, and the power of God is at hand to further the work: only put imployment in God's hand of power, ſaying, *O draw! draw me, and I will run after thee.*

SEVENTH CASE. *Whether a promiſe may be applied that is given* OBJECTIVELY *in the* WORD, *and not given* SUBJECTIVELY *and powerfully by the* SPIRIT? *If the promiſe,* for example, *be only preſented to the memory, in reading, hearing, praying, meditating, without coming in with any power, may it be applied to any uſefulneſs?*

ANSW. 1. If the queſtion be, whether a man *ought* to apply it in that caſe, and take it home with particular application? No doubt he ought, for the word of God ſhould be believed; if it be a word of ſalvation to a ſinner, it ought to be welcomed and entertained by faith. But,

2. If the queſtion be, whether a man *can* apply it in ſuch a caſe, without power attending it? To be ſure he cannot: yet he ought to eſſay it, as I ſaid before, though he feel not the power; not knowing but power will accompany the eſſay.

3. The word of promiſe may be preſented to the mind *barely* in reading or thinking, and it may be only a *ſimple* act of the memory that is firſt exerciſed about it; yet, through the Lord's bleſſing, our meditation may be improved to a *lively* acting of faith upon it; *While I was muſing, the fire burned,* ſays the pſalmiſt.

4. A word *ſuitable to our need* and caſe, when it is impreſſed upon the memory, *ought not to be deſpiſed,* becauſe it may be a meſſenger from heaven for our ſpiritual advantage; for the Spirit is called the *Remembrancer,* for bringing the word to mind, John xiv. 26. This is one of the ways of his teaching; *He ſhall teach you all things:* How? *He ſhall bring all things to your remembrance, whatſoever I have ſaid unto you.* Never caſt out with a ſuitable and ſeaſonable word, becauſe it came only to your mind, as it were, in a ſeeming overly manner, but give it entertainment; it will, perhaps, make more room for itſelf, and ſanctify your memory: *Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not ſin againſt thee.*

EIGHTH CASE. *If a word of promiſe come in to the heart with any power and life, how ſhall I know whether it be from* GOD, *or from* SATAN, *transforming himſelf into an angel of light?*

ANSW. 1. God ſends his word upon the heart ſometimes in ſuch a manner, as carries its own *evidence* that it is from the Lord, inſomuch that there is no queſtioning of it at the time wherein it comes, no more than one can queſtion whether the ſun ſhines at mid-day, it hath ſuch a ſtamp of divine glory and majeſty upon it; but afterwards, when clouds and deſertion recur, the ſoul may be tempted to doubt whether it was a deluſion or not. Therefore,

2. It is meet, in ſuch a caſe, that the man reflect upon the *impreſſion* that the word of power made upon him. Aſk a man, when it is dark night, How do you know that ever you ſaw the natural ſun? May be you was but dreaming, and in a deluſion; it was nothing but a ſtrong imagination. Why, ſays the man, I am ſure I ſaw it, becauſe mine eyes were dazled with the light of it; and I was warmed with the heat of it; and I ſaw to work by it; and, in the light of it, I ſaw every thing about me; and I was delighted with it; and the like: ſo may you ſay, when in the dark night of deſertion, tempted to think that the word you got was a deluſion; you may reflect how it was with you when the word came from heaven with power and divine light; and when, together with it, the Sun of righteouſneſs ſhined in your ſoul: were not your eyes enlightened, your heart warmed, your ſoul cheared, and your ſpirit quickened to the Lord's work?

3. Satan may, indeed, ſend in words of ſcripture; he ſpoke Bible dialect to Chriſt when he tempted him, and ſo may he do to you; but it is always out of ſome *ill deſign:* as he tempted Chriſt to deny his ſonſhip, to deſtroy himſelf, and the like; ſo the words that come from the devil, tend to ſome wicked effects, either to make the ſoul ſecure, or deſperate; either to depreſs it too much towards deſpair, or to elevate it too much to preſumption. It tends to diſturb, and diſtract, and diſcompoſe the ſoul; or elſe to fill it with falſe peace, and to make it reſt in itſelf, and drive it off from its true reſting place. In a word,

4. A word from the devil bears the *devil's image,* but a word from God bears *God's image.* The devil's image is *pride* and *unholineſs;* and a word from him tends to make a man *proud* and *carnal:* whereas a word from the Lord tends to make a man *holy* and *humble.* A promiſe from the Lord is always a glaſs wherein ſomewhat of the glory of the Lord appears, whereupon the ſoul is *changed from glory to glory by the Spirit of the Lord.* Though ſin may afterwards prevail, yet the power of it is more weakened.

Finally, If it come in a time of need, and exactly ſuitable to the ſoul's caſe, and while it is pouring out itſelf before the Lord in prayer, it looks well; *For this I beſought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me: and he ſaid unto me, My grace is ſufficient for thee; for my ſtrength is made perfect in thy weakneſs,* 2 Cor. xii. 8, 9.

NINTH CASE. *How ſhall I know, when I get a promiſe ſent in to my heart, whether or not I miſtake the* SENSE *of the promiſe, and the* END *and* DESIGN *thereof?* For example, a child of promiſe gets a promiſe born in upon him; *How ſhall he know that he does not miſtake the mind of God in it?*

ANSW. 1. When God gives a word, he gives it in a *ſuitableneſs* to the *deſign* and *ſcope* of his HOLY SPIRIT in that text of ſcripture. If the ſenſe you put upon it be not ſuitable to the ſenſe of the Spirit of God therein, then certainly you are under ſome miſtake therein. But,

2. The Spirit of God is *an Interpreter, one among a thouſand;* and readily, when he gives in a word, he makes the ſenſe appear better than all the miniſters in the world can explain it: and the ſoul will ſee ſome *goſpel-myſtery,* ſome *hidden glory* in the word, that no interpreter, but the Spirit of God, can ſhew and manifeſt.

3. You can hardly miſtake the ſenſe of the word, if the Spirit *teſtify of Chriſt* therein; for Chriſt ſays of the whole ſcriptures, that *they teſtify of him,* John v. 39.

4. You can hardly miſtake the *end* and *deſign* of God in the word that you get, if it *lead you in to Chriſt,* and draw you to him; for the lan-

language of the Spirit, in every word of ſcripture, is, Come to Chriſt: *The Spirit and the bride ſay come.*— By theſe generals you may gueſs, whether or not you hit upon the *ſenſe* of the promiſe given you.

TENTH CASE, that a child of promiſe may be exerciſed about, is, *When I am concerned before the Lord in prayer for a friend in affliction, or in dying circumſtances, be it a relation, a child, a husband, a wife, or a near intimate acquaintance, and I get a promiſe let in to my heart ſuitable to my concern; How ſhall I know if the promiſe relates to* MYSELF, *or to the* PERSON *I am concerned about? and how ſhall I judge whether I* MISAPPLY *the promiſe relating to them?*

ANSW. 1. As to that part of the queſtion, whether it relates to *yourſelf*, or the *perſon* you are concerned about: It is, indeed, poſſible to miſtake in this matter; and I do not underſtand any other way of your being ſure that it relates to your friend, except it be by ſome *ſpiritual inſtinct* and *ſecret impreſſion*, that cannot well be explained: only, the Lord, who preſents the promiſe to you, will readily preſent the perſon alſo that you are concerned about, and lay the load of his affliction, as it were, upon your ſpirit, which you carry to the Lord, and caſt down at his feet, till he pleaſe to whiſper into your ear, as it were, or rather into your heart, ſome account of his deſign relating to that perſon.

2. As to that part of the queſtion, How to judge, whether you *miſtake* or *miſapply* the promiſe that relates to them?

(1.) Perhaps it is a *general* promiſe applied to a particular caſe, ſuch as that, *Fear not, I will help, I will ſave;* and you are ready to miſtake a temporal ſalvation for a ſpiritual; or a ſpiritual and eternal ſalvation, for a bodily and temporal one. Or,

(2.) Perhaps it is a more *particular* promiſe, ſuch as that, John iv. 50. *Go thy way, thy Son lives;* or that, *This ſickneſs is not unto death, but to the glory of God*, John xi. 4. You are ready to miſtake the deſign of the word, and of the Lord's giving it; and ſo to apply it amiſs. Which may be done eſpecially in two caſes.

[1.] When you *limit* the Lord to your ſide of the queſtion; then you are in danger of being left to miſtake the promiſe.

[2.] When the *natural ſway* of your *affections* and *inclinations* is made the STANDARD of explaining the word; or when you are determined, as it were, before-hand with reſpect to what you would have, and then interpret the promiſe in favours of your own inclination, more than in a ſuitableneſs to what is moſt agreeable to God's word, or needful for the party you are concerned about. We are ready to miſtake a promiſe, and influences from heaven, as if the deſign of them were juſt to humour our preſent apprehenſion and judgment; whereas after-experience may diſcover that we were miſtaken. Job's friends were under a ſpecial influence from heaven in all that they ſpoke concerning Job; but that influence they were under, came to them when they were under a very groſs miſapprehenſion concerning Job, as if he had been a hypocrite; and accordingly they miſapplied that influence they were under, to their preſent miſapprehenſion; and ſo went on in their miſtake, accuſing Job, till the Lord diſcovered their error. So people may get promiſes, and adapt them to their miſapprehenſion, whether for or againſt theſe they are exerciſed about, making God's word to bear a ſenſe that moſt favours their own preſent ſway, inclination, or apprehenſion; hence many of the Lord's people have found themſelves brought under very melancholy diſappointments, through their inadvertency this way. Which ſhould learn us ſobriety, and wiſdom, and holy circumſpection, in applying promiſes of this ſort, that Satan get no advantage, to the weakning of faith, and razing the foundation thereof with reſpect to other promiſes.

ELEVENTH CASE. *How ſhall I judge of a promiſe that I have got, when the* QUITE CONTRARY *to what I thought was promiſed to me, hath fallen out in providence? How ſhall I maintain honourable thoughts of the divine faithfulneſs in that caſe?*

ANSW. 1. *Let God be true, and every man a liar.* You ought to take with ignorance and error in applying and uſing the promiſe; and, at the ſame time, give God the glory of his faithfulneſs, believing that he will be true to his word, however providence ſeem to contradict the promiſe.

2. Perhaps you did not know at that time what God was *ſaying* to you. As Chriſt ſaid to Peter, *What I do thou knoweſt not now, but thou ſhall know hereafter:* ſo he may ſay to ſome, What I ſpeak, thou underſtandeſt not now, but thou ſhalt underſtand hereafter.

3. Perhaps you have not given God his *day*, by waiting till the time that he deſigned for the accompliſhment; may be it is coming: or, if you have given him his day, you have not given him his *due*, by being *fully perſuaded*, that *he that hath promiſed was able to perform;* and, by *believing againſt hope.*

4. Perhaps you miſtake the *way* and *manner* wherein God deſigned to make good the promiſe to you; *His way is in the deep, and his footſteps in the mighty waters.* He makes the promiſe of heaven run, as it were, through hell before the accompliſhment thereof, that ſo *the trial of faith may be precious.* He accompliſhes the promiſe of glory, through miſery; the promiſe of liberty, through bondage and calamity. Judge not of his faithfulneſs by outward appearances, otherwiſe you will never believe his word. If you get a bright promiſe, you may get a dark cloud upon the back of it, to keep you humble, and to try if your *faith be the evidence of things not ſeen*, or if it can ſee inviſible things through viſible impediments, as Abraham's faith did. There was much inviſible glory and excellency held forth in that promiſe that was made to Mary the mother of Jeſus, Luke i. 30,—33. No doubt, Mary thought ſhe would be a happy woman while ſhe lived; and that her Son, our Lord Jeſus, would be a great man, even in worldly reſpects: for we ſee how the apoſtles themſelves dreamed of a temporal earthly kingdom that Chriſt ſhould have, as the reſt of the Jews did: no doubt, I ſay, ſhe thought of much temporal happineſs, ſplendour, and grandeur to her Son, even here; but, that ſhe might not live in that miſtake, ſee how the Lord directed old Simeon to ſpeak to her, when he had the child JESUS in his arms, Luke ii. 34, 35. Thus you ſee here promiſes, and God's way of accompliſhing them, may be miſtaken. O Sirs, ſee his way to be glorious and honourable.

TWELFTH CASE. *Whether may one conclude him-*

himself to be a child of promise, that never found ANY PROMISE *come in with power to his soul?* 'Why, 'says one, I am in no danger of mistaking the 'promise that way you was alledging; for, I 'get no promise in that manner born home 'upon me, and this makes me many times 'doubt whether or not I can be a child of pro-'mise: I hear of some getting promises with 'life and power set home upon them, but I 'know nothing of that; and therefore I would 'know if this be consistent with a believing 'state.'

ANSW. The dispensation of grace towards the children of promise, is various: I cannot say they have all the same experience of words of promise darted in, as it were, from heaven upon their hearts; but this I will say of all the children of promise, that there is some word of grace or other, whatever way they get it, on which they were made to hope; for they are *begotten again to a lively hope by the word* of the gospel; and can, in some measure say, *Lord, remember the word on which thou hast caused me to hope.* If all the promises of the Bible be alike to you, and you was never *begotten to a lively hope*, by one of them more than another, how can you be a child of promise, when the promise hath never opened its womb to bring you forth, or to bring forth any faith or hope in your heart?

THIRTEENTH CASE. *Whether may a man take a promise that is not* GIVEN *him, or apply a promise that God does not allow him to apply?*

ANSW. 1. All the promises are given in the gospel-offer, to be received; and it is the sin of gospel-hearers, that they do not *take* and *apply* what God gives, but rather put away Christ and the promise from themselves, and live in unbelief.

2. People may take and apply a promise amiss, and ruin themselves in their way of taking, when they take the promise to themselves, not by *faith*, but by *fancy*, and strong imagination: and, indeed, the faith of many is nothing but a strong fancy and opinion; a damnable faith.

3. People may take and apply the promise amiss, to their own ruin, when they take it, but not out of *God's hand*, and upon his authority; whereas true faith receives the word, *not as the word of man, but as it is in truth the word of God, which effectually worketh in them that believe*, 1 Thess. ii. 13.

4. People may take and apply the promise amiss, and may be said to take what is not given, when they take it, but not as *given*, and for the *end* and *design* for which it is given. The promise is given to make you holy, as well as to make you happy; but if you take it to make you secure, and to give you a latitude and liberty in sin, and so to abuse the grace of God unto licentiousness, then you are but *despising the goodness of God, and treasuring up to yourself wrath against the day of wrath:* but if you take the promise by faith, believing and applying it to yourself; if you take it out of God's hand, and take it as given, and for the holy ends for which it is given, then you need not fear that you take what is not given you; God allows and commands you thus to take.

FOURTEENTH CASE. *How may the promises be improven, that, in all probability, will not be* FULFILLED *in our day?*

ANSW. (1.) We are to live and die in the *faith* of them, Heb. xi. 13.—(2.) We ought to search the *periods of time* wherein they are to be accomplished, Dan. ix. 2. compared with 1 Pet. i. 10, 11.—(3.) We ought, with *patience*, to expect the accomplishment, Heb. x. 35, 36.—(4.) We must not judge of the accomplishment by *seemingly contradictory providences*; for, *the Lord is not slack concerning his promise*, but he will take his own time and way, which sometimes is very mysterious.

FIFTEENTH CASE. *Whether may a child of promise have God speaking to him in a promise savingly, and yet he not* KNOW *it?*

ANSW. I doubt not but there may be young children of promise, like young Samuel, to whom the Lord spake again and again, and he thought it was Eli; so the Lord may be speaking to some, and speaking to their heart, and they may be so little acquainted with the Lord, as to think it is but the minister that is speaking. However, these whom the Lord begins to speak graciously and powerfully unto, he will make them know his voice, and bring them to more acquaintance with him. But, in case any hereupon presume they are children of promise, though they do not know it; there are these things they will know something of, who are the children of promise.—They know that, by nature, they are *strangers to the covenant of promise*; and that, instead of the promise, they are under the threatening of the law by nature; and, under the apprehension thereof, they have fled to Christ and the promise.—They know, that all the *spiritual life* they have, is by virtue of the promise, or the grace of God in Christ; the promise hath given life to their faith, life to their hope, life to their desire, life to their repentance and mortification; *Having these promises, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit*, etc. *Thy word hath quickened me.*—They know that the promise of God is *good security* for heaven and eternal life; and they take it as such.—They know that the security of the promise depends upon the *blood of Christ*; they *are all Yea and Amen in Christ*, and upon the faithfulness of God, the oath of God; therefore their dependence is thereupon. In a word, they are *prizers* of the promise, and *pleaders* of the promise, *appliers* of the promise; and have communion with God, in Christ, by the means of the promise. *

Use 4. I come now to an use of *exhortation*, which may be directed, 1. To *unbelievers*, who have no faith, and consequently no special actual interest in the promise. 2. To *believers*, that are the actual children of the promise. 3. To *all* in general.

First, To *unbelievers*, that are *aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenant of promise.* O seek to be *the children of promise*, as Isaac; I mean, to have it made evident to you that you are so. Some *motives* and some *directions* I would here offer to you.

1st, For *motives*. I shall only propose that you consider whose children you are, while you are not the children of promise; particularly, whose children you are by *nature*, and whose children you are by *nation*, and so by remote or immediate parentage.

[1.] Consider whose children you are by *nature*. (1.) You are the *children of the devil*, 1 John iii. 10.; even the race of apostate Adam; *Children of the wicked one*, Mat. xiii. 38. *Ye are of your father*

* It is probable this ends Serm. XXXVII. preached on the Sabbath.

father the devil, John viii. 44.—(2.) You are the *children of iniquity*, Hoſ. x. 9.—(3.) You are the *children of diſobedience*, Eph. ii. 2. and v. 6.—(4.) You are the *children of wrath*, Eph. ii. 3.—(5.) The children of the curſe, *curſed children*, 2 Pet. ii. 14.—(6.) You are the *children of the night and of darkneſs*, 1 Theſſ. v. 5.—(7.) You are the *children of perdition*, John xvii. 12.—(8.) You are the *children of hell*, Mat. xxiii. 15.—(9.) *Children of the fleſh*, Rom. ix. 8.—(10.) The *children of the bond-woman*, as in the context.——From theſe epithets, given to theſe in your ſtate in ſcripture, you may gather what a ſad and doleful condition you are into, that are not the children of promiſe.

[2.] Conſider whoſe children you are by *nation*, and that whether by remote national deſcent, or by immediate parentage.

(1.) By remote *national deſcent*, as Scotſmen, and Scotſwomen. Though this be what concerns you all in common, I ſuppoſe, who hear me in this place; yet ſome affecting conſiderations may be drawn therefrom, for inducing you to be reſtleſs till you get ſome evidence of your being the children of promiſe. Why, by virtue of your Scotiſh birth, more remotely conſidered,

1. You are the children of *Pagans*, a heathen brood. It may be truly ſaid of us, *Thy birth and thy nativity was of the land of Canaan; thy father was an Amorite, and thy mother an Hittite*, Ezek. xvi. 3. For, before the goſpel came firſt to be publiſhed in Scotland, if we look a thouſand and ſome hundred of years backward, we will find we are nothing but a Pagan brood; the children of as blind and brutiſh idolaters, as ever were in the world. Owen, in his Theologumena (beſides what hiſtorians relate) diſcovers the curſed idolatry of Britain, that our forefathers were drowned into: their gods were many; and, among the reſt, theſe from whom we derive to this day the ordinary names we give to the days of the week, as Sunday, that was dedicate to the Sun; and Monday, to the Moon; Tueſday, to Twiſco; Wedneſday, to Woden; Thurſday, to Thor; Friday, to Friga, or Venus; and Saturday, to Saturn. They offered human ſacrifices to their imaginary deities, in the moſt cruel manner, which I cannot here enlarge upon. However, we are of a Pagan extract, an idolatrous brood: we have no claim to Abraham as our father; we are not, by birth, of Shem's family, the family of the faithful; and never had we been in a better condition, had not the *Lord perſuaded Japhet to dwell in the tents of Shem*.

2. You are the children of *Papiſts*, to come a little nearer-hand. We, as Scots, are of the lineage of Antichriſt, a Popiſh brood; for, after groſs Paganiſm was aboliſhed by the goſpel-light, that God ſent to Scotland, a cloud of Popery and Antichriſtian darkneſs, idolatry, and ſuperſtition, overſpread the land for ſeveral hundred years before the Reformation, wherein the Lord brought us out of that myſtical Babylon: however, when we look back to theſe dark times, we may ſee ourſelves to be but a generation of Babyloniſh brats. It is hardly two hundred years ſince our forefathers were all black Egyptians, and many in Scotland are not yet brought out of that popiſh Egypt to this day; many never had their hearts truly brought out of it, and are longing to be back again to it.

3. You are, even as Scots, children of *Apoſtates*, a *perjured brood*; the offspring of *covenant-breakers*; a *perfidious race*. We, in our forefathers, have been guilty of the moſt groſs and vile abominations of ſwearing and forſwearing, even ſince our Reformation from Popery: oaths upon oaths have been taken; and ſome oaths *contradictory* to the former. I ſpeak not only of private and perſonal, cuſtomary and bloody oaths, which abound among all ranks; but even of *public oaths* impoſed by law *. What nation under heaven have changed their religion ſo often, and the government of the church ſo frequently, as Scotland? May not the Lord ſay of us, as he ſaid of Iſrael, *My people have committed two great evils, they have forſaken me the fountain of living water, and digged to themſelves broken ciſterns that can hold no water?* May he not bid us *paſs over to Chittim*, and to heatheniſh nations, *and ſee if they have changed their gods, their glory for that which doth not profit?* Jer. ii. 10, 11, 13. But eſpecially, was there ever a nation entered more ſolemnly into covenant with God? And was there ever any nation, that not only broke, but burnt the covenant of their God, and cried it up for a ſin of rebellion to own and plead for the covenant of their God, as Scotland hath done? Was there ever any nation aſhamed of their glory, as we have been?

4. We, as the people of Scotland, are the children of an *unthankful nation*, and an *ungrateful blood*, that have ſinned againſt old and late mercies. 1. Againſt *old mercies*. God hath an old kindneſs for Scotland; and we are a race of people that have ſinned againſt very antient love: God ſent the goſpel very early to Scotland, even a few years after the aſcenſion of Chriſt; though Chriſtianity was not eſtabliſhed by law, till about the two hundred and third year of our LORD, in the reign of Donald the firſt, yet it was received by many in Scotland, before the ſecond of the ten primitive perſecutions: for, as hiſtorians tell us, and even the Roman hiſtory confirms it, many eminent Chriſtians fled from that perſecution even unto Scotland, becauſe they were aſſured that the goſpel was received there; and that perſecution being about the ſixty-ninth year of Chriſt, the goſpel-light that ſhined in Scotland before that time, behoved to have made a very early entrance here; which, as ſome tell us, was occaſioned by the perſecution that the Jews raiſed againſt the apoſtles and diſciples of Chriſt, who thereupon leaving Jeruſalem, and Judea, went up

* Our Author here, no doubt, hath his eye on the troubleſome perſecuting period in the laſt century, under the reigns of Charles II. and James VII. wherein many wicked, ſelf-contrary, and inſnaring oaths and bonds were impoſed on the ſubjects, particularly on the ſtrenuous adherers to the Reformation principles attained unto in that reforming period between 1638, and 1649.; ſuch as, The oath of *Allegiance*, or *Supremacy*; the *Inſtrument Aſſertory*; the *Declaration*; the *Bond of Peace*; the *Bond of Regularity*; the *Teſt*, etc. And in regard our Author ſpeaks of oaths *contradictory* to our Covenants, he probably alludes to the DECLARATION and TEST, which, *inter alia*, diſowned the binding obligation of our Covenants, National and Solemn League, and were framed and calculated to unhinge our covenanted Reformation, and be as a grave-ſtone thereupon: The words of the *Declaration* are remarkable; wherein the ſubſcriber [which was every one admitted to places in church and ſtate,] is required to *affirm* and *declare*, "That it is unlawful, upon any pre-"text whatſoever, to enter into leagues and covenants;—that the *National Covenant*, (as explained in the year 1638.) and the *Solemn* "*League* and *Covenant*, were, *in themſelves*, UNLAWFUL OATHS;—and that there lieth no obligation, on any of the ſubjects, from "the ſaid Oaths, to endeavour any change or alteration, either of church or ſtate, from the preſent eſtabliſhment by the laws of the "kingdom." By which declaration, *perjury* is made a neceſſary qualification to inveſt a perſon with any office, civil or eccleſiaſtic.

and

and down the world, ſpeaking to every people in their own language; and that theſe who came to our northern parts, were the diſciples of the apoſtle JOHN. However this may be, yet it is generally owned that we were among the very firſt fruits of the Gentiles brought in to the Lord Jeſus: therefore, I ſay, we are a people that have ſinned againſt very antient love, early kindneſs, and old mercies. 2. Againſt *late mercies*. Need I here mention the glorious Reformation from Popery, the merciful Revolution, and manifold deliverances from Prelacy, and arbitrary power? Theſe things are of later date, and better known; together with the great goſpel-light, and innumerable mercies of this kind, that we have ſinned againſt, inſomuch as we have ſinned away many national mercies, and are become bond-ſlaves; having ſo far ſold ourſelves, that our poſterity may ſay, we are the children of ſlaves. And have we not ſinned away many ſpiritual mercies, many goſpel-privileges, and ſacred liberties? How is goſpel-light darkened, goſpel-truth adulterate and ſophiſticate with legal mixture?

(2.) Conſider whoſe children you are by *immediate parentage*. Let none boaſt of their birth and pedigree; even as they are children of the preſent generation, every one hath reaſon to ſay, with David, *What am I? and what is my father's houſe?* The Lord gives the Jews a black name, Iſa. lvii. 3. *The ſons of ſorcerers, the ſeed of the adulterer and whore;* becauſe their immediate parents were idolaters, they are called the children of whoredoms: ſo, perhaps, it may be ſaid of many here, that ſome are of a baſtard-brood, the children of whoremongers and adulterers; ſome are of a thieviſh brood, a race of robbers and thieves; ſome are of a graceleſs pedigree, deſcended of wicked parents, that never knew any thing of God: ſome of a malignant race, the children of theſe that were enemies to God, and the work of God, and the power of godlineſs; ſome of a viperiſh brood, of whom it may be ſaid, as John the Baptiſt to the Jews, *O generation of vipers*, haters of God, and bitter enemies to the croſs of Chriſt, *who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?* Oh! how far from, and unlike to the children of promiſe are ſuch? Or, if any here be the children of gracious and religious parents, yet conſidering what even they were by nature, as well as others, have you not reaſon to ſay, as it is, Deut. xxvi. 5. *A Syrian ready to periſh was my father.* Whether your immediate parents were good or bad, you have matter of humiliation: if they were *good*, then it may be humbling unto you, that you have not walked in their imitable footſteps, nor followed their faith and holineſs; and you are their children and offſpring, merely as they were ſinners, not as they were ſaints: if they were *bad*, then without controverſy it is a humbling conſideration, they begat you after their own likeneſs, and you remain *children of wrath and diſobedience* like them, and ſo you are their rightful and immediate heirs, heirs to all the curſes and threatenings that they were under.

Now, ſhould not this ſtir you up to be reſtleſs till you know that you are among the *children of promiſe*, to conſider whoſe children you are by nature, by nation, and by immediate parentage? eſpecially when it is alſo conſidered, what a wrathful heritage you have, by being of ſuch a Syrian brood; for, by reaſon of your native pedigree, you are under dreadful plagues, particularly the plague of ſin's pollution, and the plague of God's curſe.

1. Under the plague of *ſin's pollution*: not only deſtitute of God's image, which man had in his primitive innocent ſtate; but polluted and defiled throughout the whole man, like children *caſt forth to the open field, to the loathing of thy perſon; not ſalted at all, nor ſwaddled at all: Not waſhed with water, but lying in their blood*, Ezek. xvi. 4, 5.; every finger of your hand, every bit of your fleſh and bones is but a clod of corruption; every member of the body, every faculty of the ſoul, is but a heap of pollution and filthineſs; *Altogether become filthy*, Pſal. xiv. 3.

2. Under the plague of *God's curſe*, under the ſentence of the law; the curſe thereof is againſt us as ſoon as we are born; *Curſed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them*, Gal. iii. 10. And ſo, while you are not children of promiſe, you are nothing but children of the threatening, and heirs of damnation, *Aliens from the commonwealth of Iſrael, ſtrangers to the covenants of promiſe; having no hope, and without God in the world*, Eph. ii. 12. Is it not ſad to be ſuch plagued and curſed children!

Again, as you would conſider whoſe children you are, and conſequently what a *ſad ſtate* you are in, while you are not the *children of promiſe*; ſo conſider alſo, for your excitation and upſtirring in this matter, whoſe children you *would be*, if you were the *children of promiſe*; and how *happily they are ſtated* that are ſo. Why, theſe that are the children of promiſe, (1.) They are the *children of God*, Gal. iii. 26.; of the *living God*, Rom. ix. 26.—(2.) They are the *children of the kingdom*, in that ſenſe mentioned, Mat. xiii. 38. — (3.) They are the true *children of Zion*, Pſa. cxlix. 2.—(4.) The *children of Jeruſalem, which is above*, Gal. iv. 26.—(5.) They are the *children of light*, Luke xvi. 8.—(6.) The *children of wiſdom*, Mat. xi. 19.—(7.) They are the *children of Abraham*, in a true ſpiritual ſenſe, Gal. iii. 7.—(8.) They are the *children of liberty* and *of the free-woman*, Gal. iv. 31.—(9.) The *children of the reſurrection*, Luke xx. 30.—(10.) The children of grace and glory; *heirs of God, and joint heirs with Chriſt*, Rom. viii. 17.——Theſe are not bare names they have; no, they import the *unſpeakable happineſs* here, and eſpecially hereafter, that belong to the *children of promiſe*.

2*dly*, For *direction*. If you would put in for a ſhare among the children of promiſe, I offer you theſe three or four advices.

1. O ſinner, ſee, and know, and believe your relation, by nature, to the *threatening*, and ſeek the Spirit of God to convince you thereof. The Spirit of God, as a Spirit of bondage, muſt bind your conſcience and the threatening together, and apply the law-threatening, before ever you will have any due concern about being the children of promiſe. If you know not God as a threatening God, you will have little care about knowing him as a promiſing God. Till the ſoul be brought to ſay, "Ah! nothing "but the threatening of hell and damnation "belongs to me; I am a child of wrath," never will it value the privilege of being a child of promiſe. What meaſure of conviction, or legal humiliation, is neceſſary, I determine not; but if, in ſome meaſure, you do not ſee yourſelves under the ſentence of the law, how can you

you ever reliſh the promiſe of the goſpel, and ſee your need thereof? but then, having ſeen your need,

2. See your *concern* in the promiſe, and your *claim* thereto, as members of the viſible church. Though, by natural generation, you have no part in it, yet by Heaven's gracious diſpenſation you have a claim to it; *The promiſe is to you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even to as many as the Lord our God ſhall call*, Acts ii. 39. The promiſe is left to the *goſpel-church*, Heb. iv. 1. and belongs to them no leſs than it did to the church of the Jews, Rom. ix. 4. The promiſe is a letter from heaven, backed for you, ſinner: take, and open, and read it, with application to yourſelves; for it is *a faithful ſaying, and worthy of all acceptation*, declaring that *Jeſus Chriſt came to ſave ſinners*. Though you have no poſſeſſion of the thing promiſed till you believe; yet you have as good a right to take poſſeſſion by believing, as the command of God and the call of the goſpel can give you; and this right was ſealed to you in baptiſm. See your claim.

3. *Plead* this claim, as you may ſee the Lord calls you to do, Ezek. xxxvi. 37. Where, after the covenant of promiſe is opened and laid before you, the Lord ſays, *For this will I be enquired of by the houſe of Iſrael, to do it for them.* Plead then, that a ſovereign Lord, who *ſhews mercy on whom he will ſhew mercy*, would give you the *new heart* there promiſed, the *new ſpirit*, the *heart of fleſh*, and *put his Spirit within you, and cauſe you to walk in his ſtatutes*, and be *your God*, and make you *his people*, according to the promiſe. Plead, that he, who hath given you a promiſe to plead, may give you the grace of the promiſe; which when you get, then ſhall you have evidence of your being children of the promiſe. And in this way,

4. Be *reſtleſs* till the promiſe be powerfully applied, and till you feel the virtue thereof. Cry for power to accompany the goſpel-diſpenſation, that ſo the promiſe may have ſtrength to bring forth children, and to bring forth you particularly, as a child of promiſe, *begotten to a lively hope* thereby, *of his own* ſovereign *will*, James i. 18.; and *of his free mercy*, Titus iii. 5. You can, indeed, no more contribute to your own regeneration by the word, or to your becoming a child of promiſe, than a child can contribute to its own production, or a creature to its own creation. The new creature is the product of God's almighty efficacious power allenarly: yet as this power works upon the rational faculties, when God begins the good work; ſo he calls us, as rational creatures, to uſe the means and ordinances of his appointment, and to be found in that way wherein his power and grace uſes to ride proſperouſly. Therefore, ſeeing the ordinances are the *golden pipes*, Zech. iv. 12. through which the oil of grace runs, attend upon them; and ſeeing the promiſes of God are the veſſels whereby God conveys and infuſes his grace into us, apply yourſelves unto them; for theſe *exceeding great and precious promiſes are given us, that by theſe we might be partakers of the divine nature*, 2 Pet. i. 4. Now, ſeeing the promiſe is but the veſſel, and Chriſt is the fountain of grace, in whom all the promiſes are *Yea* and *Amen*; therefore, in uſing that promiſe, bring the promiſe to Chriſt, as a man would bring a veſſel to the fountain, and ſee to get the veſſel filled with grace and power, and virtue there, that *out of his fulneſs* you may *receive grace for grace*, John i. 16. Then ſhall you appear to be the *children of God, by faith in Chriſt Jeſus*, and as the children of promiſe.

5. In a word, Pray the Lord to enable you to *caſt out the bond-woman*, to give up with the law, and renounce it, not as a rule of obedience, but as a rule of acceptance, and as a covenant of works, and condition of life; having no expectation of life by the deeds of the law, or by any perſonal righteouſneſs of your own, but reſting allenarly upon the free promiſe of God in Chriſt, for juſtification, ſanctification, and eternal life, according to the goſpel-method; that in this way, under the conduct of the Spirit of promiſe, you may become the *children of promiſe*, and be the *children of God by faith in Chriſt Jeſus*, Gal. iii. 27.; and the *children of the free-woman*, Gal. iv. 31.——Be reſtleſs in the uſe of means, till God put power and virtue in the promiſe, for theſe ends.

Secondly, The *ſecond* branch of our exhortation propoſed was to *believers*, that are actually the children of promiſe; and our exhortation to them is, that being ſo, they would *live upon the promiſe by faith*. And here again I would offer ſome *motives*; and then ſome *directions*, in order to the believer's living by faith upon the promiſe.

1*ſt*, For *motives*. O believer in Chriſt, and child of the promiſe, *Take heed leſt there be in you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God*; and ſee that your life be a life of faith upon the promiſe. And there are eſpecially two conſiderations I would urge, for exciting you to this life, namely, 1. The excellency of the promiſe. 2. The excellency of the life of faith thereupon.

[1.] Conſider the *excellency of the promiſes*. The apoſtle ſays, 2 Pet. i. 4. they are *exceeding great and precious promiſes*. Some things may be *great*, and yet not *precious*; but the promiſes are both *great* and *precious*; and not only ſo, but *exceeding great* and *exceeding precious*. There is a treaſure here, exceeding what tongue can utter, or heart conceive. You may conſider the excellency of the promiſe, in theſe following reſpects, namely,

1. The promiſes are excellent and precious, in reſpect of their *author*, which is God; *All the promiſes of God are in him Yea, and in him Amen, to the glory of God by us*, 2 Cor. i. 20. Where God is declared to be the author, for they are the *promiſes of God*; and God is the end of them, they are to the *glory of God*. If you look into the promiſe, you will find all the attributes, and all the names of God there; ſuch as, the *love* of God: O how does his love, mercy, and grace appear, in making the promiſe! It is free love that makes him a Promiſer, and thereupon a debtor to us.—Again, the *power* of God is manifeſted, in making good the promiſe: God ſaid, that *the ſeed of the woman ſhould bruiſe the head of the ſerpent*; and God hath been obliged to ſhew his power to make it good in Chriſt Jeſus, to the ſeed of Abraham by miracles, and to the children of Iſrael by wonders: it hath coſt many marvellous operations to make good his word in ſeveral ages to his people.—Again, His *faithfulneſs* is here diſplayed: in this is the ſecurity of the promiſe; *Though we believe not, yet he abideth faithful, he cannot deny himſelf*, 2 Tim. ii. 13.—Again, His *wiſdom* comes in, to give forth theſe promiſed mercies in time of need, and

and in a ſuitableneſs to our wants. You have a remarkable word, Pſal. cxxxviii. 2. *I will worſhip towards thy holy temple, and praiſe thy name for thy loving-kindneſs, and for thy truth: for thou haſt magnified thy word above all thy name;* SUPER OMNE NOMEN, *above every name.* God is pleaſed to make his word above every name; and all his names carry his word upon their ſhoulders. And, are not theſe then precious and excellent promiſes, that are thus enameled with love, mercy, grace, power, faithfulneſs, wiſdom, and all the other names of God? And ſhall ſuch a treaſure ly by us, without being improven?

2. The promiſes are excellent and precious, in reſpect of their *object*, or the perſon to whom they are made, namely, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Mediator and Redeemer: not to the elect immediately, but to Chriſt for them; *Now to Abraham and his ſeed was the promiſes made: he ſays not, And to ſeeds, as of many; but as of one: And to thy ſeed, which is Chriſt,* Gal. iii. 16. Had the promiſe been made to man, then it had been made to *ſeeds;* that is, to diverſe; as to one of the Jews, and to one of the Gentiles; as of diverſe kinds: but it was to *one;* that is, both to Jews and Gentiles, which are both but one ſeed in Chriſt Jeſus. All the promiſes *are in him,* 2 Cor. i. 20.; that is, in Chriſt; and with him, for the ſake of the redeemed. The promiſes are ſo precious, that God would not truſt them in the hands of man; nay, nor in the hands of angels; but only in the hands of the *angel of the covenant,* Jeſus Chriſt.

3. They are excellent and precious, in reſpect of their *price.* We uſe to value things according to the price that they coſt us: Now, the price of the promiſe was the blood of the Son of God; hence it is ſaid, 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. *We are redeemed not with corruptible things, as ſilver and gold, but with the precious blood of Chriſt, as of a Lamb without blemiſh, and without ſpot.* Would we not think that thing dearly bought, that ſhould coſt us the blood of one ſon, or of one daughter, nay, of one only ſon? How precious then is the purchaſe that coſt the blood of God's only Son? Let this ſtir us up highly to prize the promiſe.

4. They are excellent and precious, in regard of the *reality* of them. The promiſes are not vain toys, or empty notions; nay, all the promiſes are ſo many pardons, ſo many bleſſings, ſo many bounties, ſo many ſubſtances of the greateſt reality that can be imagined. Gold is counted the heavieſt metal; and, the purer the gold is, the weightier it is. And all the promiſes are as gold ſeven times tried, and purified in the fire. You read, Heb. xi. 1. that *faith is the ſubſtance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not ſeen.* How ſo? becauſe faith does ſee the ſubſtance afar off laid up in the promiſe. The believer ſees and weighs them in the balance of faith, and finds them ſubſtantial; and therefore, ver. 13. the worthies *died in the faith, not having received the promiſes; but having ſeen them afar off, they were perſuaded of them, and embraced them.* The ſtars are of a vaſt wonderful bigneſs; but they ſeem not to be ſo, becauſe they are at ſuch a vaſt wonderful diſtance from us, even many millions of miles; ſo thus the ſaints ſaw the promiſes afar off, as many great luminaries and lights, and embraced or ſaluted them: and, did they embrace ſhadows? No; they were ſolid things. That muſt be a reality with a witneſs, that hath the attributes of God to fill it up: every creature hath ſo much weight as it hath of God in it; every promiſe is filled up with God's love, with his mercy, power, faithfulneſs, and all the names of God; they have a whole God to fill them up. *Take heed, therefore, leſt there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God,* by neglecting to live upon the promiſe.

5. The promiſes are excellent and precious, in regard of their *certainty* and *immutability.* Riches have wings, and flee away; honours have wings, and flee away; frames have wings, and flee away: but God may as ſoon ceaſe to be God, as not to be true to his word, and ſure in his promiſe: learn, therefore, to be ſure of the promiſe, that you may have ſomething that will bide by you, and ſtick cloſe; ſurely they ſhall not fail. *Though all men forſake thee,* ſaid Peter, *yet will not I:* but the promiſe ſays more, Surely and certainly, though all men forſake thee, yet will not I; though friends and relations, health and ſtrength, and life forſake thee, yet will not I; though frames, enlargements, and enjoyments fail thee, yet will not I. *All fleſh is graſs, and the goodlineſs thereof as the flower of the field; the graſs withereth, and the flower fadeth, but the word of the Lord abideth for ever,* Iſa. xl. 6, 7, 8. You will take the word of a great man, becauſe his word is his honour: but God hath done more than paſſed his word; for he hath added his oath, Heb. vi. 17. *Therefore God willing more abundantly to ſhew unto the heirs of promiſe the immutability of his counſel, confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things, in which it is impoſſible for God to lye, we might have ſtrong conſolation.* O what a happy people are you, for whoſe ſake he is willing to ſwear? And, on the contrary, How muſt they be among the worſt of men, that will not truſt God with his word and oath! Is not his honour concerned to make good the ſame? If the promiſes were to be made good by angels, we might queſtion them: but God being the Promiſer, and ſo obliging himſelf to be the Performer, how can you queſtion them? they are ſure; *Though my houſe be not ſo with God, yet he hath made with me an everlaſting covenant, well ordered in all things, and ſure; this is all my ſalvation, and all my deſire,* 2 Sam. xxiii. 6. Hence I ſhall add,

6. The promiſes are excellent and precious, in regard of their *fulneſs.* All your ſalvation lies there, according to that word juſt now cited: what can you deſire, that is not in the promiſe? What ſalvation do you need, that is not here? The promiſe contains ſalvation from ſin, from the guilt of ſin, from the filth of ſin, from the power of ſin, from the ſting of ſin, from the ſtain of ſin, from the fruit of ſin, from the fountain of ſin, and from the very being of ſin at length. Here are promiſes of ſalvation from wrath, from the law, from juſtice, from death, from hell, from the world, and from the devil, and unreaſonable men; ſalvation from troubles, and reproaches, and fears, and doubts, and faintings; ſalvation from deſertion and deſpondency, from wants and weakneſs, from wrongs and injuries done to your names or otherwiſe: ſalvation from all woes and wearineſs; ſalvation from backſliding and apoſtacy; ſalvation from plagues and all imperfections: innumerable poſitive ſalvations and mercies; pardoning mercy, ſin-ſubduing mercy, healing mercy, conquering mercy, comforting

comforting mercy, upholding mercy, grace-increasing mercy, and perfecting mercy; sanctifying mercy to sanctify all providences, all crosses, all relations; defending mercy, strengthening mercy, helping mercy, following mercy, enlightening, enlivening, enlarging mercy; mercy for supplying your wants, dispelling your fears, covering your infirmities, hearing your prayers, ordering all things for your good; and salvation to everlasting life, glory, and immortality.—I have in these few words named as good as fifty pieces of salvation contained in the promise of the new covenant: but though I should go on to mention a thousand, yet the text will say more; *this is all my salvation.* There are promises here for all sorts of men; for kings and subjects; for noble and ignoble; for parent and child; for master and servant; for ministers and people; for husband and wife; for married and unmarried; for them that have children, and them that are barren; for these that are whole, and these that are sick; for them that are prisoners, and them that are in debt; for the blind, and the lame, and the diseased; for the soldier and the seaman; for the living and for the dying.—O the infinite variety that lies in the promise! What an infinite treasure is here, that cannot be exhausted! There can be none poor that have a promise; there can be none rich that want a promise; and none so rich as these that have the promises: *Godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come,* 1 Tim. iv. 8. Some will say of a monied man, *O! he is worth God knows what.* Indeed it is an idle way of speaking; why, what do they mean? such an one is worth even a belly-full of earth, and a back-load of thick clay: *Lord, deliver me,* says David, *from the men of the world, which have their portion in this life, whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure,* Psal. xvii. 14. Only believers have a true fulness; and only God knows what they are worth: the promise is full of God; and God only knows what is God's worth: he that fills the pipe with the spring, only knows what a believer is worth. As it was said of Jacob, *Who can count the dust of Jacob?* so, who can count the treasure of the believer? As the heaven is full of stars, so the Bible is full of promises, and the promise full of blessings, suiting all cases and conditions. Oh then! that there should be such a treasure, and we should not know it, nor be acquaint with it; no not one of twenty. Let this be matter of humiliation, and let the believer be more careful to live upon the promises, seeing they are so excellent and precious.—So much for the *excellency* of the promise.

[2.] Consider the *excellency* of the *life of faith* upon the promise, for moving you to live upon the same by faith: and the excellency thereof may be viewed in these particulars following, besides many others that might be added.

1. The life of faith upon the promise is a most *quiet* and *peaceable* life; *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee,* Isa. xxviii. 3. Men would live at ease and quiet, but they seek this life among the creatures, where it is not to be found; they that seek it there, will find themselves deceived. Greatness and honour in this world, is mixed with gall and vinegar, instead of sweetness. A life of true peace and contentment is not to be had in the creature: all things in this world cannot put us in such a peaceable condition as we would desire, and that because the creature is a mixed thing, and a mutable thing.

(1.) It is a *mixed* thing. The best life here below hath some sweet, and some bitter; some good, and some bad; some rest, and some trouble: and it does not fall out so by accident, but by divine ordination. There is not all quietness to be had in meat and drink, nor all rest to be had in the bed; the best of counsels are not all good, nor the best of armies all strength: nay, it is a mixed contentment that is here below.

(2.) It is a *mutable* thing, as well as mixed. All creatures have their changes; like the moon, sometimes increasing, and sometimes decreasing; and like the sea, now ebbing, and now flowing. Sometimes we are in a high and honourable, anon in a poor and miserable condition; merry to-day, and sad to-morrow: therefore, says Christ, *Cease from man, whose breath is in his nostrils.* The creature is both mutable and momentany; it vanisheth, and cannot give any content; *Your fathers, where are they?* Where is your husband, woman? Why, this day in the warm bed, to-morrow in the cold grave. Where is your wife, man? To-day in the bosom of the husband, to-morrow in the bosom of a coffin. The very quintessence of all the creatures cannot yield the least drop of happiness, nor a grain-weight of solid peace: it is only a God in Christ that can give satisfaction to the soul; therefore he says, *Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.* If beauty, riches, honour, should promise any such things they would be liars; *There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked. They are like the troubled sea, that cannot rest, but still cast forth mire and dirt.* Whether the waters of the sea ebb or flow, they are never at rest; whether they run north or south, they are still in motion; so the wicked, which way soever they turn, they are never at rest. But now, soul, come here, and you may have the life you desire to live; true rest and quiet is in the life of faith, and nowhere else. It is by faith on the promise that a happy event is secured: you need not trouble yourself here, but only use the means, and leave the event to the Lord; as Jacob, Gen. xliii. he must starve, or send his beloved son Benjamin away: well, says Jacob, *If it must needs be so, take now your brother, and arise, and go again, and take money with you:* he uses the mean, and then he puts all into the hand of God; *God almighty give you favour before the man,* ver. 14. To this purpose, *Paul goes bound in the Spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befal him; save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, that bonds and afflictions abide him: but none of these things trouble me,* says he; *neither count I my life dear to me,* Acts xx. 22, 23, 24. Faith is a casting the burden upon the Lord, on which the soul is easy; *Cast thy burden on the Lord, and he will sustain thee,* Psal. lv. 22. Whatever care it hath, it devolves it on the Lord, and so keeps no anxious care behind, and hath its warrant from the Lord; *Be careful for nothing, but in every thing, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, make your request known to God,* Phil. iv. 6. There is nothing here ado, but to pray and give thanks, and to leave it on God to make answer for all. Men that live by sense cannot do so; but as the creature fails and changes, so does their hope and trust fail and change; but faith answers all doubts and objections, dissolves all fears, and has

has happineſs bound up in God's glory; *I will both lay me down in peace, and ſleep; for thou, Lord, only makeſt me to dwell in ſafety*, Pſal. iv. 8.

2. The life of faith on the promiſe, or upon Chriſt by the promiſe, is the moſt *free* and *independent* life that the creature can live here in this world, while others live but a bare ſervile life, even while they think that they are free. I name two pieces of freedom that the believer hath, beſides many that might be mentioned.

(1.) It is a free life in oppoſition to the *law*, as a covenant, both in the command and curſe of it. — On the one hand he is free from the *command* of the law, as a covenant of works; he is no more obliged to *do*, that he may *live*: he is *not under the law, but under grace*, Rom. vi. 14. Though he be more than ever under the obligation of the law, as a *rule of obedience*, for the *love of Chriſt conſtrains him thereunto*, and to teſtify his gratitude, to glorify his Lord and his God; yet he is under no obligation to it as a *rule of acceptance*: nay, he does not owe it a farthing, as it is a condition of life: he holds his title to life another way, even by Chriſt's obedience unto death. — Hence alſo, on the other hand, he is free from the *curſe* of the law; *Chriſt hath redeemed us from the curſe of the law, being made a curſe for us*, Gal. iii. 13. Being a child of promiſe, and living upon it, he is no more a child of the *threatening* nor of the *curſe*, but delivered from all *liableneſs* and *obligation* to *vindictive wrath*. This is an article of our faith, however debated by ſome*; an article which, I think, is worth the contending for, and that for ſeveral reaſons.

1. Becauſe it is an article of our Bible, declaring that *there is no condemnation to them that are in Chriſt*, Rom. viii. 1.; and that the law hath nothing to lay to their charge, becauſe they are *free from it*, ver. 2. and are not under it.

2. It is an article of our Confeſſion of Faith, founded on the ſcripture, and to which we are ſolemnly bound by National Covenants, "That "the believer is not under the law as a cove- "nant of works, to be thereby either juſtified "or condemned †:" and if the law cannot condemn them, how can they ever be liable to that vindictive wrath, which is nothing elſe but law-condemnation?

3. To aſſert this obligation of the believer, and liableneſs to hell, is inconſiſtent with the perfection of juſtification; for which our Larger Catechiſm ſays, in point of juſtification, "That the believer is freed from the reveng- "ing wrath of God, and that perfectly in this "life ‡."

4. To bring the believer under this obligation, by his new ſins, is derogatory from the perfection of that *glorious righteouſneſs*; that law-fulfilling, juſtice-ſatisfying, and wrath-appeaſing righteouſneſs of Chriſt, with which the believer is inveſted. This robe of righteouſneſs is put upon him, and it ſhall never be taken off him again: for, *the righteouſneſs of God, which is by the faith of Jeſus Chriſt, is unto all, and upon all that believe*, Rom. iii. 22. It is upon him for ever, without any intermiſſion or interruption, ſo long as his union with Chriſt remains firm; and, behold, he is *bethrothed unto him for ever*. It is true, the believer ſins deſerve hell; and, I think, they deſerve it more than the ſins of others, becauſe they ſin againſt more love and light: and the more their ſins are, the more are they liable to *fatherly wrath and chaſtiſements*, as our Confeſſion declares ‖: but from the *deſert of ſin*, to infer an *obligation to hell*, or *vindictive wrath*, which is all one, were to deſtroy the very *nature of pardon*, which removes the *obligation to wrath*, but cannot remove the *deſert of ſin*. The intrinſical demerit of ſin flows from the very *nature of ſin*, and cannot be ſeparate therefrom; whereas obligation and liableneſs to hell flows from the *threatening of the law*, which, being fully execute upon the Surety, juſtice itſelf would be injuſtice, to demand or bind over the believer to another ſatisfaction, or threaten him with wrath, though the threatening ſhould never be execute. "For, "ſay ſome, it is ſure as to the event, that be- "lievers will never go to hell, though yet their "ſins make them liable to it." This is very weak in my opinion: for, it was ſure as to the event that he ſhould never go to hell, before ever he was a believer; the decree of God, and the death of Chriſt in his behalf, ſecured that matter before ever he was born; but now, upon the imputation of Chriſt's righteouſneſs, he is not only ſecured as to the *event*, but ſecured from the *obligation* to everlaſting death. As, by Chriſt's *active obedience*, the believer is *intitled* to *heaven*; ſo, by his *paſſive obedience*, the believer is *ſecured* from *obligation to hell*: his freedom from obligation to death and hell ſtand as firm upon Chriſt's dying, as his title to life upon his doing. And as the imputation of Chriſt's active righteouſneſs, not only ſecures the event that the believer ſhall go to heaven, but gives him an actual title thereto; ſo the imputation of Chriſt's ſatisfaction, and paſſive obedience, not only ſecures the event that he ſhall not go to hell, but ſecures his freedom from all obligation thereto. And now, how the believer, that remains ſtill intitled to eternal life, ſhould notwithſtanding be liable to eternal death, is what I do not think any ſhall be able to make me underſtand. If a believer's new ſins make him liable to eternal death, then they would alſo deſtroy his title to eternal life; and ſo both parts of his juſtification would be at once overturned.

Whatever contradiction this doctrine meet with, I little regard it, unleſs theſe and the like arguments can be ſolidly anſwered, which I gladly deſpair ever to hear. Believers are not the children of a law-threatening, let be children of wrath, as they were before union to Chriſt: nay, they are the *children of promiſe*, not the children of the *bond-woman*, but of the *free*, as Iſaac; and the more faith, the more of this freedom is diſcerned. And therefore the life of faith, I ſay, is a free life, in oppoſition to the bondage of the law.

(2.) It is a free life in oppoſition to the bondage of *ſin*. And this follows of conſequence from the former freedom: becauſe they are free from the law, therefore they are from the dominion and ſlavery of ſin; *Sin ſhall not have dominion over you; for you are not under the law, but under grace*, Rom. vi. 14. *The law of the Spirit of life in Chriſt Jeſus, hath made me free from the law*

* Our Author here has probably his eye on the conduct of the General Aſſembly, *Annis* 1720 and 1722. in their condemning, *ſimpliciter*, ſix propoſitions, called by them, *Antinomian Paradoxes*. — Whoever inclines, may ſee this affair ſet in its proper light, in the Aſſociate Preſbytery's Act, concerning the *Doctrine of Grace*, p. 53,—67.

† Confeſſion of Faith, chap. xix. §. 6. ‡ Larg. Cat. queſt. 77. ‖ Chap. v. §. 5. and chap. vi. §. 6.

of

of sin and death, Rom. viii. 2.; that is, the *covenant of works*, called the *law of sin and death*, because it binds sin and death upon us, till Christ set us free: so it is explained in that little tract annexed to our Confession and Catechisms, intitled, *The Practical Use of Saving Knowledge*. It is the believer only that is free from the servitude of sin, while the rest of the world are servants and slaves thereunto, however they imagine themselves to be free. The rich man thinks his riches serve him, when, in very deed he serves them, and is a slave to them; the ambitious man thinks his honour serves him, while yet he is a slave to it; the carnal man thinks his lusts and pleasures serve him, while yet he is nothing but a slave to them; *For we ourselves also were sometime foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving diverse lusts and pleasures*, Tit. iii. 3. The wicked are the devil's drudges, their chains rattle at their heels: faith only gives liberty, and makes a man live a free and independent life, insomuch that he depends upon none but God only: *My soul, wait thou only upon God*, says David. The world is mightily mistaken in the choice of their condition; they desire to live an independent life, and to be beholden to none, and servants to none; but they seek this life among the creatures, where it is not to be found: it is only attained by the believer, who lives by faith upon a promising God.

3. The life of faith upon Christ in the promise, is the most *fixed* and *unchangeable* life that a soul can live in this world: it is not liable to such mutations and changes as the life of sense is. He that lives in the changeable creature, as oft as the creature changes and dies, so oft does he, and lives a restless life: as Nabal's heart *died away*; so the life of unbelievers is up to-day, and down to-morrow: but faith lives upon a living God, and it is a living faith; the more of this life, the more of fixedness; *My heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord*, Psalm cxii. 7. And then is the man more in case to serve the Lord without distraction, and to glorify him; *My heart is fixed, I will sing and give praise*, Psal. lvii. 7. and cviii. 1.

4. The life of faith, on the promise, is a most *spacious* life; whereas the opposite is but a narrow and strait life, and hath hardly room to turn: for, we may soon come to an end of all perfection amongst the creatures; as of the beauty of Absolom; the wisdom of Ahitophel; for there is not enough in the creature: *The eye cannot be satisfied with seeing, nor the ear with hearing*, Eccl. i. 8. We cry still, Give more, though we have never so much. Alexander wanted elbow-room, when he wanted another world to conquer. There is room enough for the body on earth, but not for the soul; because the soul is a vast thing, a noble spirit. But now faith hath heaven and earth to walk in at pleasure: it hath its turns with God; yea, God and all his perfections to walk in: *I will walk at liberty, for I seek thy precepts*; or, as it is in the Hebrew, *I will walk at* LARGE, Psal. cxix. 45.

5. The life of faith is a most *social* life. If a wicked man would live this life, he must indeed forsake his bad company, but he will have better: yea, as we say of the society of some people, they are no company; ill company is worse than no company: but, by faith, we converse with God, and Christ, and the Spirit; with a glorious Trinity, three in one, Eph. ii. 18. and iii. 12. Hence may the believer, that lives by faith, say, as Christ said, John viii. 16. *I am not alone*; why? *The Father was with him*: so the believer is not alone, the whole glorious Trinity is with him; and he is never left alone, for God says to him, *I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee*, Heb. xiii. 5. Yea, by faith he enters upon a society with a heavenly company; see Heb. xii. 22, 23. Hence,

6. The life of faith is a most *honourable* life. To live upon the promise is very honourable, and that both *subjectively*, with respect to the believer; and *objectively*, with respect to God.

(1.) View it *subjectively*, with respect to the *believer*. What an honourable life is that of faith? It is to live *above the world*; and this is *the honour of all the saints*: while these that are soaked in sense, do ly among the clay, and eat the dust like the serpent; the believer lives a glorious life, having little or nothing ado with the creatures; *Our life is hid with Christ in God*, Col. iii. 3. They have a heaven before their time, while by faith they will what God wills, and are swallowed up in God. O what an honourable life, to live in God, and upon him!

(2.) View it *objectively*, with respect to *God*, it is honourable; for it brings honour and glory to him; *Abraham staggered not at the promise through unbelief, but was strong in the faith, giving glory to God*, Rom. iv. 20.: he gave honour to God by believing. God is more beholden, so to speak, to the poor believer, that lives by faith, than to the greatest potentate in the world, that lives not this life of faith.

QUEST. *What* GLORY *does faith bring to God?*

ANSW. Even glory to all his attributes and perfections: his *mercy*, in making the promise; his *faithfulness*, in fulfilling the promise; his *power* in doing, notwithstanding all difficulties in the way; his *wisdom*, in ordering the fittest time and ways of accomplishment; his *all-sufficiency*, in filling the promise with all needful succour.

QUEST. *What* WAY *does faith glorify God?*

ANSW. Faith glorifys God, both by dependence and by returns.

1. By its *dependence* upon a promising God, when the believer does stay, and rest, and rely wholly upon the Lord: this the carnal man cannot do. Faith can say, I have a God, whom I dare trust, and that is *able to keep that which I have committed to him*. They that mistrust God, do dishonour him; but they that trust him, highly honour him. The believer trusts him, and intrusts himself to him; according to Psal. xxxvii. 5. *Commit thy way to the Lord, trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass*. The more we trust him with all our concerns, with our justification, sanctification, salvation, and all according to the promise, the more we honour him.

2. By its *returns* it does honour and glorify God; for the language of faith is, *Not unto us, not unto us, O Lord, but to thy name we give glory, for thy mercy and for thy truth's sake*, Psal. cxv. 1. And the believer's design is to study to return praise to God for all his goodness and mercy, saying, *I will extol thee, O Lord, for thou hast lifted me up*, Psal. xxx. 1. O! hast thou extolled and lift up me? And shall I not extol thee, and lift up my heart to praise thy name? What an excellent life is that, which thus extols God, and gives him glory in the highest!— I might here tell you what a *pleasant* life the

life of faith is; O but *wiſdom's ways are ways of pleaſantneſs!* And what a *profitable* life it is; what rich incomes there are this way, while out of *Chriſt's fulneſs the believer receives grace for grace:* what a *happy* and *holy* life it is, and how a living by faith makes way for dying in the faith. But let theſe motives mentioned ſuffice. What I have ſaid, may make you ſee what an unſpeakable loſs you are at, if you be eſtranged from this life of faith on Chriſt by the promiſes.

2*dly*, I would now offer ſome *directions*, ſome means or helps, in order to the *children of promiſe* their living on the *promiſe by faith*. And,

[1.] If you would, as children of promiſe, live by faith on the promiſe; then *be convinced of, and afflicted for your unbelief*. And, are there not too many witneſſes to bear teſtimony that your life is rather a life of unbelief than faith? Conſider, for your conviction herein, theſe and the like witneſſes againſt you.

1. The firſt witneſs is the *power and prevalence of ſin*. Does not this prove that your faith is ſmall, and your unbelief great? For, the more faith, the more victory over ſin.

2. The ſecond witneſs is the *ſtrength of worldly-mindedneſs*. Where this prevails, it argues little faith: *For, this is the victory whereby we overcome the world, even our faith*; and, the more faith, the more is the heart determined to count all but loſs and dung for Chriſt.

3. The third witneſs is your *fears and diſcouragements* in the day of adverſity; *For if thou faint in the day of adverſity thy ſtrength is ſmall*, Prov. xxiv. 10.

4. The fourth witneſs, to prove your having little of the life of faith, is your *eaſy and frequent falling* before every temptation and motion towards ſin. No ſooner are you tempted, but conquered: corruption is ſo ſtrong, that you need not be tempted; you are ready to yield without a temptation, or with a very ſmall one.

5. The fifth witneſs, to prove your unbelief, is *ſoul-barrenneſs and unfruitfulneſs*, and *ſoul-leanneſs*; *I ſaid, My leanneſs, my leanneſs, wo unto me*, Iſa. xxiv. 16.

6. The ſixth witneſs is *ſloth and careleſneſs*, in ſpiritual duties, and in theſe duties that are moſt internal; ſuch as, ſelf-examination, ſelf-reſignation, ſelf-judging, ſelf-loathing; praying in the Spirit; watching over the heart; applying the blood of Chriſt, the death of Chriſt, the love of Chriſt, the word of Chriſt to your own ſoul. Faith acts eſpecially in theſe, and ſuch like duties; and the neglect of theſe argues little faith, and little of the life thereof.

7. The ſeventh witneſs of your unbelief is, the *little growth in grace*, and going *from ſtrength to ſtrength*; little *preſſing towards the mark*. No doubt, true grace may have its ebbing and flowing, its waxing and waning, and may, like the ſun, be under a cloud; but ſtill it runs its race, and now and then breaks out from under a cloud further advanced. However, does not your ſmall advance in the Lord's way, diſcover either the want or the weakneſs of faith? Together with,

8. Your *low eſteem of Chriſt*, and improvement of him as the Lord your righteouſneſs and ſtrength; ſeldom triumphing and ſaying, as it is, Iſa. xlv. 24. *Surely in the Lord have I righteouſneſs and ſtrength.*

If I ſhould bring forth all the witneſſes that would prove againſt you, that your unbelief is great, and your faith ſmall, they would be too many. If you were living by faith, then,

(1.) What means your *ignorance* of, and little *acquaintance* with the promiſes? God hath given you great and rare promiſes, and you are a great ſtranger to them. But, how can there be a fire without fewel? The promiſes are the fewel of the life of faith.

(2.) What means that *ſinking of ſpirit* that ſometimes takes place? Out of which David raiſed himſelf by faith; *Why art thou caſt down, O my ſoul? Why art thou diſquieted within me? Hope in God; for I ſhall yet praiſe him.* Does not your ſinking ſpirit argue that you are living as much upon the creature as upon God? As if one ſhould have one foot upon firm ground, and the other upon quick-ſand, certainly he would ſink into the quick-ſand; ſo a man having one foot upon God, and another upon the creature, he is moſt ſubject to fall to the creature.

(3.) What means the *little comfort* you have in the word, if you be living by faith? *This is my comfort in my affliction*, ſaid David, *thy word hath quickened me*. This argued his life of faith; whereas, where there is little comfort from the word, it argues little faith.

(4.) What means your *heart-diſtractions* about the events and ſucceſs of your affairs? Surely a life of faith would deſtroy that life of carking care: Oh! what if my trade ſhould fail me? what if ſuch a debt be loſt? what if ſuch a debtor ſhould break? what would I do?

(5.) What means your *ſelf-confidence?* Does not that diſcover much unbelief? *The true circumciſion rejoice in Chriſt Jeſus, and have no confidence in the fleſh*. But, how ſoon are you ſwelled with an opinion of yourſelf, when you do or ſay any thing that you judge the world may think commendable? O! *Is not this great Babel that I have built?* May not I be famed for wiſdom and parts? Alas! Faith humbles the man that hath it, and ſays with the church, Iſa. xxvi. 12. *Lord, thou wilt ordain peace for us; for thou haſt wrought all our works in us, and* FOR *us*, as it is in the margin.

(6.) And eſpecially, what means your *eſtrangement* from Chriſt? *To them that believe, he is precious*, 1 Pet. ii. 7. But your little eſteem of him, and great eſtrangement from him, ſhews little of the life of faith. The more faith, the more high thoughts of Chriſt; beholding the glory of God ſhining in his face.

If ever, then, you will live the life of faith, labour to find out the unbelief that lurks in your boſom. Search out your infidelity, and ſay with yourſelf, *Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief*. Go and lament your unbelief before the Lord, in a corner or a cloſet, and ſay, Oh! what an unbelieving creature am I? How ready am I to ſink, with Peter, by reaſon of the weakneſs of faith? How little do I ſee and admire the beauty of Chriſt? How many witneſſes are there againſt me of my unbelief? Shame yourſelf for it before the Lord, and conſider what a poor, mean, baſe life you have for want of faith, and how ſoon you ly in the bottom of the mire and dirt, when you might live above, even with Jeſus Chriſt. Till you be convicted of unbelief, you will juſt remain among the creatures, and think it is good to be there. Again,

[2.] If you would, as children of promiſe, live by faith on the promiſe, then *labour to be well*

well acquaint with the promiſe. It is one thing to talk of the promiſes, and another thing to be acquaint with them. How will you love the promiſes, or live on them, if you do not know them? Therefore ſtudy a due acquaintance with them: and, to help you in this, there are four things relating to them, that would be a profitable ſtudy, namely, 1. The worth of them. 2. The diſtinction of them. 3. Your intereſt in them. 4. The law of the accompliſhment of them.

1. Study the *worth* of the promiſe, as exceeding *great* and *precious*, in all the ſix reſpects that I have formerly taught. See them to be an invaluable treaſure: none but God knows the riches of them, in their Author, ſubject, price, reality, immutability, variety and fulneſs. And ſee that you ſtudy theſe things well, not contenting yourſelf with the hearing of them, but by ſerious meditation of the precioufneſs of the promiſe. O believer, learn to know what you are born to: for, *Didſt thou know the gift of God, and who it is that ſays to you*, live by the promiſe, and what a godly inheritance the promiſes are, ſurely you would be more taken up in aſking of the Lord Jeſus, *And he would give you living water out of theſe wells of ſalvation*, John iv. 10.

2. Study the *diſtinction* of the promiſes, and the variety of them, that you may be able to find out, on all occaſions, promiſes ſuitable to your neceſſity, and ſeaſonable. A believer cannot be in that condition, wherein he may not have recourſe to a promiſe fitted for him to ſerve him in his need, if he be acquaint with them diſtinctly; but for a child of God to live in the midſt of promiſes, and yet not know where they ly, he is like a wounded, ſick, or diſeaſed man, that is in the midſt of an apothecary's ſhop, and knows not where the boxes or glaſſes with the ſalves, or ointments, or cordials are, that ſhould help him; he is as ready to fall upon the thing that would hurt and harm him, as upon the thing that would help and heal him; he is, as it were, in a wilderneſs. Believers ſhould have the promiſes, in a manner, at their finger-ends; yea, treaſured up in their hearts; *Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not ſin againſt thee.*

It were good, I think, and profitable for a believer's advancing in a life of faith, to make a catalogue of the promiſes, as they travel through the ſcriptures morning and evening. Gather together the promiſes that relate to the *ſoftening of the hard heart;* then the promiſes that relate to the *ſubduing of corruption;* next the promiſe that relates to the *healing of backſlidings*, and ſo on; taking a liſt of the promiſes, and ſeeing all the promiſes are *Yea* and *Amen* in Chriſt; and Chriſt is called *the Covenant of the people.* Notice how the promiſes are in him, and belong to him and his ſeveral offices: reduce the promiſe of Chriſt, to the offices of Chriſt; for example, his threefold office, of Prophet, Prieſt, and King.

(1.) There are promiſes of wiſdom and knowledge, counſel, conduct, direction, and reſolution of doubts; theſe belong to Chriſt, as a *Prophet*, and are to be reduced thereunto.

(2.) There are promiſes of pardon, juſtification, peace, joy, acceptance with God; theſe belong to Chriſt, as a *Prieſt*, and are to be reduced to that office.

(3.) There are promiſes of victory over ſin, ſubduing iniquity, ſupplying of wants, protection and defence; theſe belong to Chriſt as a *King*, and are to be reduced to that office.

Could you thus, were it with a pen, or by whatever other means you can, reduce the promiſe to the offices of Chriſt, it would be a ready way to have recourſe to them in time of need; and alſo it would help in the right manner of pleading the promiſes. How deſirable and pleaſant would it be, to go to ſuch an office, and plead ſuch a promiſe there, ſaying, Lord, does not this belong to thee as a Prophet to do ſo and ſo, as a Prieſt to fulfil ſuch and ſuch a word, and as a King to accompliſh ſuch and ſuch a promiſe! Could you bring Chriſt and the promiſe together, and then the promiſe and the office together, it would be a mighty advantage, eſpecially to theſe that know not where to have a promiſe, nor how to plead the promiſe. Therefore ſtudy, in this manner, the diſtinction of the promiſes.

3. Study your *intereſt* in the promiſe. If you ſhould know of never ſuch a fair and rich inheritance, while yet you know of no right and title you have to it, what would it avail you? Endeavour therefore to clear your title. People give no reſt to themſelves, with reſpect to their earthly inheritance, till they have ſettled their title: and ſo ſhould you do in this, and much more; otherwiſe you will diſcover your unbelief, inſtead of faith, if you take more care for your inheritance and title in earthly things, than you do in heavenly. The outward call of the word of grace, and goſpel-diſpenſation, clear your general title and claim to the promiſe, ſo as to encourage and warrant your fleeing to it, believing it, and embracing it by faith. But moreover, believer, you have a ſpecial title to, and intereſt in the promiſe, that believers want: ſeek to have the Spirit of the Lord clearing that up to you, that you may live by faith joyfully; and the joy of the Lord may be your ſtrength. The more you know your intereſt in it, the more freely will you betake yourſelf to it, and make improvement of it, to the glory of God, and your own ſpiritual good.

4. Study the *law of the accompliſhment* of the promiſes, and that here God keeps a reſerve in his own hand, as to the time, as to the mean, as to the method, and as to the meaſure of accompliſhing the ſame; *The viſion is for an appointed time; but at the end it ſhall ſpeak, and not lie; though it tarry, wait for it, becauſe it will ſurely come, it will not tarry*, Hab. ii. 3. *The Lord is a God of judgment, and bleſſed are all they that wait for him*, Iſa. xxx. 18. The Lord will accompliſh his word; but it may be through *fire and water that he will bring you to a wealthy land;* it may be through many difficulties, and in ſuch a manner, as you did not expect: but *fear not, only believe;* and, *If thou wouldſt believe, thou ſhouldſt ſee the glory of God.* However, *He that believes, makes not haſte;* but waits the Lord's time and way of coming.

[3.] In order to your living by faith on the promiſe, as being a child of promiſe, *ſtudy always your caſe and the promiſe together*, and endeavour to adapt the promiſe to the caſe, and the caſe to the promiſe: be it an afflicted caſe, or a deſerted caſe, or a backſliding caſe, or whatever ſort of caſe it is, ſtudy the caſe and promiſe together; for, if you ſtudy your caſe without

out the promise, you are in danger of despairing; and if you study the promise without studying your case, you are in danger of presuming. Therefore, for your *ignorant case*, study the promise that relates to Christ as a *Prophet*, and lay the case and the promise together: for your *guilty case*, study the promise that relates to Christ, as a *Priest*; and lay the case and the promise together: for your *captivated case*, when overpowered by your enemies, study the promise that relates to Christ, as a *King*; and compare the case and the promise together.—Also, amidst the distresses of *saints*, study Christ in the promise as the *King of saints*; amidst distresses of *nations*, study Christ in the promise as the *King of nations*; amidst distresses of the *church*, study Christ in the promise as the *Head of the body the church*. And whatever your need be, believer, know that in the promise there is your provision; you are a child of the family, and God hath said, *He that provides not for his family, is worse than an infidel*. And now, O believer, think on this, will not God provide for his family? will you make him worse than an infidel? Oh! beware of that blasphemy! Confide in him for your provision, and be not anxious, though you have very little in hand, you have a great stock upon bond: the greatest part of your estate now, O believer, lies in bills and bonds; and it is kept for you in your Father's hand. If you study your case and the promise together, it is the way to improve the promise in every case; and this is what you are called to.—Improve the promise as an *antidote*, against all temptations; as a cordial, under all your tribulations; as a spur, to all your duties. If the love of God and Christ in the promise constrain you to duty and service, it is a gospel-walk. O let the love and grace of the promise influence you to love, so as you may be able to say, O it is love brings me to hear; it is love makes me read; and love makes me pray; and love makes me meditate; and love makes me go about my duty, and wait on ordinances!—Again, improve the promise for the encouragement of *others* that are believers. There is a promise, *Where two or three are met together in my name, I will be with them*; therefore, let the saints gather together, keep together, converse together, pray together, and encourage one another in the Lord's way, forasmuch as you see the day approaching.—Yea, improve the promise for an encouragement to your *graceless friends*: tell them, on all fit occasions, O there is a promise that did me good; the Lord thereby opened my heart, and killed my corruption, and quickened my soul. What know you but you may be an instrument of gaining their souls, and engaging them to seek after the Lord?—In a word, improve the promise in *every case*: in *darkness*, improve the promise of *light*; in *weakness*, the promise of *strength*; when under the *power* of *corruption*, the promise of *sanctification*; when under a *sense of guilt*, improve the promise of *pardon*; when in *bondage*, the promise of *liberty*; when in *straits*, the promise of *supply*; when in *danger*, the promise of *protection*; when in *confusion*, the promise of *direction*; when *tempted*, the promise of *support*; when *dejected*, the promise of *comfort*; and when *deserted*, the promise of the Lord's *return*.

[4.] In order to live by faith on the promise, O believer, that art a child of promise; see that you *neglect not the use of the means and ordinances of God's appointment*. Though the promise is free and absolute, yet the use of the means does not detract from the freedom and sovereignty of the grace of God manifested in the promise. You are to wait on him in his own way, otherwise you tempt God, and throw away the promise and all. See the direction given, Luke xxiv. 49. *Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you; but tarry ye at Jerusalem, till ye be endowed with power from on high.* The promise will be accomplished, but tarry ye at Jerusalem, and wait in the use of means: as the mariner does at the harbour, when his ship is upon ground; he does not fall a dragging and pulling at the ship; no: he knows his own power will not do it, but waits at the shore till the water return, and the wind blow, and then he makes his way: he hath no command of the water or wind; nay, the God of providence orders the return of these as he pleases; but he waits at the water-side till providence order matters unto his mind: so, believer, you can do nothing of yourself; you are, perhaps, standing aground, it is vain for you to think of pulling and dragging at your own heart; it is not in the power of your dead heart to live and believe, nor have you the ordering of the floods of the Spirit and the wind of Heaven's influences: but wait you at the shore, in the use of means, till the Lord himself return, and till you be endowed with power from on high; then shall you make way heaven-ward.

QUEST. *What* MEANS *shall I use, in order to the living on the promise by faith?*

ANSW. There are some of these means I have already mentioned; and, besides these, there are both outward and inward means of faith, and the increase thereof. And, besides these outward means of waiting on the word and sacraments, and all the instituted ordinances of God, I shall mention these following means further for the increase of faith in the promise; and they are partly outward, and partly inward means.

1. *Pray for what is promised;* for it is in the way of prayer that the promise is accomplished. Thus you see the psalmist exercised, Psal. cxix. 49. *Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope:* and thus were the disciples exercised, saying, *Lord, increase our faith.*

2. *Look to the promise for all the grace you need;* and expect not qualifications in you, till you get all out of the promise: *Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?* Can dry ground produce water of itself? Nay, the promise must first water the dry ground; *I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground,* Isa. xliv. 3. Our hearts are like dry ground, a dry pump. You know, the pump of a ship will draw up no water, if it be altogether dry, till once some water be poured into it, and then it will bring up water: even so it is here; you may pump at your hearts till you break them, before you can draw up one drop of grace; so dry are they, that they can yield none, unless Christ himself be first poured in by his Spirit, according to the promise. Stay not away from taking hold of the promise, because your hands are defiled, and must first be washed: nay, though your hands be never so polluted, stay not on the pretence of wiping them first, but take Christ as thou art, that he may wash and make thee clean himself; when *he sees thee polluted in thy blood, he says unto thee, Live.*

3. *Look*

3. *Look after Chriſt in the promiſe.* The promiſe is the veſſel, Chriſt the treaſure; the promiſe the cup, Chriſt the liquor: be not ſatisfied with the cup, or with the taking it by the handle; but make application, drink out of that cup.

4. See the reaſon of your believing, as well as the greatneſs of the promiſe to be believed, leſt you think it too good news to be true: therefore, ſtill know the reaſon of your faith; that is, the faithfulneſs and power of God: give him the glory of his *faithfulneſs*, Heb. xi. 11.

5. Conſider the promiſes *already made out*, (1.) To *Chriſt* the Head. His *head is lifted up*, after he hath *drunk in the brook*; according to the promiſe. This is a pledge that all will be made out to his people. (2.) To the *members* of his body. The promiſe fulfilled to one, is an argument for faith to another; as the promiſe made to Joſhua, belongs to all believers, Heb. xiii. 5.

6. Conſider your *experience* compared with the *promiſe*, and ſay, *He hath delivered, and doth deliver*; and in him *we truſt that he will deliver.* The experiences of others may be uſeful alſo for the increaſe of faith in the promiſe, Pſal. xxxiv. 5, 6.

7. Let the children of promiſe be *fruitful in bringing forth children*; I mean, in bringing forth the fruits of holineſs and righteouſneſs, as children of promiſe, in an evangelical manner. And thus grow in grace upon the tree of the promiſe, which hath brought them forth as branches thereof: this is the way to grow in the knowledge and faith of the goſpel-promiſe, John vii. 17. And the more again of the goſpel you know, the more fruitful will you grow.

Perhaps ſome believer may object. *Oh! I think I was better long ago than I am now, notwithſtanding that I dare not deny but the Lord hath given me ſome further knowledge of the goſpel.*

I *anſwer*, That the Chriſtian may grow *evangelically*, when he does not grow *morally*. For clearing of this, know that the believer hath two roots, out of which he brings forth fruit. —There is a *legal root*, or principle, ſo long as there is any remainder of the covenant of works in him, which will be to his dying day; and this preſſes him to duty upon moral and legal grounds, from legal rewards and threatenings, fears and hopes; and this root may bring forth ſome fruits of tenderneſs and obedience: but this bond-woman muſt be caſt out with her children and her fruit, as the apoſtle ſays in the context, Gal. iv. 30.—There is alſo an *evangelical root*, or principle, which is Chriſt in the believer, or the new covenant, when through faith the man brings forth fruit to the new Huſband, Rom. vii. 4. Now, at the firſt converſion, both theſe principles do remarkably concur, a mixture of law and goſpel both, as it were; and hence a great deal of fruit, a great deal of prayers and tears: but though there be much fruit, yet it is of a mixed nature; partly legal, partly evangelical. Now, when the legal principle, or the dominion of the firſt huſband, the law, dies and languiſhes, and little remains but the goſpel-principle, the fruits may indeed appear leſs bulkſom, but they may be better in their kind. Some indeed may leave their firſt love, and turn more legal and carnal; but I ſpeak of what may and ought to take place, and will do ſo in a growing believer: the ſecond covenant gets place, and draws him to duty; and his work may be leſs, but yet better than formerly. As it is with a young apprentice to a carpenter or wright; he hacks and cuts more, and caſts many more chips; but, when he hath learned the trade better, he caſts not ſo many chips, but he makes better work: ſo, believer, perhaps you prayed more formerly, when the law was concurring; and, perhaps, you was always in bondage, except when you was upon your knees, while the law was preſſing you on; you then ſeemed more tender and ſedulous: but now you pray better, and with more faith and love; you cleave cloſer to Chriſt, depend more on him, and draw more out of this fountain. Let your growth be evangelical; and if it be ſo, it will, by no means, encourage ſloth, but will advance a holy goſpel-liberty, and diligent activity in the ways of God.

8. Keep alive a *pregnant ſenſe of your want*; for the promiſes are the ſupply of want; and wants are for the honour of the promiſes. Wants and promiſes are correlatives. A goſpel-ſenſe of want, and of nothingneſs and unworthineſs, encourages faith in the promiſe; as it was with the apoſtle, Rom. vii. 24, 25.—There is a *legal ſenſe* of want, that diſcourages believing, when the ſenſe of corruption weakens faith, and diſcourages faith; when a man would have ſomething in him to boaſt of, or glory in, and whereby he may bribe the free grace of God. Some believers are ſo legal, they would indeed ſwim in the water of the promiſe, but they would have ſome bladders of their own to be under their arm-pits to bear them up, and cannot truſt to the free grace of God in the promiſe to hold up their head. A child of promiſe, that is born of the promiſe, is born up by the promiſe too; but you would have ſomething in yourſelf. Nay, you muſt be content to ſay, It is not in me, it is not in me, but *in the Lord have I righteouſneſs and ſtrength.*—But there is a *goſpel-ſenſe* of want, that encourages faith, and furthers it. The apoſtle laments that ſin dwells in him, and cries out, *O wretched man that I am! who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death!* yet it did not damp his faith; he cries out alſo, *I thank God through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.* The pſalmiſt alſo ſays, *Iniquities prevail againſt me:* but it did not damp his faith; *as for our iniquities thou wilt purge them away.* Again, ſays the pſalmiſt, *I am poor and needy*; yea, but he inſtantly adds, *the Lord thinks upon me.* The right ſenſe of ſin and want does not damp believing, but forces the man to Chriſt and the promiſe; it drives him out of himſelf, and his own righteouſneſs and ſtrength. Happy the man that ſees nothing but Chriſt left him, nothing but a promiſe, and that hath nothing elſe to rely on, Iſa. xl. 29, 30, 31. *He gives power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaſeth ſtrength*; them that have nothing elſe to confide in; but ſee what follows, *Even the youths ſhall faint and be weary, and the young men ſhall utterly fail.* Theſe that have ſtrength of their own, and ſtand by their own ſtrength, they will fail; *but they that wait upon the Lord, ſhall renew their ſtrength:* they that have no dependence but on the Lord, they ſhall CHANGE their ſtrength; for ſo is the Hebrew word; and it is borrowed from them that have change of garments for every day: ſome have a garment for the houſe, and a garment for the field; a garment for work, and a garment for travel; a garment for the Sabbath-day, and a garment for the week-day; a garment for their ſeveral pieces of buſineſs, walking

ing or working: so, *they that wait on the Lord, shall renew their strength; they shall* CHANGE *their strength* according as they need it. If they need a little strength, for some lesser work, they shall have it; if they need greater strength, for greater work, they shall have it: they shall renew and change their strength; they shall have flying strength, running strength, walking strength, according as they need: for so it follows, *They shall mount up on wings as eagles, they shall run and not weary, and walk and not faint.*

Thirdly, The *third* branch of the exhortation, that I promised, was to *all* in general, namely, that they would *improve the promises*, whereof believers are the children, in order to their first or further believing and laying hold upon Christ, as held forth to them in the gospel-promise; and that they would apply the promise, so as to apply Christ therein.

If it be asked, *What connexion is there betwixt applying the promise, and applying Christ?* or, *how is Christ in the promise, and the promise in Christ, so as I may know, that in dealing with the promise, I deal with Christ; and in applying the promise, I apply Christ?*

ANSW. Though Christ be in heaven, and we upon the earth; yet the promise is the means of communication betwixt Christ and us, as the apostle explains it, Rom. x. 6, 7, 8. *Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven, to bring Christ down? or descend into the depths, to bring up Christ? but the word is nigh, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart; that is the word of faith which we preach.* Christ is brought near to us by the promise, as a fountain of water is brought near to a city by pipes and conduits: perhaps the fountain is several miles distant from the city, yet the pipes convey the water of it, so near, that you may put your mouth to the pipe and drink, or your empty pitcher to it and fill it; and thus you apply, improve, and make use of the water of the fountain, though at a great distance, by the means of the pipe that is at hand: so it is here; Christ is the fountain, *in whom is all the fulness of the Godhead;* the promise is the pipe: though the fountain-head be in heaven, yet the pipe is at your hand, at your mouth; yea, *in your mouth, and in your heart*, says the apostle. Is not that word of his, namely, the gospel, and the promise of it, called *the word of faith?* because it is both the object of faith, the word which we are to believe; and the means of faith, by which we believe; *for faith comes by the hearing of it.* Is not the word of promise in your mouth, when we are speaking it, and you reading it? and in your heart, when either you are, or should be thinking of it? What remains but that we put the mouth of faith to the pipe, and then we take in the water of life? O for the Spirit of faith, in opposition to that legal spirit, which the apostle is here discovering! ver. 3. He is telling that the law requires doing for life, ver. 5.; and that the gospel requires no doing at all, but exhibites Christ doing in our room, which we are to believe he hath done. You need not be anxious, might the apostle say, about *ascending to heaven to bring Christ down* to do all for us, he hath descended for that end already; nor about *descending to the grave to bring Christ up*, why, he hath already risen and ascended, as a token that he hath finished the work: so that there is no more doing for life necessary; Christ hath done all: and this word, concerning Christ the great doer in our room, is nigh; the promise is nigh. He left this pipe when he ascended to heaven, and appointed ministers to turn the cock of the pipe, and let out the water, saying, *Preach the gospel to every creature;* and he promised that his Spirit should run through that pipe till he come back again, saying, *Lo, I am with you always, to the end of the world.* How? the pipe is as long as to reach from heaven to earth, from Christ's heart to your heart, as well as from his mouth to your mouth, Isa. lix. 21. Now, Christ is in the promise, while this pipe conveys Christ and his Spirit to us; and the promise in Christ, while the pipe is fixt into his heart, *all the promises* being *in him Yea and Amen:* YEA, in point of *affirmation*, he having affirmed them in his veracity; and AMEN, in point of *confirmation*, he having confirmed them by his death. Even as the pipes, or conduits, may be said to be in the water, and the water is in the pipe; so Christ is in the promise, and the promise is in Christ; and to take the promise in Christ, or Christ in the promise, comes much to the same thing. Only, now Christ in the promise is come down, and he is as nigh to you, as your mouth and your heart is nigh to you. The gospel is the great pipe, and all the promises are like so many branches and lesser pipes for conducting the water to this, or that part of the city, and even to private houses, for the benefit of particular persons, according as the contrivance is ordered: Behold, here is a contrivance of infinite wisdom, from the conduit of the covenant that stands fast in Christ Jesus: there are many pipes full of water, for refreshing; full of wine, for chearing; full of milk for nourishing souls, Isa. lv. 1. And we are come to set the pipe to your mouth; *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come to the waters; he that hath no money, come; buy wine and milk without money, and without price.*

Now, here is a pipe for every mouth, by which you may draw in Christ to your heart, though he be in heaven, and you on earth.—Is there any *blind* and *bewildered* soul here, that needs a drink of *instructing* grace out of Christ's fulness? Behold, there is a pipe for your mouth; *I will lead the blind in a way they know not, and in paths which they have not trode.*—Is there any *guilty* soul here, that needs a drink of *pardoning* grace? there is a pipe for your mouth, in that promise; *I, even I am he that blotteth out thy transgressions, for my name's sake, and will remember thy sins no more.*—Is there any *filthy* and *unclean* soul here, that needs a drink of *sanctifying* and *purifying* grace? why, there is a pipe for your mouth; *I will sprinkle clean water on you;—and from all your filthiness and idols will I cleanse you.*—Is there any *bound, fettered* soul here, that cannot believe, cannot repent, cannot pray, and whom Satan hath bound for many years, and needs a drink thus to your soul of *bond-loosing, Satan-conquering* grace? why, there is a pipe for your mouth; *The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me*, says Christ, *to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.*—Is there any *backsliding* souls here, that cannot keep a word that they say to God, whose heart hath beguiled them a hundred times, a thousand times, and needs a drink of *healing* grace, healing water, to cure the disease of backsliding, so far, as that you shall never fall back into perdition? here is a pipe for your mouth; *Return, backsliding children, I will heal your backslidings, I will love you freely.*—Is there any *dead* soul here, that needs a drink

drink of *quickening* grace? there is a pipe for your mouth; *I am the resurrection and the life: the hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of man, and they that hear shall live.*—Is there any *deserted* soul here, that needs a drink of *never-leaving* nor *forsaking* grace; there is a pipe for your mouth; *I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*—Is there any *dispirited, weak, fainting* soul here, that needs a drink of *strengthening* grace? there is a pipe for your mouth; *My grace shall be sufficient for thee; my strength shall be made perfect in thy weakness: He gives power to the faint, and increaseth strength to them that have no might.*—Is there any *dejected* soul here, that needs a drink of *comforting* grace? there is a pipe for your mouth; *I will send the Comforter, and he shall testify of me, who am the Consolation of Israel.*—Is there any *overmastered* soul here, that hath been long led captive by the power of some strong corruption, and needs a drink of *sin-conquering* grace? here is a pipe for your mouth; *He will subdue our iniquity, and cast all our sins into the depths of the sea.*—Is there any *tempted* soul here, that needs a drink of *devil-vanquishing* grace? here is a pipe for your mouth; *The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent; The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.*—Is there any *backward* soul here, that needs a drink of *drawing* grace? here is a pipe for your mouth; *When I am lifted up, I will draw all men after me.*—Is there any *death-frighted* soul here, that is afraid for the king of terrors, and needs a drink of *death-conquering* grace? here is a pipe for your mouth; *Death shall be swallowed up in victory; O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction.*—Is there any *secure, stupid* soul here, whose conscience is seared as with a hot iron, and that needs a drink of *awakening* and *convincing* grace? here is a pipe to your mouth; *I will send the Spirit, and he shall convince the world of sin.*—Is there any *awakened* conscience here, who, under a sense of sin, are under fears of damnation, and need a drink of *hell-conquering* grace? here is a pipe for your mouth; *The blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin: Deliver his soul from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom.*—Yea, is there any *heaven-daring, atheistical, prayerless, graceless, ungodly* wretch here, that hath been living without God, and without thoughts of eternity to this day; and that, whether they see their need or not, yet need to be plucked as brands out of the burning, and need a drink of *saving* and *converting* grace? behold there is a pipe for your mouth; *There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.*

Old sinner, young sinner, man, wife, and child, that is capable to understand what I am saying; whatever grace you stand in need of, the pipe of the promise for conveying that grace from Christ to you, is at your very mouth; yea, saith the apostle, the promise is near, *the word is near, in thy mouth, and in thy heart.* Is not the Lord beating at every door of your hearts by these words of grace? And, oh! wo and misery! will you let all this grace fall by you? Will you spit it out of your mouth, and let the devil run away with it out of your heart, saying, O such a word is not to you, it is not to the like of you? Why, the devil is a liar; and, because he is so, he is perhaps tempting you, through unbelief, to make God a liar. God says, *To you is the word of salvation sent; the promise is to you and to your children, and to all that are afar off*; it is to you to be received and believed by you: and, will you say it is not to you? What! will you put away the grace of God from you? Wherefore came I to this place, but to tell you that this grace is tendered to you, to every one of you? And I tell you it, in his name, who hath given me a charge to *go and preach the gospel to every creature*; Christ is seeking entrance into your hearts by the means of this word; and so near is he come to you by this long pipe of the promise, that you cannot miss Christ and salvation with him this day, without shutting him out at the door of your heart and mouth both. Oh! will you open your mouth wide, and he will fill it; and cry to him, saying, Lord, come and open my heart; open the everlasting doors, and come in, O King of glory! Welcome him, and welcome his word of grace, and take him at his word, saying, Lord, *be it to me according to thy word*, according to thy promise of pardoning and purifying grace, saving and sanctifying grace.

O sinner, sinner! the promise of pardon concerns you, guilty you; the promise of purifying concerns you, filthy you: you shall not have it to say that you wanted grace, and knew not where to get it; for the God of all grace is come near to you, with a profer and promise of all grace in Christ. If death, judgment, and eternity were as near to your view, as this promise of grace is come this day, you would give all the world for a promise: and will you now thrust it out of your heart, and eject it out of your mouth? What can you expect in this case, but that God will *spue you out of his mouth*, and thrust you out of his presence, and cast you in among devils and damned spirits to all eternity! What! will you prefer a black devil, a base world, a brutish lust, before Christ, and all his promises of grace and glory! O God forbid. Fy for shame! will you reject the word of grace, the promise of mercy that God is putting into your mouth by this glorious gospel? O better chuse to die upon the spot, than lose such a sweet morsel, a taste of grace, and a foretaste of glory. However it be, though you would reject this grace, as I fear the most part will do, yet I must tell you, that the *kingdom of God is come unto you*, and you shall not have it to say, that you came to Glendovan such a day, and got nothing; for I take you all witnesses, and heaven and earth to witness, that you have got an offer of grace, of Christ, and a promise that is worth ten thousand worlds.

May a promising God set it home upon you, that, being begotten to a lively hope, by the virtue of the promise, it may be said of you, that, *Now, brethren, as Isaac was, you are the children of promise.*

SERMON

SERMON XXXIX,-XLII.

The SAVING SIGHT; or, a View of GOD in CHRIST. *

JOHN xiv. 6. —*He that hath ſeen me, hath ſeen the Father.*—

MY dear friends, the great, glorious, and inviſible God hath been, this day, condeſcending to make himſelf viſible to us, notwithſtanding of the great diſtance betwixt him and us. There is a three-fold diſtance that mars our ſight; there is a *natural* diſtance, that hinders the ſight of the natural underſtanding; there is a *local* diſtance, that mars bodily ſight; and there is a *moral* diſtance, that impedes ſpiritual ſight: all theſe, in certain reſpects, take place here.—In reſpect of the infinite *being* of God, there is an infinite *natural* diſtance betwixt him and us, who are but finite creatures, inſomuch that we cannot ſee him.—In reſpect of the *manhood* of Chriſt, now aſcended into heaven, there is a vaſt *local* diſtance betwixt him and us, that put him out of our view, who are on the earth.—In reſpect of the infinite *holineſs* of God, there is an infinite *moral* diſtance betwixt him and us, that we cannot perceive him through the dark clouds of ſin and corruption that over-caſt our ſouls. But ſuch is the condeſcending mercy of our God, that he is pleaſed to come near to us in ſuch ways as tend to remove theſe impediments out of the way of our ſeeing of him; and therefore, that the infinite *natural* diſtance betwixt him and us may not impede our ſeeing of him, he is pleaſed to come near to us in a *natural* way; I mean, by aſſuming our nature, that we may ſee him there; and that the vaſt *local* diſtance betwixt God, Chriſt, and us, may not interrupt our ſeeing of him, he is pleaſed to come near in a *ſacramental* way, that we may ſee him myſtically and ſacramentally there; and that the *moral* diſtance betwixt him and us may not impede our ſeeing of him, he comes near in a *ſpiritual* way, by his Spirit and grace, enlightening the eyes of ſinners, and ſcattering the clouds of ſin and corruption.

My friends, it is our infinite mercy, that we have other ways of ſeeing God than the blinded nations that want the goſpel. The way in which they may ſee God, ſo as to leave them inexcuſable, is common to them and us both. It is now ſome more than five thouſand years ſince the great and inviſible God erected the pillars of heaven, and earth, that *the inviſible things of him, from the creation of the world, might be clearly ſeen and underſtood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead*, Rom. i. 20.; but becauſe no ſinner can, in this glaſs, get a ſaving ſight of God, he hath been pleaſed to ſet other glaſſes before our eyes. It is now more than ſeventeen hundred years ſince the ſame inviſible God, in the perſon of the eternal Word, came down in the likeneſs of fleſh and blood, that his glory might be made viſible to us through the glaſs and vail of our nature; *The Word was made fleſh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory*, John i. 14. But after his work on earth was finiſhed, by his doing, dying, and riſing again, he aſcended into heaven, far out of our view; therefore, the ſame inviſible and eternal God, in ſuch a wonderful and ſtupendous manner, does farther obſcure his glory, to make it evident to our dull apprehenſion, and viſible even to our earthly ſenſes, that he hath, this day, come down in the likeneſs of bread and wine, that he might accommodate himſelf both to our nature and neceſſities; and that being thus, though ſpiritually, yet ſacramentally and viſibly preſent, we might ſee and apprehend his inviſible glory, love, grace, and mercy, under theſe viſible elements, inſomuch, that henceforth we need not be at a loſs to reſolve that ſeeming contradiction and wonderful myſtery, *namely*, that the infinite mercy of God in Chriſt is ſo deep, that no thought can fathom it, and yet ſo obvious, that every eye may ſee it, nor at a loſs to read Moſes's riddle, Heb. xi. 27. for now it is eaſy, eſpecially to the believer, whoſe *faith is the evidence of things not ſeen*, to explain how one may *ſee him that is inviſible*.

This goſpel ſacrament, we have been celebrating, is a glaſs, wherein we ſee Chriſt; Chriſt is a glaſs, wherein we ſee God: if our eyes, therefore, have been opened, by the Spirit of God, we have ſeen a great ſight this day. May I aſk you, then, where you have been, and what you have ſeen about this ſolemnity? Have you been at Jeruſalem, and ſeen the King's face? If you have ſeen the ſacramental elements, I aſk, what have you ſeen there? If you ſaw no more but bread and wine, ſurely you have been blind; for, Chriſt was there evidently ſet forth, crucified before you. But, if you have ſeen Chriſt there, then I aſk again, What have you ſeen? It may be you do not know what you have ſeen; for, as you, that have got no ſight of Chriſt, are at a greater loſs than you are capable to know and underſtand; becauſe, having miſſed a ſight of Chriſt, you have miſſed a ſight of God, and ſeen nothing worth the ſeeing: ſo you that have got a ſaving ſight of Chriſt, you have got a greater ſight than readily you are aware of. Perhaps you have ſeen Chriſt, and yet, with Philip here in the text, do not know that you have ſeen the Father. Perhaps God hath been in this place, and you knew it not: but if you have got a ſight of Chriſt, and yet do not know how much, and how far you have ſeen, or whether it be the true Chriſt you have ſeen, then be informed of this matter out of his own bleſſ-

* This piece appears to be the ſubſtance of four ſermons. The firſt was preached on the Sabbath evening, immediately after the celebration of the Lord's Supper, at Dunfermline, May 21ſt, 1727.; and the reſt, at the ſame place, after the ſolemnity. It hath undergone three impreſſions.

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ed lips, *He that hath ſeen me, hath ſeen the Father.* O! what an happy ſolemnity might we ſay this hath been, if it could be ſaid of a multitude here, as it was ſaid of the nobles of Iſrael, Exod. xxiv. 11. *They ſaw God, and did eat and drink*; or, that *their eyes have ſeen the King, the Lord of hoſts!* I doubt not but there are many here that came to Dunfermline, with a deſign that they might *ſee the King in his beauty*, at this ſacramental occaſion, and to ſee the glory of God. Well, the brighteſt glaſs that ever God's glory was ſeen in, hath been, and is yet ſet before you. The great ſacramental ſight is, in a ſpiritual manner, as well as with bodily eyes, to ſee the ſacramental elements, ſo as in the elements to ſee Chriſt, and in Chriſt to ſee the Father: and though the ſacramental table be drawn, yet, while Chriſt is preſented to you in this goſpel, the glaſs is not yet withdrawn. You have a new occaſion to ſee him again; and not only to ſee him, but alſo to ſee whether you have ſeen him formerly, yea, or not; and to ſee what you have ſeen in him; for, *he that hath ſeen me, hath ſeen the Father.*

Having, before this ſolemnity, ſpoken to the preceding part of the verſe, and ſo to the connexion of this text with the context, I have the leſs ado this way; only, Chriſt having, ver. 6, 7. diſcovered himſelf as the only way to the Father, and as the Father's great repreſentative, inſomuch, that as there is *no coming to the Father, but by him*, nor *ſeeing of the Father, but in him*; ſo there is none that come to him, can miſs the Father, or fail of winning to the Father by him; and none that look to him, can loſe a ſight of the Father in him: notwithſtanding this ſweet doctrine, Philip having ſaid, *Shew us the Father*, ver. 8. the Lord Jeſus here ſpeaks to him both by way of reproof and inſtruction; he meekly reproves him, ſaying, *Have I been ſo long with thee, and yet haſt thou not known me, Philip?* that you ſhould talk ſo ignorantly, after I have taught you ſo plainly, that, in knowing me, you know the Father: but our Lord, who is ſuch a meek reprover, is alſo an indefatigable inſtructer; and therefore again he kindly inſtructs him in the words of the text, ſaying, *He that hath ſeen me, hath ſeen the Father.* As it is an ignorant, ſo it is a needleſs petition for you, Philip, to aſk of me, ſaying, *Shew us the Father*, ſince I have told you, that there is no way of knowing the Father ſavingly, but by knowing me; and if you knew me more, you would know the Father more: let me, therefore, again tell you, Philip, and, in you, all my diſciples to the end of the world, *He that hath ſeen me, hath ſeen the Father.*

In which words you have the believer's *fiducial viſion*, which is much the ſame *ſpecifically* with the *beatifical* viſion that he will have in heaven for ever, notwithſtanding of whatever *gradual* difference there will be betwixt them. Particularly,

1. You have the *act* of this viſion, it is called a SEEING; and being expreſſed by ſight, it imports a clear and diſtinct knowledge.

2. You have the *immediate object* of this viſion, namely, CHRIST, who is here ſpeaking, *He that hath ſeen me*; not only ME, as God co-eſſential with the Father; ME, as the Son of God, the ſecond perſon of the glorious Trinity; but alſo ME, as God-man, Mediator betwixt God and man; ME, as *the brightneſs of the Father's glory, and the expreſs image of his perſon.*

3. You have the *ultimate object* of this viſion, namely, the FATHER; he *hath ſeen the Father*; that is, either the Father eſſentially conſidered, as God; one God with the Son and the Holy Ghoſt; or perſonally conſidered, as the firſt perſon of the glorious Trinity, and as *the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* And here is the fartheſt ſight of faith's proſpect in time the far end of faith's view, even to ſee the Father in Chriſt.

4. You have here the *connexion* betwixt the act of ſeeing the *immediate object*, with the act of ſeeing the *ultimate object*, flowing from the eſſential *oneneſs* betwixt the Father and the Son, notwithſtanding of their perſonal diſtinction: *He that hath ſeen me, hath ſeen the Father.* Of this myſterious *oneneſs*, as the foundation of this connexion betwixt ſeeing him, and ſeeing the Father, the Lord Jeſus inſiſts, ver. 10. ſaying, *I am in the Father, and the Father in me.* And again, ver. 11. *I am in the Father, and the Father in me.* Hence the doctrine I incline to treat of, for explaining this purpoſe more fully, is this:

DOCT. *That ſuch is the* oneneſs *betwixt Chriſt and the Father, that he that hath ſeen Chriſt, hath ſeen the Father.*

Though believers, who have ſeen, and *ſee but through a glaſs darkly*, may not diſtinctly know that they have ſeen the Father, when they have ſeen Chriſt, as the context clears; yet ſuch is the myſterious *unity* and *oneneſs* betwixt glorious Chriſt, and his glorious Father, that a ſaving ſight of Chriſt does neceſſarily carry in it a ſaving ſight of the Father, as Chriſt declares, *He that hath ſeen me, hath ſeen the Father.*

And now, my friends, ſo great is the ſubject I am propoſing to ſpeak of, that frequently I have had thoughts of giving it over, as too ſublime and glorious for me to handle. It is ſuch, that if we could ſpeak aright about it, not only *elect ſinners*, but *elect angels, who pry into the goſpel myſtery*, might be edified by it. If we ſhould eſſay to ſpeak of the heaven of heavens, and all the glory of it, it would not be ſuch a great ſubject as to ſpeak of *ſeeing Chriſt*, and of *ſeeing the Father in him.* They are blind that do not ſee the need we have of the aſſiſtance of the eternal Spirit, who *proceeds from the Father and the Son*, when we are thus eſſaying to ſpeak of ſeeing the Father in the Son. Therefore, O endeavour, with your hearts, to lift up a prayer, for the conduct and help of the Spirit of God and of glory, that in ſpeaking and hearing of ſuch a ſubject, we may ſee the glory of Chriſt, and the glory of the Father in him.

The method I propoſe to follow in clearing and illuſtrating this doctrine, as the Lord ſhall be pleaſed to aſſiſt, is this,

I. To ſpeak of that ONENESS that is betwixt the Father and the Son.
II. To offer ſome *thoughts*, or *remarks*, concerning a *ſaving ſight* of Chriſt.
III. To ſhew in what *reſpects* it is, that they who *ſee* CHRIST, *ſee the* FATHER.
IV. *How*, and in what *manner* the Father is ſeen in Chriſt.
V. Offer ſome *grounds* of the doctrine, ſhewing whence it is, that they that ſee Chriſt, do ſee the Father.
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VI. Draw some *inferences* from the whole, for application thereof.

I. The *first* thing proposed is, to speak of the ONENESS that is betwixt the Father and the Son. This *oneness* is declared by our Lord Jesus; and, indeed, it is a mystery of pure revelation, and what we could not otherwise know; and it is what we cannot fully comprehend: yet it is the object of our faith, ver. 10, 11. *Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?* It is what our Lord Jesus tells his disciples they shall more fully know afterwards, ver. 20. *At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father; and you in me, and I in you.* Our Lord Jesus expressly asserts this *oneness*, John x. 30. *I and my Father are one.* He makes it the ground of all Christian unity, John xvii. 21. *That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be* ONE *in us.* Hence also our Lord Jesus, much in the same manner as in the words of the text, John xii. 44, 45. *He that believeth on me, believeth on him that sent me. He that seeth me, seeth him that sent me.* Such then is the *oneness* betwixt the Father and the Son, that he who *hath seen Christ, hath seen the Father.* But to explain this oneness a little more particularly, we must consider,

1*st*, *Negatively*, that we are not to understand this *oneness* in respect of *personality*; the Father and the Son are not one person, but two persons: the Father is one person, and the Son is another person of the adorable Trinity. They are distinct in respect of personal properties, *namely*, it is proper to the Father to *beget* the Son; and to the Son to be *begotten* of the Father; even as it is to the Holy Ghost to *proceed* from the Father and the Son, from all eternity. I hope I need not stand to enlage upon this to you, that make use of our Catechisms, with the scripture proofs; only carry still along with you this personal distinction, the Father is not the Son, nor the Son the Father; the Father was not incarnate, nor did humble himself and die for sinners as Christ did; the Father *sent the Son.*—Neither are you to understand this *oneness* betwixt Christ and the Father in respect of Christ's *humanity*; the two natures of Christ must not be confounded: the humanity of Christ is not one with God; the humanity is unite to Christ the Son, not to the Father: it is Christ who is Mediator, God-man, in one person. Hence, when Christ says, John xiv. 28. *My Father is greater than I*, it must be understood of Christ's humanity, and of Christ in the *form of a servant*; who yet, in regard of his divine nature, is *in the form of God, and thinks it no robbery to be equal with God*, Phil. ii. 6, 7. Therefore,

2*dly*, And *positively*, we are to view this *oneness* betwixt the Father and the Son in these following respects.

1. There is an *oneness* in point of *nature* and *essence* betwixt them; Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are but one God; *Hear, O Israel, the Lord, our God is* ONE JEHOVAH, Duet. vi. 4. *There are three that bear witness in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, and these three are* ONE, 1 John v. 7. Hence it is said, *In our Lord dwells all the fulness of the God-head bodily*, Col. ii. 9. The Father and the Son, then, are *one* in essence and being with the Holy Ghost: "These three are "one God, the same in substance, equal in "power and glory."

2. There is an *oneness* betwixt the Father and the Son in point of *essential properties* and *attributes*; Christ is, together with the Father and Holy Ghost, one Spirit, "infinite, eter-"nal, unchangeable, in his being, wisdom, "power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth." —Is the Father *omnipotent?* so is the Son; He is *the mighty God*, Isa. ix 6.—Is the Father *omnipresent?* so is the Son; *Lo, I am with you always to the end of the world*, Matth. xxviii. 20.; and, *Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.*—Is the Father *omniscient?* so is the Son; *Thou that knowest all things, knows that I love thee*, John xxi. 17. Christ said to Nathaniel, *When thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee.* Here was a token that none in the world knew but Nathaniel himself, upon which he was convinced of the Deity of Christ, which made him say, *Truly thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel.*—Is the Father *eternal?* so is Christ; *Before Abraham was I am.*—Is the Father *immortal?* so is Christ; *The King eternal and immortal.*—Is the Father *immutable?* so is Christ; *The same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, and without all variableness or shadow of turning.*

3. There is an *oneness* betwixt them in point of *work*; the works that are proper only to God are ascribed to Christ. I cannot stand upon all the scriptures that are cited by orthodox divines on these subjects. In short, *My Father worketh hitherto, and I work*, says Christ.—The work of *creation* is ascribed to him; *All things were made by him*, John i. 3. *Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thine hands*, Heb. i. 10.—The work of *preservation* also, and the sustentation of the world; *Upholding all things by the word of his power*, Heb. i. 3.—The work of *redemption*; Acts xx. 28. *Feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.*—The *donation of the Spirit*, is his work; *When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me*, John xv. 26. And, *I will send him unto you.*—The *raising of the dead out of their graves*, is his work, and that both in a spiritual and corporal sense; *The hour comes, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live*, John v. 25.—The *government of the world* now, and the *judging of the world* at the last day, is his work; *The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son*, John v. 22.; and he will *judge the world in righteousness.*—The *institution of ordinances and offices in the church*, is his work; Mat. xxviii. 19. *Go ye and teach all nations.* See Eph. iv. 11.

4. There is an *oneness* betwixt the Father and the Son in point of *worship* and *honour*; and therefore all men are called to *honour the Son even as they honour the Father*; John v. 23. *He that honours not the Son, honours not the Father which sent him.* All manner of worship due to the Father is due to the Son; therefore says Christ, John xiv. 1. *Ye believe in God, believe also in me.* And Psal. ii. 12. *Kiss the Son lest he be angry.* See Rev. v. 12, 13. and vii. 10, 11.

5. There is an *oneness* betwixt them in point of *will*. Though, as man, he hath a *will* distinct from his *will* as God, and so distinct from the Father's will, yet subject to the divine will in every thing; *Not my will, but thine be done.* But as God, his will is one and the same with the Father's will, and therefore what the Father wills Christ wills; John iv. 34. *My meat is to do the will of him that sent me:* and again, *I de-*

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light to do thy will, O my God; lo, I come to do thy will.

6. There is an *oneneſs* of *happineſs* and *felicity* betwixt them. Rom. ix. 5. ſpeaking of the Jews, *Of whom according to the fleſh Chriſt came, who is over all, God bleſſed for ever.* Chriſt was from all eternity, and is the ever bleſſed God. There was a time, indeed, when the Son was humbled and made a *curſe for us;* but his eſſential glory and happineſs was never diminiſhed, however it was eclipſed: as God, he was as happy on the croſs, and in the grave, as ever he was.

7. There is an *oneneſs* betwixt them in point of *intereſt;* John xvii. 10. *All thine are mine, and mine are thine, and I am glorified in them.* This ſays, that they are both one in eſſence, and one in intereſt; there is no ſeparate or divided intereſt betwixt them. O happy ſouls that are intereſted in Chriſt! for the Father's intereſt and his are one and the ſame.

8. There is an *oneneſs* of *affection* betwixt them: the objects of the Father's love, are the objects of Chriſt's love; and the objects of Chriſt's love, are the objects of the Father's love; 2 Theſſ. ii. 16. *Our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and God even our Father, which hath loved us.* John xvi. 21. *He that loves me ſhall be loved of my Father; and I will love him.* Hence Chriſt ſays to his beloved friends, John xvi. 27. *The Father himſelf loves you.* Was it only Chriſt's love that brought him to die and ſuffer for ſinners? nay, it was the Father's love alſo that ſent him on that errand. See 1 John iv. 9, 10.

9. There is an *oneneſs* of *dignity* and *authority* betwixt them. Chriſt is the Angel of the covenant, of whom the Father ſays, Exod. xxiii. 21. *Beware of him, and obey his voice,—for my name is in him; i. e.* my authority is in him. His eſſential dignity and authority is the ſame with the Father's; he *thinks it no robbery to be equal with God:* he does not rob the Father of his authority when he makes himſelf equal with him; for, as God, the dignity and authority of both is one and the ſame; and as Mediator, he hath a donative right to all the power and ſovereignty; *All power in heaven and in earth is given unto me,* Matth. xxviii. 18.

10. There is an *oneneſs* betwixt them in point of *ſupreme Deity, ſelf-exiſtence, ſelf-ſufficiency,* and *independency:* Hence the ſupreme throne is called *the throne of God, and of the Lamb,* Rev. xxii. 1. Hence ſays the Father to him, Pſal. xlv. 6. compared with Heb. i. 8. *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.* And hence ſays he of himſelf, Iſa. xlv. 21, 22. *There is no God elſe beſides me, a juſt God and a Saviour; and there is none beſide me. Look to me, and be ſaved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none elſe.* Hence his name is JEHOVAH-TSIDKENU, Jer. xxiii. 6. *The Lord our righteouſneſs.* Hence alſo called JEHOVAH, Mal. iii. 1. and elſewhere. Hence Paul ſays, *He is God over all,* in the fore-cited Rom. ix. 5. And the apoſtle John, 1 John v. 20. *This is the true God, and eternal Life.* Hence alſo, theſe that get a ſaving manifeſtation of him, cry out with Thomas, *My Lord and my God,* John xx. 28. as ſeeing that *in him dwells all the fulneſs of the Godhead bodily:* though, indeed, in point of perſonality, the Father is the firſt perſon; yet in point of eſſence, or eſſentially conſidered, Chriſt is the ſame, ſupreme, ſelf-exiſtent, ſelf-ſufficient, independent, inviſible, and eternal God, with the Father and the Holy Ghoſt. But I muſt not enlarge upon this point, that I may overtake the reſt. Only thus much ſhall ſuffice for a touch at that *oneneſs* that is betwixt the Father and the Son, that lays the foundation for the other part of the doctrine of Chriſt here, *He that hath ſeen me, hath ſeen the Father.*

II. The *ſecond* thing propoſed was, to offer ſome *thoughts* concerning the *ſeeing of Chriſt,* eſpecially a ſaving ſight of him in whom the Father is ſeen. What I would ſay on this head, may be laid open in the following *remarks,* for giving you a view of this matter, namely, *ſeeing of Chriſt.*

1. *Remark,* "That there are *ſeveral ways* where-"in natural men may ſee Chriſt to little advan-"tage." There is a *bodily* ſight of Chriſt, that many got when he was upon the earth; they ſaw him who was God, though yet they did not ſee God in Chriſt, nor believe in him; *Ye have ſeen me, and believe not,* John vi. 56.—There is a *mental* ſight of Chriſt, and a *rational* view of God, that natural men may have when they apprehend the *inviſible things of God in the works of creation,* Rom. i. 20. They may ſee it was an infinite power that made theſe viſible heavens, ſun, moon, and ſtars: and hence it is ſaid of the heathen, *They knew God, yet glorified him not as God,* ver. 21.—There is a *ſpiritual* kind of ſight of Chriſt that natural men may have by the common illumination of the Spirit. Thus Balaam had his eyes ſtrangely opened, and ſaw the *viſions of the Almighty.* Thus the apoſtates, Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6. were enlightened, and ſome are ſaid, *through the knowledge of Chriſt,* to *eſcape the pollutions of the world;* yet afterwards are ſo entangled therein, that their *latter end is worſe than the beginning,* 2 Pet. ii. 20.—Beſides, there is a *wrathful* ſight of Chriſt, that all the wicked world will have at the day of judgment; for, *Behold, he comes with clouds, and every eye ſhall ſee him, and they alſo that pierced, and all nations ſhall wail becauſe of him.* None of theſe are the ſight of Chriſt here to be underſtood: it is a ſaving ſight of Chriſt we ſpeak of.

2. *Remark.* "That there is a *goſpel-ſight* of "Chriſt, that is either more common to the vi-"ſible church, or more ſpecial to the inviſible." The *more common* is that which the whole viſible church have beyond the outfield of the heathen world, Titus ii. 11. *The grace of God that bringeth ſalvation hath appeared to all men;* i. e. to all the viſible church that have the goſpel preached to them; they have ſo far the objective revelation and diſcovery of Chriſt, and the glory of God's grace in him ſet before them. Like Chorazin and Bethſaida, they are lifted up to heaven, and highly exalted with goſpel-privileges, goſpel-ordinances, goſpel-offers, goſpel-ſacraments, the miſimprovement whereof brings them down to hell.—The more *ſpecial* ſight of Chriſt, that is peculiar to the church inviſible, is that which reſults from the ſubjective, internal, ſaving, and powerful revelation of Chriſt into the heart; *he revealed his Son in me,* ſays Paul, Gal. i. 16. Hence,

3. A third *remark* I offer is, "That the *light* "wherein Chriſt is ſavingly ſeen, is his own "divine light, Pſal. xxxvi. 9. *In thy light ſhall* "*we ſee light.*" As we cannot ſee the natural ſun, but in his own light; ſo we cannot ſee the Sun of righteouſneſs, till he himſelf ariſe with healing under his wings: and this divine light wherein we ſavingly ſee Chriſt is common to

Father,

Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt. It is in the Father's light, we ſee the Son; in the Son's light, we ſee the Father; and in the Spirit's light, we ſee both the Father and the Son. Hence the Father is ſaid to diſcover Chriſt. *No man can come to me, except the Father draw him. It is written in the prophets, they ſhall be all taught of God: every man therefore that hath heard and learned of the Father cometh unto me*, John vi. 44, 45.—The *Father* diſcovers the excellency of Chriſt to the ſoul; and the ſoul ſees him ſuch an excellent perſon, that it would give a world for him, not knowing all this time, that it is the Father of Chriſt that is diſcovering him: *It pleaſed God to reveal his Son in me*, ſays Paul; and again, *God, who commanded light to ſhine out of darkneſs, hath ſhined into our heart, to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jeſus Chriſt*, 2 Cor. iv. 6.—Again, the *Son* is ſaid to diſcover the Father. As the Father comes and courts a bride for his Son, ſo when the match is drawn up, then the Bridegroom ſhews to the bride her friends, and particularly the Father, of which more afterwards: *No man hath ſeen God at any time, the only begotten Son, that is in the boſom of the Father, he hath declared him*, John i. 18.—And then further, it is the Spirit that diſcovers both the Father and the Son, as he is both the Spirit of the Father and of the Son, he ſhews the Father in the Son, and hence is called *the Spirit of wiſdom and revelation in the knowledge of Chriſt*, Eph. i. 17. *He ſhall glorify me*, ſays Chriſt, *for he ſhall receive of mine, and ſhew it unto you*, John xvi. 14.

4. *Remark*, "That the *eye* whereby Chriſt is "ſeen, is the *eye of faith*." As before ſaving illumination we are dark, and without *light*; ſo, before ſaving faith, we are blind and without *ſight*: therefore, as Chriſt, when he diſcovers himſelf, does, with the one hand, reveal his glory; ſo, with the other, he gives the eye to ſee his glory. All men are born blind, and remain ſo till Chriſt open their eyes, and give faith; for, he is *the author and finiſher* thereof. This faith is the only eye whereby Chriſt is now ſeen; he cannot be ſavingly ſeen otherwiſe: faith is therefore called *the evidence of things not ſeen*, Heb. xi. 1.; and thereby we *look not at the things that are ſeen, but at the things that are not ſeen*, 2 Cor. iv. 18. Thereby *we ſee and behold, as in a glaſs, the glory of the Lord*, 2 Cor. iii. 18. It is true, the glory of Chriſt did once paſs before man's bodily eyes, but yet none ſaw it but believers by faith; *The Word was made fleſh, and we beheld his glory*, John i. 14. It is true alſo, that the glory of Chriſt will appear glorioufly at the great day of his appearance; but then there will be no faith either on Chriſt's right or left hand, ſuch as now we ſee him by. The *redeemed* will have no faith, nor any uſe for ſuch faith as now; for then, ſight and love will put an end to faith. The *damned*, on the other hand, though they ſhall be no more unbelievers; for ſight and fear will put an end to their unbelief; yet their faith will be no ſaving faith then, but only ſuch as the devils now have, that believe and tremble: but from Chriſt's aſcending to heaven, till his coming again to judgment, faith is the only eye that can ſavingly ſee Chriſt. Hence,

5. *Remark* I offer, is, "That there are *ſeveral* "*periods* wherein Chriſt hath been, and is to be "ſeen by faith, particularly theſe four."—Firſt period was before his *coming in the fleſh*; thus *Abraham ſaw him afar off*; thus *Iſaiah ſaw his glory*; yea, and all the old-teſtament ſaints, by faith, ſaw him in the promiſe and prophecy at a diſtance, Heb. xi. 13.—Second period was *after his coming*, and *before his death and ſuffering* on the croſs; thus old Simeon ſaw him by faith, Luke ii. 30. *Mine eyes have ſeen thy ſalvation.* It was a great bleſſing to ſee Chriſt in the fleſh; but many did ſo, that yet did not ſee him believingly, as his true diſciples did, John i. 14.—Third period was *after his death, before his aſcenſion*; thus all the diſciples of Chriſt ſaw him, and were *glad when they ſaw the Lord.* Indeed, while he was yet lying in the grave, their faith was like to give up the ghoſt; alſo, *we truſted, that it had been he that ſhould have redeemed Iſrael, but now he is crucified, dead, and buried:* they were at a loſs to know, whether they ſhould repent of their faith or of their unbelief. Indeed the eye of faith was much tried, when Chriſt, the object of it, was brought ſo low: their faith had difficulties to grapple with, which ours want now, when we ſee him crowned with glory and honour.—Therefore, the fourth period is *after his aſcenſion to heaven*, till his *ſecond coming*; and in this period we, and all other believers, to the end of the world, remain while here; and the farther he is removed from the view of the eye of the body, the more properly is he the object of the eye of faith, which can behold him through the clouds, though he be in heaven, and we on the earth.

6. *Remark* I offer, is, "That there are *certain* "*ſeaſons* wherein Chriſt, in a ſpecial manner, is "ſeen;" particularly the day of *converſion* is a day wherein Chriſt is firſt ſeen: when Paul was converted, *God revealed his Son in him.* If you be a believer, and would know when you was firſt converted, it was even when you had the firſt view of Chriſt and his glory. It is by the power of this diſcovery of Chriſt that faith is wrought, while the *goſpel comes not in word only* to the ſoul, *but in power, and in the Holy Ghoſt, and in much aſſurance.*—But again, ſometimes the diſcovery he makes of himſelf afterwards may be more ſenſible and remarkable, when, perhaps, on the back of a *long deſertion*, he returns, and ſays, *I remember the kindneſs of thy youth, and the love of thine eſpouſals. I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedſt the pillar, and vowedſt the vow unto me.* Sometimes to ſhew his holineſs and goodneſs, as being the *rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him*, he is pleaſed to ſhew himſelf after a courſe of ſpiritual diligence. Thus Moſes prays and cries, ſaying, *I beſeech thee, ſhew me thy glory*; and accordingly, the *Lord makes all his goodneſs paſs before him*, Exod. xxxiii. 18, 19. Indeed, if there were more of Moſes's ſpirit, it would be better with us. We receive not, becauſe we aſk not.—Sometimes again, to ſhew his ſovereignty, and the freedom of his grace, he gives a ſight of himſelf to a *backſliding child*, and courts him back with kindneſs, ſaying, *Thou haſt not called on me, O Jacob; thou haſt been weary of me, O Iſrael; thou haſt made me to ſerve with thy ſins, and wearied me with thine iniquities; yet I, even I am he that blotteth out thy tranſgreſſions for mine own ſake, and will not remember thy ſins*, Iſa. xliii. 24, 25. It is, indeed, an amazing condeſcenſion, that the Lord ſhould pleaſe to give a glance of himſelf, even upon the back of hainous provocations; yet thus he is pleaſed many times to give them occaſion to ſay, *It is the voice of my Beloved; behold, he cometh ſkipping*

on

on the mountains, and leaping upon the hills; making all the hills and mountains of sin, guilt, and separation, to melt down before him. And, indeed, nothing melts their hard heart so much as to see him thus coming.—Sometimes their *suffering season* is his time of shewing himself, and of their seeing him: *If you be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are you; for the Spirit of God and of glory resteth on you*, 1 Pet. iv. 14.—Sometimes a *dying* season is another time of their seeing him; thus Stephen, when they were stoning him to death, he *looked up, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right-hand of God.*—There are, I say, certain seasons of their seeing Christ. But I proceed.

7. *Remark* I offer, is, "That there are *various* "*respects* and *various degrees* wherein persons "may be said to see Christ savingly;" particularly when he manifests himself to them, as he does not manifest himself to the world. See John xiv. 21, 22, 23. His people may be said to see him, when he makes them sensible of his gracious presence with them, and sensible of his special love towards them, and puts them in a condition to say, *He loved me, and gave himself for me:* and when, by this deep impression of his gracious presence, and sweet persuasion of his special love, through the powerful breathing of his Spirit upon them, he draws forth their graces to a lively exercise; *lifts up the light of his countenance upon them;* and *makes them sit down under his shadow with great delight;* when he clears up their interest in his love, saying, *I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with everlasting loving-kindness have I drawn thee.* In a word, one may be said to have seen Christ, when he comes with a word of grace, and work of power, and opens the locked heart, and melts the hard heart, and fixes the wandering heart, and humbles the proud heart, and heals the plagued heart, and draws the backward heart, and frees the fettered heart, spiritualizes the carnal heart, raises the drooping heart, helps and curbs the unbelieving heart, and comforts the dejected heart; and when he is pleased to give his convincing, quickening, strengthening, sanctifying, and directing presence: but these things I cannot enlarge upon, only there are various degrees of seeing Christ, in whatever respect his people may be said to see him. Some have more, and some less of this sight. Some are brought to the banquetting-house, to get a full meal; others receive but a crumb that falls from the table; and particular believers have not always, and at all times, the like measure and degree of the outletting of his favour. Sometimes the soul may be brought to the suburbs of glory, and get such a discovery of Christ, that he would be content the valley of vision were his burial-place, saying, with Simeon, *Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.* At other times the view and discovery is of a lower degree, when faith is not riding so triumphantly, but fighting its way through many doubts and fears, trials and temptations, and sensible presence much withdrawn.

8. *Remark* is, "That there are several *proper-* "*ties* of a saving sight of Christ that tend to "give light concerning it." For instance, this sight of Christ is but *imperfect* here, and *partial*, in regard of what it will be hereafter, 1 Cor. xiii. 9. *Now we know in part;* and ver. 12. *Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face.* Indeed their sight is like a not-seeing, in comparison to what one day it will be.—Again, this seeing of Christ, though imperfect, yet it is *unspeakable.* Indeed, the joy that results from a sight of Christ is unspeakable; *In whom, though now we see him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.* Who then can utter or express the glory of Christ, the sight whereof raises that unspeakable joy?—This sight of Christ is *supernatural; How is the glory of the Lord seen but by the Spirit of the Lord?* 2 Cor. iii. 18. It is God that must bestow this blessing; flesh and blood cannot reveal Christ to a man: *The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned;* but *God hath revealed them to us by his Spirit*, 1 Cor. ii. 10, 14.—This sight of Christ is an *amiable* sight; for, *He is altogether lovely.* This makes his tabernacles amiable, because they see the glory of God there; and every thing in God that they see is amiable; yea, you are not to think that the children of God see only one side of God, as it were, and not another. Though the Lord shews but part of himself at once, now a lesser and then a greater part of himself, yet it is not to be thought as if they saw but one side of God and not another, or if he shewed his amiable side and concealed his terrible side; no, that which is most terrible in God to wicked men, that is also most amiable and lovely in the eyes of the saints; for a God in Christ is all amiable. His power, greatness, and justice, which the wicked abhor, appear to them in excellent glory.—Again, the sight of Christ here is frequently *interrupted*, it is only in heaven that the saints have the uninterrupted vision and fruition of God, without any cloud to darken their day; but here, no sooner does the heart begin to open to Christ some time, than, alas! he is gone; *I opened to my Beloved, but my Beloved had withdrawn himself and was gone.*—Again, this sight of Christ, however short and inconstant, yet is always *sweet* and *satisfying*; *sweet* and *ravishing*; *His mouth is most sweet*, says the church. O how sweet and satisfying are the smiles of his mouth! it is enough to make a heaven in the soul. *How sweet are the words of his mouth! sweeter than the honey and the honey-comb.* When he manifests himself in a word of grace, the sweetness is such, that all sweetness is but bitterness in comparison thereof. How sweet and satisfying is it when the day-spring from on high visits the soul, especially after a long dark night of temptation, desertion, and despondency, wherein the soul thought that God had forgotten to be gracious, and would never return. When the Sun of righteousness breaks out below the black clouds, even of sin and provocation, when the soul now sees the power and glory of God in the sanctuary, how is it *satisfied as with marrow and fatness*, and the *mouth praises him with joyful lips!*—Again, this sight of Christ is *convincing*, powerfully convincing; it carries so much evidence in it, as makes the soul cry out with Thomas, *My Lord, and my God; He that believeth hath the witness in himself.* Surely we do not see Christ sleeping; nay, it is with open eyes and an open face; *All we with open face beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord*, 2 Cor. iii. 18. According to the measure and degree of the manifestation, it will have some evidence, even as a man seeing the sun, carries its own evidence along with

with it; though the ſight be dark in compariſon of what it will be, yet it is convincing in itſelf.—And as it is convincing, ſo it is *affecting*. O! a ſight of Chriſt is moſt affecting, when it is a ſaving ſight; it affects with reverence, therefore it is ſaid of the diſciples, when they ſaw him *they worſhipped him*. It affects with joy; *Then were the diſciples glad when they ſaw the Lord*. It affects with holy fear; *When I ſaw him, I fell at his feet as dead*. It affects with wonder, and makes the ſoul cry out, RABBONI, *who is a God like unto thee?* It affects with ſelf-abhorrence; *Now mine eyes ſee thee, wherefore I abhor myſelf*. It affects with ſelf-abaſement; *O what am I, and what is my father's houſe, that thou haſt brought me hitherto?* It affects with penitency and godly ſorrow; *They ſhall look on him whom they have pierced, and mourn*. It affects with new vigour and courage; *They looked to him, and were enlightened, and their faces were not aſhamed*.

9. *Remark* is, "That there are many *means* "whereby, and glaſſes wherein we may ſee "Chriſt."—Sometimes he is ſeen in the glaſs of his *outward works*, the viſible creation ſhews forth his divine glory; the very *heavens declare* it, ſays the pſalmiſt; and the ſpiritual eye will ſee Chriſt in the creatures, though *his glory is above the earth and heaven*, Pſal. cxlviii. 13.; yet his glory is in the earth and heaven, and in all his works, ſmall and great, inſomuch, that though they cannot ſavingly diſcover him, yet theſe that have got a ſaving diſcovery of him, may ſee more and more of his glory whereſoever they caſt their eyes, were it but on a creeping inſect, or a graſs pile.—Again, ſometimes he is ſeen in the glaſs of his *inward works*, more eſpecially when he works effectually upon the heart, implanting the graces of his Spirit there, or afterwards making grace to grow, both in the root, by the increaſe of a holy and ſpiritual diſpoſition; and in the fruit, by a ſuitable goſpel walk and converſation. When he works any wonderful change upon the ſoul, whether it be yourſelves or others, and that you ſee he hath taken a gracious dealing with ſuch or ſuch an one, why, then you ſee there the finger of God; and that the Lord is near, his wonderous works declare.—Sometimes he is ſeen in the glaſs of his *providences*: common providences are common glaſſes, where he may be ſeen, whether they are judgment or mercy. As *the Lord is known by the judgment that he executes*, and by *the mercy that he renews every moment*, ſo his people will ſee him in a rod; they will ſee him in a deliverance; yea, the ſpiritual man will ſee more of the Lord in an ordinary meal, than the hypocrite ever ſaw at a communion-table. But there are alſo ſignal providences, wherein they get more ſignal views of him. When Abraham's knife was at his ſon's throat, he met with a notable providence; behold, a ram caught in a thicket by the horns, ready for him to ſacrifice in room of Iſaac. O! how much of God's glory did Abraham ſee in that providence! therefore he calls the name of the place JEHOVAH-JIREH, *In the mount of the Lord it ſhall be ſeen*. The Lord will provide remarkable proviſion, remarkable protection; and this or that remarkable providence hath been ſometimes the vehicle of a remarkable manifeſtation of the Lord's glory.—Again, he is to be ſeen ſometimes in the glaſs of the word; 2 Cor. 18. Rom. x. 6. John v. 39. *Search the ſcriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they that teſtify of me*. Here then we may ſee him in the types, in the prophecies, in the promiſes, in the doctrines of the word, as the Antitype of all the types, the ſubſtance of all the ſhadows, the truth of all the prophecies, the fulneſs of all the promiſes, the centre of all the truths and lines of the word. In the precept we ſee his holineſs; in the promiſe, we ſee his goodneſs; his juſtice, in the threatenings; his wiſdom, in the revelations of the word. Here a believer will ſometimes ſee Chriſt in a title or deſignation given him in the word. O the glory that is to be ſeen in that name JESUS, in that name IMMANUEL, in that name KING of SAINTS, KING of KINGS!—Sometimes in a *reſemblance* or *ſimile*; while he is reſembled to a roſe, for beauty; to a rock, for ſtrength; to a treaſure, for bounty; to a riſing ſun, for glory. In this glaſs the ſoul will ſee him infinitely beyond all reſemblances. However, when any light from heaven is ſhining, you have no more ado, as it were, but to open your Bible, and there ſee Chriſt.—Again, he is to be ſeen in the glaſs of his *ordinances*, whether public, or private, or ſecret; hence his people many times ſee him in a duty, they ſee him in meditation, they ſee him in prayer; ſometimes they ſee him in a ſermon; while the miniſter is opening the word, the Lord is opening their underſtanding to diſcern Chriſt there; while they are hearing a ſermon; yea, ſometimes while they are reading a goſpel ſermon they will have Chriſt in their hand, as it were, Chriſt in their mouth, Chriſt in their eye; yea, Chriſt in their heart.—Finally, in the *ſacrament* Chriſt is to be ſeen; for, in baptiſm he is repreſented by the water, and the ſpiritual eye may ſee him there; and in the auguſt ordinance of the ſupper he is repreſented by the bread and wine; there he may be ſeen and known in the breaking of bread. All the believing views of Chriſt, and ſights of him here-away are *mediate*, through the intervention of means and ordinances; not *immediate*, as they ſhall be above: *Now we ſee through a glaſs darkly*; but the time comes when the glaſſes ſhall be broken, and believers *ſhall ſee him face to face, and ſee him as he is*. Rev. xxi. 22. *I ſaw no temple there; for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it*.

The 10th and laſt *remark* is, "That Chriſt "himſelf, who is the object of this ſight, is a "moſt *glorious, full*, and *extenſive* object." There is more to be ſeen in Chriſt than all the angels in heaven can tell. This is a larger field than we ſhall ever be able to travel over through all eternity. O what glory is to be ſeen in his natures and perſon, as God-man in one perſon! To ſee him in his miſſion and commiſſion, as the Sent and Sealed of the Father; to ſee him in his offices, relations, and excellencies; in his doing, ſuffering, dying, riſing, aſcending, ſitting at the right-hand of God, interceding, and coming again to judgment; to ſee him in his furniture for his work as Mediator betwixt God and man, as ſtanding ſo well affected to both parties and their intereſts, *namely*, his Father's honour and his people's happineſs both, and in whom both parties may confide: accordingly the Father truſts him with all the concerns of his glory; and well may his people truſt him with all the concerns of their ſalvation; yea, ſo furniſhed, that he is able to bring both parties together, and to decide the difference betwixt them,

them, ſuch is his intereſt with God, and power with man. To ſee him in his fitneſs for us, as being a Prophet, to teach; a Prieſt, to ſave; a King, to ſubdue; a Phyſician, to heal; a Friend, to help in all caſes: as having merit, to juſtify; Spirit, to ſanctify; blood, to waſh; grace, to pardon; fulneſs, to ſupply; ſweetneſs, to endear; and beauty, to allure. O how ſweet is it to ſee him fitted of infinite wiſdom to your need! And, do you not need him when you are in the dark, to enlighten you; when dead, to quicken you; when dull, to revive you; when in doubts, to reſolve you; when in fears, to encourage you; when you ſtagger, to eſtabliſh you; when you fall, to raiſe you; when you are tempted, to ſuccour you; when weak, to ſtrengthen you; when wandering, to reſtore you; in duties, to aſſiſt you; in difficulties, to guide you; in dangers, to guard you; when under bondage, to looſe you; when under burdens, to relieve you! None but Chriſt can do all this, and a thouſand times more; and if you were always looking to Chriſt, when you ſtand in need of him, your eyes would ſeldom be off him, for you are ſtill needing him in theſe reſpects. But it is the ſpecial deſign of the ſacrament to ſhew him forth in his death and ſuffering; there we ſee him as a crucified Chriſt, and we are to view his death and ſuffering, (1.) In the *cauſe* thereof: the *procuring* cauſe was ſin; *He was wounded for our tranſgreſſions*: the *inſtrumental* cauſe was the devil and his inſtruments: the *moving* and *impulſive* cauſe was love; *He loved me, and gave himſelf for me*; the *efficient* or *effective* cauſe was God; *It pleaſed the Lord to bruiſe him*: the *final* cauſe, or the fruit and effect, was God's glory, and our eternal redemption. (2.) In the *ſeverity* thereof, while he drank the cup of the Father's wrath to the bottom. (3.) In the *ſufficiency* thereof, for paying all the debt that was owing to the law and juſtice of God. (4.) In the *acceptableneſs* thereof, for it was a *ſacrifice of a ſweet-ſmelling ſavour unto God.* —— In a word, the principal glory to be ſeen in Chriſt is, that *he that ſees him, ſees the Father.* And this leads me to,

III. The *third* head propoſed, namely, to ſhew in what *reſpects* they that ſee Chriſt ſee the Father; *He that hath ſeen me, hath ſeen the Father.* I have ſhewed the *oneneſs* that is betwixt the Father and him in nature, properties, will, affection, authority, ſupremacy, and other ways: and therefore he that ſees Chriſt muſt ſee the Father in all theſe reſpects wherein he is one with him. There is no need of Philip's prayer here, *Lord, ſhew us the Father*: for, having ſeen Chriſt we have ſeen the Father. It is Chriſt and he alone that declares, repreſents, and makes known to us the eſſential glory of the inviſible God; and without him our underſtanding could make no approach to his divine excellency. It is in the face of Chriſt that we ſee the glory of God, 2 Cor. iv. 6. And now, if any would know whether they have got a ſaving ſight of Chriſt, here is the great diagnoſtic and infallible evidence thereof, namely, if you have ſeen the Father in him; and, indeed, as there is no ſeeing of the Father, but in the Son; ſo there is no ſaving ſight of the Son, without ſeeing the Father in him: here is the excellency of the glory of Chriſt that faith ſees; here is the very foundation of our holy religion, and the ground of all our hope of life and immortality, *God in Chriſt reconciling the world to himſelf*; here is the *great myſtery of godlineſs, God manifeſted in the fleſh*: here is the ſum of the goſpel, *viz.* the glory of God repreſented to us in the perſon and office of Chriſt as God-man, Mediator betwixt God and us. To ſee this glory is ſaving faith; not to ſee it, is damnable unbelief.

But, to come more directly to the queſtion, to ſhew in what reſpect they that ſee Chriſt, do ſee the Father, it is needful we conſider,

1ſt, More generally in what *capacity* CHRIST is to be conſidered, when we ſee the Father in him; and in what *capacity* the FATHER is to be conſidered when we ſee him in Chriſt.

As to the former, *viz.* in what *capacity* CHRIST is to be conſidered, when we ſee the Father in him: why, in ſhort, he is to be conſidered,

1. As God the SON, the ſecond perſon of the ever-bleſſed and ever adorable Trinity.

2. As MAN, or God incarnate; God-man in one perſon, clothed with the offices of Mediator, Redeemer, Saviour, and Surety for a number of loſt ſinners.

As to the latter, *viz.* in what *capacity* the FATHER is to be conſidered when we ſee him in Chriſt.

1. When Chriſt is conſidered as GOD, then the Father is to be conſidered *perſonally*, for the firſt perſon of the glorious Trinity.

2. When Chriſt is conſidered as MAN, then the Father is to be conſidered *eſſentially*; including Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, one in eſſence.

In both theſe reſpects Chriſt and the Father are ſpoken of in the text, as the context ſhews: for, in the following context, Chriſt is ſaid to be *in the Father*, and the *Father in him*, in the unity of the ſame divine eſſence, ver. 10.; in which reſpect, Chriſt being conſidered as GOD, the Father is taken *perſonally*; ſo, in the preceding context, Chriſt is ſaid to be the *way* to the Father; *Ye believe in God, believe alſo in me; I am the way, no man cometh to the Father but by me*, ver. 1, 6. In which reſpect, Chriſt being conſidered as MAN, or God-man, the Father is to be taken *eſſentially*: for, as God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, eſſentially conſidered, did conſtitute Chriſt perſonally conſidered, and ſo clothed with our fleſh to be the way to God, and the repreſentative of the divine glory, namely, his own glory, as God, equally with the Father's, which are eſſentially the ſame; ſo Chriſt, the ſecond perſon, conſidered as man, is the way to God eſſentially conſidered: nor does it involve any contradiction, that thus he ſhould be the way to himſelf, as well as to the Father; ſeeing it is as man, that he is the way to himſelf as God; and in him as man, we ſee his eſſential glory as well as the Father's: for, as perſonally conſidered, he is the eternal Son of the eternal Father; ſo eſſentially, he is the everlaſting Father, one in number with the firſt perſon; Iſa. ix. 6. *The mighty God, the everlaſting Father*; compared with Deut. vi. 4. *The Lord our God is one Lord.*

However, though the text allows us not to exclude the conſideration of Chriſt *perſonally*, as GOD the SON; yet it is eſpecially as MAN that he is to be viewed by us, or in his incarnation, for therein he becomes the repreſentative of God to the church, 2 Cor. iv. 6. And without him, under this conſideration, we cannot either ſee him or his Father; for Chriſt's divine perſon, abſolutely conſidered, is equally inviſible

ſible and inacceſſible to us as the Father is: in him, therefore, as man, we ſee the Father; *i.e.* we ſee God in him, he being the image of the inviſible God, and the great repreſentative of God unto us. But,

2dly, And more particularly, I proceed to ſhew in what *reſpects* they who *ſee Chriſt do ſee the Father*, in the utmoſt latitude that the text allows, it will import the following particulars.

1. That they who ſee Chriſt will ſee the Father's *nature* and *eſſence* in him; for, when the glory of the Godhead is diſcovered, then he is ſeen in whom dwells the fulneſs of the undivided eſſence of the Godhead bodily, Col. ii. 9.

2. They who ſee Chriſt will ſee the Father's *perſonality* in him; for, when he is truly ſeen, he is ſeen to be *the brightneſs of the Father's glory, and the expreſs image of his perſon*, Heb. i. 3. Therefore, though the Father and the Son are not *one perſon*; yet, when the Son is ſeen, we ſee the Father's perſon in him as the *image* thereof.

3. They who ſee Chriſt, ſee the Father's *relations* in him; I mean, his relation both to Chriſt, and to us in Chriſt. When Chriſt is ſeen, then the Father's relations to *Chriſt* are ſeen; that is, not only his relation to Chriſt by *nature*, as Chriſt is the only eternally *begotten of the Father*; but alſo by *office*, as Chriſt is the *ſent* and *ſealed* of the Father to the mediatorial work. Yea, when Chriſt is ſeen, then the Father's relations to *us*, in Chriſt, are ſeen; particularly as he is our God and Father in Chriſt: *I aſcend to my Father, and your Father; to my God, and your God*, John xx. 17. They who ſee Chriſt, or God in Chriſt, they cannot ſee him any other way than a *reconciled God and Father in him*. To ſee God out of Chriſt, is to ſee him as a *conſuming fire*, a Judge, and an Avenger; but to ſee him in Chriſt, is to ſee him as a Friend and Father.

4. They who ſee Chriſt, ſee the Father's *face* in him; *The God who commanded light to ſhine out of darkneſs, hath ſhined into our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jeſus Chriſt*, 2 Cor. iv. 6. Chriſt is the fair face of God; and as we ſee nothing of the body of a man, that is all clothed, but his face; ſo God is clothed with ſuch robes of terrible majeſty, that we can ſee nothing of him but his face: and happy are they who ſee his face by ſeeing him in Chriſt; for, as the beſt ſight of a man is to ſee his face, ſo the beſt ſight of God is in Chriſt; his brighteſt beauty, and greateſt glory is to be ſeen there. Hence the ſaints in ſcripture, when they ſought to ſee God, they ſtill ſought for a ſight of his face; as Pſal. lxxx. 3, 7, 19. *Cauſe thy face to ſhine, and we ſhall be ſafe*. The *ſeed of Jacob* are called the *ſeekers of his face*: and, where is the face and favour of God but in Chriſt?

5. They who ſee Chriſt, they ſee the Father's *heart* in him. To ſee a man's heart is to know his mind, and ſee his ſecret thoughts that none but God and he know; and to ſee this were little worth the ſeeing, ſince all hearts, by nature, are wicked; and the *heart of the wicked is little worth*: but to ſee God's heart is a vaſt matter; and yet when the believer ſees Chriſt's, he ſees God's heart, and ſome ſecrets there that none know but God and the believer himſelf that is looking to Chriſt; Pſal. xxv. 14. *The ſecret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will ſhew them his covenant*; or, as it may be read, and is accordingly tranſlated in the margin, HIS COVENANT, TO MAKE THEM KNOW IT. You may conceive it thus; Chriſt is given for *the Covenant of the people*; this covenant is given to make them know the *ſecret of the Lord*, the Father's heart, mind, and will; and his glorious counſels are ſee when Chriſt is ſeen. He lies in *the boſom of the Father*, John i. 18.; therefore, they who ſee Chriſt, cannot but ſee into his boſom: and, O they ſee far that ſee there! Some look to God, but never look to his heart and boſom: ſome look to his hands, in the works of creation: ſome look to his feet, in the ways of his providence: ſome look to his head, as it were, in his unſearchable decrees: but they loſe the right ſight of him who do not look to his heart and boſom. This is another ſort of a place than that which the angels ſpake of concerning the dead and buried body of the Lord Jeſus, *Come ſee the place where the Lord lay*, Mat. xxviii. 6. I may, in alluſion to it, ſay a greater word, *Come ſee the place where the Lord lay from all eternity; where he lies to this day; and will do for ever*; that is, *the Father's boſom*. What! can that be ſeen? Yes; when you ſee Chriſt, you cannot miſs a ſight of the place where he lies.

6. They who ſee Chriſt, they ſee the Father's *properties* and *perfections* in him: and here to ſpeak of all theſe, would be to ſpeak for ever. I ſhall only name ſome of theſe glorious perfections, excellencies, and the properties of the divine majeſty that are ſeen in Chriſt, in ſuch manner as they cannot be ſeen any where elſe. I paſs over the infinity, immenſity, and other ſuch excellencies of God, which yet are to be ſeen in Chriſt, that I may confine myſelf to ſome of theſe attributes of God, that are ordinarily more obvious to the believing eye of the ſoul that gets a ſaving ſight of Chriſt.

(1.) He that hath ſeen Chriſt, hath ſeen the infinite *wiſdom* of the Father in him, and in the work of redemption by him. We do not extenuate the diſplays that are made of the divine wiſdom in the works of creation and providence; when, taking a comparative view thereof, we ſet them vaſtly inferior to the diſcoveries that are made of *the manifold wiſdom of God*, in and through Jeſus Chriſt, Eph. iii. 9, 10. whoſe name is, *Chriſt, the Wiſdom of God*, 1 Cor. i. 24.; and *in whom are hid all the treaſures of divine wiſdom*, Col. ii. 3. If the queſtion then be, as it is expreſt, Job xxviii. 12. *Where ſhall wiſdom be found? and what is the place of underſtanding? The deep ſays, It is not in me: the ſea ſays, It is not in me*. But, behold, here it is, even in him who ſays, *He that hath ſeen me, hath ſeen the Father*. As this wiſdom is, in itſelf, an eternal, eſſential property of the divine nature, we can have no comprehenſion of it, it ſtands at ſuch an infinite diſtance from us, but in and by Chriſt, and in him alone is manifeſted this *manifold wiſdom of God*. O the many foldings of wiſdom that are here! Chriſt is a vaſt volume, a great book, wherein we may ſee and read the *wiſdom of God in a myſtery*. This book is open to us in the goſpel, and if the Spirit of faith be allowed, we have no more ado, but to turn over the leaves, and in every page we will ſee written in capital letters, WISDOM, WISDOM, WISDOM; INFINITE WISDOM.—Wiſdom in *contriving* ſuch a ſalvation of ſinners, as ſhould redound to the greateſt glory of God.—Wiſdom in *chooſing* ſuch a perſon to be the Saviour and Redeemer, even the fitteſt perſon of all the three glorious perſons of the adorable Trinity, the

the middle perſon to be Midſman and Mediator betwixt God and man.—Wiſdom in *furniſhing* him with all the help and aſſiſtance in this work, that the other two glorious perſons could give him, while he is ſealed by the Father, and anointed by the Spirit: *Him hath God the Father ſealed; and the Spirit of the Lord God is upon him above meaſure.*—Wiſdom in *uniting* the moſt diſtant extremes, in joining God and man in one perſon, the infinite and eternal God with a piece of clay. O wiſdom, wiſdom ſhines here! Wiſdom in puniſhing the ſin, and yet pardoning the ſinner; taking vengeance on the crime, and yet ſhewing mercy on the criminal. This wiſdom of God ſhines in the face of Chriſt, the *Surety of the better teſtament.*—Wiſdom in bringing the *greateſt good* out of the *greateſt evil*, and all by the moſt unlikely means; making ſin itſelf, which tends to the greateſt diſhonour of God, to contribute to his greateſt glory; while ſalvation from it, by Jeſus, brings in *glory to God in the higheſt*; and while in him alſo is brought life out of death, and the higheſt ſalvation out of the deepeſt humiliation.—Wiſdom in counter-acting the *policy* of the old ſerpent in ſuch a wonderful manner, making the *ſeed of the woman to bruiſe the head of the ſerpent*; and the babe of Bethlehem to conquer all the armed legions of hell.——But to turn over all the leaves of this book will be the work of eternity; however, all this wiſdom, and infinitely more, is to be ſeen in Chriſt.

(2.) He that hath ſeen Chriſt, hath ſeen the Father in his infinite *power*; for, as he is the *wiſdom of God*; ſo he is *the power of God*, 1 Cor. i. 24. It is no diſparagement to the diſplay of the power of God, in making of heaven and earth, and all things out of nothing, though we declare to you, that the power of God does not ſhine there ſo much as it does in Chriſt. Divine power is glorious in creation-work, but much more in ſalvation-work. It is more for God to redeem one ſinner, than to make a thouſand worlds. Our *help is laid upon one that is mighty*; and, how does the almighty power of God here ſhine in laying ſuch a weight upon the Redeemer's back, as would have broken the back of all the angels in heaven; yea, under which the creation grones, and yet ſupporting him under ſo great a burden? What burden? Why, *The Lord laid on him the iniquities of us all*; and, together with the burden of ſin, the burden of all the wrath that was due to it, that he might *deliver us from the wrath to come.*—Power in upholding him in this great ſervice; *Behold my Servant, whom I uphold*, Iſa. xlii. 1.—Power in enabling him to overcome all the powers of earth and hell, and making him to triumph over them on the croſs, and to ſpoil principalities and powers openly.—Power in giving him victory over ſin and death, that we might ſhare of his triumphs, and have victory in him: *O death, where is thy ſting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, 1 Cor. xv. 55.—Power in ſaving ſinners by the efficacy of his grace, the virtue of his Spirit, as well as by the merit of his blood, and in bringing them from the power of Satan unto God, which is more than to bring them from nothing to a being. In him we ſee that power of God, whereby *he is able to ſave to the uttermoſt.*

(3.) He that hath ſeen Chriſt hath ſeen the Father in his infinite *holineſs*. He is indeed *the holy One of God*; and *holineſs to the Lord*, is a title that peculiarly belongs to him, who was *holy, harmleſs, undefiled, and ſeparate from ſinners.* It is no diſparagement to the holineſs of all the angels and inhabitants of heaven, to ſay comparatively with him, that *the heavens are not clean in his ſight, and that he chargeth his angels with folly.* God hath, in Chriſt, diſcovered moſt clearly, *That he is of purer eyes than that he can behold iniquity.* Yea, in giving his Son to the death for our ſins, he hath declared, that he hates ſin, as much as he loves his eternal Son: *He gave himſelf for our ſins, according to the will of God*, Gal. i. 4. Thus God gave him, and he gave himſelf to take away ſin, which is ſo contrary to his holineſs. The Father put him upon this work, and held him to it, till he *finiſhed tranſgreſſion*, and *made an end of ſin*, by the *ſacrifice of himſelf*; therefore when we ſee Chriſt, we ſee infinite holineſs vindicated, and may cry out, *Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hoſts; the whole earth is full of his glory.*

(4.) He that hath ſeen Chriſt hath ſeen the Father in his infinite *juſtice* and *righteouſneſs*. Chriſt is ſet forth for this very end, to repreſent and declare this glorious attribute of the divine nature; *Whom God hath ſet forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteouſneſs for the remiſſion of ſins.* Rom. iii. 25. Not only to ſatisfy his juſtice, in puniſhing of ſin; but alſo to declare his juſtice, in pardoning of ſin; and both, in and through Chriſt the propitiation. It is no diminution of the glory of God's juſtice, that ſhines in the eternal damnation of the wicked world of men and devils, to aſſert, That the glory of his juſtice, in executing judgment upon ſin, appears more brightly in the face of Jeſus, as he was a ſacrifice to ſatisfy juſtice to the full, by one offering, which all the millions of the damned that are ſacrificed to incenſed juſtice, will never be able to do through all eternity. God had a mind to ſave a number of ſinners, *Elect according to the foreknowledge of God*; but the law, that required the death of the ſinner, and that *the ſoul that ſins ſhould die*, ſtood in the way; therefore God, rather than go contrary to his own law, will take payment, according to the law, of his own Son. Chriſt therefore pays all the debt that the law could crave; and thus God is glorified in his moſt exact righteouſneſs and infinite juſtice.

(5.) He that hath ſeen Chriſt hath ſeen the Father in his infinite *love*, *mercy*, and *grace*: *God is love*, ſays the apoſtle, 1 John iv. 8 But, where is this property of the divine nature manifeſted, ſeeing his wrath is revealed from heaven againſt all ungodlineſs of men, and we are compaſſed about with the evidences of his anger and diſpleaſure at this day? Where then ſhall we ſee that God is love? Why, the ſame apoſtle tells us, ver. 9. *In this was manifeſted the love of God towards us, becauſe God ſent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him: herein is love, not that we loved him, but that he loved us, and ſent his Son to be the propitiation for our ſins.* Out of Chriſt, we ſee him a *conſuming fire*; but in Chriſt, we ſee that *God is love!* O the love of God that ſhines in his miſſion, perſon, and offices! Love in giving him to be a Saviour and Surety! Love, in giving him for us and to us! Love, in accepting the payment of our debt from him, and ſubſtituting him in our room! Love, in accepting us in him, and

love in giving out to us the great bleſſings promiſed and purchaſed by him! O Love! love, without a parallel! Mercy, without a match! Wonderful mercy vented through a ſacrifice; ſovereign grace and goodneſs, in ſetting up ſuch a ſun as Chriſt in the firmament of the church militant and triumphant! The natural ſun runs his race, and rides his circuit from one end of the heaven to the other, and the benefit we enjoy thereby is a fruit of the goodneſs of God, as the God of providence; but, O the glorious race that the Sun of righteouſneſs runs from everlaſting to everlaſting! His circle is from one end of eternity to the other, if eternity, that is endleſs, may be thus conſidered; for, he *was ſet up from everlaſting* in the council of peace, and *to everlaſting* will he ſhine, and ſhew forth the goodneſs and mercy of God, as the God of grace.

(6.) He that hath ſeen Chriſt, hath ſeen the Father in his infinite *faithfulneſs*, *veracity*, and *truth*; for, as he is the way to the Father, ſo he is the truth, John xiv. 6.; in whom the fidelity of the God of truth does ſhine. Here was the glory that the diſciples ſaw, John i. 14. *Full of grace and truth.* To ſee the truth of God in Chriſt is a noble ſight, on which our everlaſting ſafety and ſecurity does depend; and, behold, in Chriſt it is to be ſeen moſt conſpicuouſly. The truth of God in all the threatenings of the law ſhines in Chriſt, while theſe threatenings receive their accompliſhment in him, *As the end of the law for righteouſneſs to every one that believeth*, Rom. x. 4. The truth of God in all the promiſes of the goſpel ſhines in Chriſt; *for in him they are all yea and amen*, 2 Cor. i. 20. In Chriſt this miracle ſparkles, that God, in ſaving the ſinner, is true to his threatening, and true to his promiſe both; true to his threatening, that ſays, *The ſoul that ſins ſhall die;* and yet true to his promiſe alſo, that ſays, *I will love thee freely.* How gloriouſly do theſe oppoſites centre in Chriſt! And ſo the glory of truth, of the Father's truth, appears. He is true to his threatening in Chriſt, who hath endured the ſhock of it; and true to his promiſe in Chriſt alſo, who hath fulfilled the condition of it; and both by his obedience unto death, *even the death of the croſs.*

Thus the Father is ſeen in Chriſt, in reſpect of all theſe, and the like divine properties and perfections, which in Chriſt appear to be both his Father's attributes and his own. They are ſeen to be Chriſt's divine perfections, and the perfections of the Father in him; *He that hath ſeen me, hath ſeen the Father.* I would here ſay further,

7. They that ſee Chriſt, ſee the Father's *name* in him; *My name is in him*, ſays God, Exod. xxiii. 21. God's greateſt name is his name; for example, *What is his name?* Exod. iii. 13. God ſays unto Moſes, I AM THAT I AM, ver. 14. This explains his name JEHOVAH, and ſignifies that he is *ſelf-exiſtent*, having his being and eſſence of himſelf, that he is eternal and unchangeable, always the ſame; that we cannot by ſearching find him out, but that he for ever is what he ever was; and that he is the fountain of all beings. Now, it was Chriſt, the Angel of the covenant, that ſaid this to Moſes, when he *appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the buſh*, Exod. iii. 2. He diſcovered himſelf by this name, when he was to deliver Iſrael out of Egypt, which deliverance was but a figure of good things to come; and therefore you may ſee him again taking this name three times to himſelf in one chapter in the New Teſtament, John viii. 58. *Before Abraham was*, I AM, and ver. 24. *If ye believe not that* I AM *he, ye ſhall die in your ſins.* The word in the original is, ὅτι ἐγώ εἰμι, *that* I AM. And ſo it is ver. 28. *When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then ſhall ye know* ὅτι ἐγώ εἰμι, *that* I AM. Now, Chriſt hath been lifted up on the pole of the croſs, on the pole of the ſacrament, on the pole of the goſpel, and exalted on the Father's right-hand. Do we know by this time that the name of the man that was crucified at Jeruſalem, is, I AM THAT I AM? Do we ſee his Father's name in him? *He that hath ſeen me, hath ſeen the Father.*

8. They that ſee Chriſt ſee the Father's *glory* in him; not only his name, but the glory of his name; not only his attributes, but the glory of his attributes: his name and attributes are indeed his glory; and when we ſee theſe we ſee the Father's glory. But what I further mean, is, that, in Chriſt, we ſee the glory of the *Father's glory*; and the glory and ſplendor of all theſe things that I have mentioned. This light is the *light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jeſus Chriſt*, who is the *brightneſs of his glory, and the expreſs image of his perſon:* therefore in him we ſee not only the wiſdom of God, but the glory of his wiſdom; not only his power, but the glory of his power; not only his holineſs, but the glory of his holineſs; not only his juſtice and righteouſneſs, but the glory of his juſtice and righteouſneſs; not only his love, mercy, and grace, but the glory of his love, mercy, and grace; not only his faithfulneſs, veracity, and truth, but the glory of his faithfulneſs, veracity, and truth. When God diſcovers himſelf in Chriſt, then he is ſeen upon his higheſt throne, in his greateſt glory. O Sirs, let me tell you, that when only heaven is his throne, and the earth his footſtool, he appears infinitely glorious; but when Chriſt is his throne, and the heavens are his footſtool, then, O then, infinite glory appears infinitely more glorious. Though infinite glory is not capable of addition or augmentation, yet in point of manifeſtation, I ſay, infinite glory appears infinitely more glorious, when diſplayed on ſuch a lofty throne. O but a *God in Chriſt*, which is the *throne of grace*, is alſo a *throne of glory*; and *Glory to God in the higheſt* it is the *throne of God and of the Lamb.* If we ſee it, we cannot chooſe but ſing with the redeemed, *Salvation to our God that ſits upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever.* What ſhall I ſay? he that ſees Chriſt, not only ſees the Father's glory, but all the Father's glory; for he is not only the ſeat of his glory, but the ſeat and centre of all his glory; *In him dwells not only the fulneſs of God, but all the fulneſs of the Godhead*, Coloſſ. ii. 9. Though finite eyes can never ſee all that infinite fulneſs; yet all that ſee Chriſt do ſee that all that infinite fulneſs, that can never be fully ſeen, is in him. Though a man cannot comprehend the whole globe of the earth in his arms, or ſee it all at once, yet he may ſee it all in a lively repreſentation thereof in a map; even ſo, though we cannot ſee all this fulneſs comprehenſively, ſo as to comprehend it, yet we ſee it all repreſentatively in Chriſt, who is the lively and living repreſentative *of all the divine glory*, and the repoſitory *of all the divine fulneſs*; all the dimenſions of the

divine

divine glory are to be seen in him, even the height and depth, length and breadth thereof. In his humiliation we see the depth of the Father's love reaching down to hell to lift us up; in his exaltation we see the height of the Father's grace, raising us up to sit with him in heavenly places; in the extent of his death we see the breadth of the Father's love, extending, by divine destination, to all the promised seed, and, by the method of application, to whosoever will. In the duration of his life, as a Priest for ever, we see the length of the Father's love, which is like himself, *From everlasting to everlasting*; and so in seeing Christ, in all his estates, we see the Father in all the *dimensions of his glory*. So in all Christ's offices we see all the Father's treasures; why, all the treasures of the Father's wisdom centre in his prophetical office, and that for our illumination; all the treasures of the Father's righteousness centre in his priestly office, and that for our justification; and all the treasures of the Father's power centre in his kingly office, and that for our sanctification; yea, all the treasures of the Father's grace centre in him, as being *All in all* for our complete redemption. Thus *he is made of God unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption*, 1 Cor. i. 30. When we see Christ, then we see the Father in all his glory, in all his fulness, in all his treasures, and that for our eternal salvation, our everlasting consolation, and *good hope through grace*.

Thus I have given you a short and poor hint at the resolution of that question, *He that hath seen Christ, hath seen the Father*; insomuch, that I say again, there is no need of Philip's prayer here, *Shew us the Father*; for he that hath seen Christ, hath seen the Father: and, O happy they, whose eyes have seen *this glory of God in Christ*, while their ears are hearing of it! But I come now to

IV. The *fourth* head proposed, was to shew, *how* and in what *manner* the Father is seen in Christ. Besides the light that the former head may give to this question, I shall add these following particulars.

1. In Christ we see the Father *clearly* and *evidently*, so much is implied in the term SEEING; *He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father*. To know God in Christ, is to see God, because in Christ he is clearly and distinctly known; though faith and sight differ in certain respects, yet faith is a kind of sight; for, *it is the evidence of things not seen*, Heb. xi. 1. In Christ we see clearly and evidently him who *is invisible*, ver. 27. Christ is the clearest and brightest glass that infinite wisdom could contrive to represent the glory of the Father: and as the disciples, when Christ was revealing the Father to them, John xvi. 27, 28, 29. cried out, *Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and not in proverbs, or parables*; so the soul that sees the Father in Christ, sees him clearly and plainly, not in clouds and thick darkness. The Old-Testament church had, in types and sacrifices, a dark representation of Christ, but now we have in Christ, the antetype, a clear representation of the Father; we now see him with *open face*.

2. In Christ we see the Father *savingly*. This is plain from the context, shewing that Christ, who is the glass, the true and living glass, in whom we see the Father, is also the true and living way by whom we come to the Father, and so enjoy him as our God and Father in Christ, ver. 6. My friends, to see the glory of Christ, and the glory of the Father in him, is such a saving sight, that salvation is inseparable from it; nay, salvation is in it; yea more, it is the very thing that formally constitutes everlasting life and salvation: *This is life eternal to know thee*, etc. John xvii. 3. The true and faithful witness, who cannot lye, is saying this to his Father, and you may be sure he will not lye to him or you either. Further, says he, *This is life eternal, to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent*; that is, to see Christ, and to see the Father in him is eternal life: to see God out of Christ is no saving, but a confounding sight to a sinner, but to see him in Christ, is to see him *savingly*; *Look to me, and be saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God, and besides me there is none else*.

3. In Christ we see the Father *comfortably* and *satisfyingly*: it is the best antidote in all the world, against all heart-trouble, therefore, says Christ here, ver. 1. of this chapter, *Let not your hearts be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me*. To believe in God, as a Judge and Lawgiver, is necessary for the secure, to awaken their conscience, but this faith will never pacify the conscience, till you believe also in me, says Christ. I have given satisfaction to the Judge, and his law both, therefore believe also in me, that you may get satisfaction to your heart and conscience both; *Let not your heart be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in me*. God out of Christ is the most terrible; but in Christ, the most comfortable sight that ever was seen; and no wonder that the heart be pleased when it sees in Christ that God is well-pleased; *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased*. To see God in Christ, is to see the Father smiling in the Son's face; and surely they are unbelievers that have not seen God to be well-pleased in him. I do not love to discourage any poor drooping believer; and I shall not deny, but that there are some believers that have very little comfort, but I can hardly think, that they are believers that never had any comfort less or more. What! if ever you saw God in Christ, will you tell me, dare you say for your life that it was no comfortable sight? If so, then I truly think you never yet saw him. I ask not what comfort you feel at present. It may be you are still drooping by reason of unbelief; but if ever you saw him, and his Father in him, I am sure it was a joyful sight at the time, and afforded some satisfaction: so much is imported in Christ's assertion in the text, compared with Philip's petition in the preceding verse, *Shew us the Father, and it sufficeth*; importing, that the sight and knowledge of God is full of satisfaction and refreshment, tending to give full contentment. Well, says Christ, *He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father*, and there is the most satisfying sight of the Father that you can have. It is true, the way of seeing God by faith, as revealed in his Son, is a way not satisfactory to a carnal heart, and believers themselves have a jealousy of it, so far as they are carnal, and unbelieving, which was the ground of Christ's reproof to Philip here, upon which he also instructs him, that here is the only satisfying sight to faith; *He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father*.

4. In Christ we see the Father *applicatively*, and as near at hand. It was unbelief in Philip, that said, *Shew us the Father*, as if the Father

ther had been ſtill at ſuch a diſtance as to be inacceſſible and inviſible; nay, but ſays Chriſt, whatever God be in himſelf abſolutely, and though he remain ſtill in his nature inviſible and incomprehenſible, yet in me, and in me alone, he comes ſo near as that you may ſee him, and embrace him by faith; *He that hath ſeen me, hath ſeen the Father.* To ſee God abſolutely with mortal bodily eyes is impoſſible, he ſtands at an infinite diſtance from us. When we ſee him in the creation, or in any external repreſentation of his glory, we ſee him at an infinite natural diſtance from us as creatures; when we ſee him in the law, or covenant of works, we ſee him at an infinite moral diſtance from us as ſinners; yea, there we ſee him compaſt about with flames of wrath, ready to devour us: but when, through the goſpel glaſs, we ſee him in Chriſt, then we ſee him near at hand; yea, nearly related to us as our God, Friend, and Father in Chriſt. And hence the ſight of faith brings in Thomas's exclamation, John xx. 28. *My Lord, and my God.*

5. In Chriſt we ſee the Father *diſcriminatively*; that is, ſo as to diſcern the perſonal diſtinction betwixt the Father and the Son, notwithſtanding of their eſſential *oneneſs.* The very run of the text and context, both before and after it, declares the diſtinction. O Sirs! the three diſtinct perſons of the glorious Trinity, in their diſtinct perſonal properties, as it is an unfathomable myſtery in itſelf, ſo it would have been for ever hidden and unſeen to us, if Chriſt, the Sun of righteouſneſs, had not riſen; and, in his light, diſcovered the ſame, ſo as we have, in Chriſt, a diſcriminative view of the Father; for we cannot ſee the Son of God in the light of the eternal Spirit, but we muſt, at the ſame time, ſee, that he is the eternal Son of an eternal Father. The diſtinct œconomy and adminiſtration of the three perſons, in the work of our redemption, gives us a clearer view of their perſonal diſtinction than can be had in any other glaſs; nay, I know no other glaſs that can make it known. The glaſs of the creatures ſays, It is not in me to ſhew that: the glaſs of the law ſays, It is not in me; but the glaſs of the goſpel ſaith, Ευρηκα; *I have found it.* And when the Spirit promiſed in the goſpel comes to glorify Chriſt, then, in the glory of the Son, we ſee the glory of the Father: *He that hath ſeen me, hath ſeen the Father.* Hence,

6. In Chriſt we ſee the Father *truly*: *He that hath ſeen me, hath ſeen the Father.* It expreſſes the truth of the matter out of the mouth of him that is truth itſelf. He that hath a true ſight of Chriſt, hath a true ſight of the Father, and a ſight of the true God. *We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an underſtanding, that we may know him that is true; and we are in him that is true. This is the true God and eternal life,* 1 John v. 20. Ye that never yet ſaw Chriſt, you are yet *atheiſts, without God;* you never ſaw the true God to this day, but only a falſe god; a god of your own deviſing; an image of your own brain. But as for you, believer, when you got a true ſight of Chriſt, then you got a true ſight of the true God. We ſee the true Father in the true Son, by the light of the Spirit of truth teſtifying of Chriſt.

7. In Chriſt we ſee the Father, not only truly, but *glorioufly.* This is plain alſo in the text, for notwithſtanding the Lord Jeſus had ſaid, ver. 7. *If ye had known me, ye ſhould have known my Father alſo; yea, and henceforth ye know him, and have ſeen him;* yet Philip ſays, *Lord, ſhew us the Father,* as if there had been ſome other and better way of knowing the Father than by knowing and ſeeing Chriſt; whereupon Chriſt reproves him, and lets him know, that this was the beſt, the only, and the moſt glorious way: *Have I been ſo long time with you, and yet haſt thou not known me, Philip? He that hath ſeen me, hath ſeen the Father; and how ſayeſt thou, Shew us the Father?* If you would have another way of your own, might Chriſt ſay, whereby to ſee the Father, you ſhall find, that the way you would be at, is either impoſſible, or vaſtly inferior to what you enjoy; for, whereas you ſay, *Shew us the Father;* if you deſire an immediate ſight of him out of me, that is impoſſible, and would conſume mortal men, ſo as you know not what you would be at: or, if you deſire only ſuch a ſight of God as Moſes and others got of old, then know, that what they got, comes far ſhort of what you have already when you ſee me; *He that hath ſeen me, hath ſeen the Father's glory;* and not only ſo, but the glory of the Father in the moſt glorious manner that can be ſeen by mortal eyes.

8. In Chriſt we ſee the Father *orderly* and *regularly.* This is imported alſo in the text and context; that as there is no *coming to the Father, but by Chriſt;* nor *ſeeing of the Father, but in Chriſt:* ſo the goſpel-order of coming to God, is by Chriſt; and of ſeeing God, is in Chriſt. And here, indeed, is the true order and evangelical method of acceſs to God, when, by the Spirit, we are led to Chriſt, and by Chriſt to the Father; *Through him we have acceſs, by one Spirit, unto the Father,* Eph. ii. 18. Here is the true order of communion with God, the way in which God deſcends unto us, is the way in which we aſcend unto God. The Father ſent the Son into our nature; and the Son ſends the Spirit into our hearts, that, by the Spirit, we might aſcend to the Son; and by the Son to the Father. Here is the true order of all right worſhipping of God; it is a worſhipping of God in Chriſt, by the Holy Ghoſt. It is the ſame with the order of ſeeing God in the text, where the light of the Spirit being ſuppoſed, wherein alone we can ſee Chriſt, it follows, *He that hath ſeen me, hath ſeen the Father.* So much for the manner.

V. The *fifth* head propoſed, was, to offer ſome *grounds* or *reaſons* of the doctrine, ſhewing whence it is, that they that ſee Chriſt, ſee the Father. The reaſons of a doctrine being the great pillars which ſupport it, and the hinges on which it turns; therefore I muſt mention ſome of theſe for the confirmation of faith in this matter.

1. *He that hath ſeen Chriſt, hath ſeen the Father,* becauſe of the *oneneſs* that is betwixt them; as I ſhewed upon the firſt head. The true ground of our knowing the Father in the Son, is his unity in eſſence with the Father; ſo that though their perſonal properties be diſtinct, yet the eſſence is the ſame in both, and the one is in the other; for thus the Lord Jeſus clears it in the following words, *How ſayeſt thou, Shew us the Father? Believeſt thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?*

2. *He that hath ſeen Chriſt, hath ſeen the Father,* becauſe of the *agreement* that is betwixt them. As they are *one,* ſo they *agree in one;* as it is ſaid

said of *the three that bear witness on earth, the Spirit, the water, and the blood,* 1 John v. 8.; so, much more may it be said of the *three that bear witness in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, that are one,* that they *agree in one*; and indeed their agreement in the work of our redemption is such, that though the several persons of the glorious Trinity have their distinct work, and œconomy therein, yet it is with such a complicated harmony, that the administration of one cannot be seen without seeing that of the other. He that sees, by the Spirit's shining on the word, what the Son hath done, as Mediator, in the Father's name, and as the Father's Ambassador, cannot but see, in the same light, the Father as employing him in that embassy.

3. *He that hath seen Christ, hath seen the Father,* because of the *relation* that is betwixt them. In his *natural* relation, as he is the *Son of God*, we see the first person of the glorious Trinity to be his Father by eternal generation. In his *œconomical* relation, as he is the *Sent of God,* we see God to be his Father by special election, unction, vocation, ordination, and exhibition unto the mediatorial work. Both these, I think, are joined together in that word, John i. 14. *The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us; and we beheld his glory, as the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*

4. *He that hath seen Christ, hath seen the Father,* because of the *likeness* that is betwixt them. Not only as *God* was he in the *form of God, and thought it no robbery to be equal with God,* Phil. ii. 6.; but also as *man,* though he came in the likeness of sinful flesh, yet he had also the likeness of his holy Father about him, being *holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners,* Heb. vii. 26. The pity, mercy, and compassion of his Father; the love, grace, and goodness of his Father, did, when on earth, and does now, in heaven, so appear in him, that whoever have a perfect understanding of Christ, will have a perfect understanding of the Father.

5. *He that hath seen Christ, hath seen the Father,* because of the *liking* that is betwixt them. Not only a *likeness* but a *liking*. Such a liking hath Christ to the Father, that he declares it is his heart's *delight to do his Father's will,* Psal. xl. 8. And if Christ's love be stamped, as it were, on the Father's heart, and the Father's love stamped on Christ's heart, he that hath seen Christ, must see the Father's love and delight. One of the capital letters of the Father's name often mentioned in scripture, is his *Love* to Christ as the Saviour of his people. His love to him, not only as his own Son, but as our Surety. Hence Christ, as Mediator, so frequently says to his Father, John xvii. *Thou hast loved me; thou hast loved me*; and again, *thou hast loved me.* But why three times in the close of that chapter? Why so oft does he repeat this in his intercessory prayer? Why, because as the Father loved him in his undertaking, from all eternity, before the foundation of the world; and loved him in his state of humiliation here, and loves him now in his state of exaltation, and will do so for ever; so the Father's love to them for whom Christ prays and intercedes, is founded, in all the displays of it, upon his love to him; and he hears him always on their behalf, because he loves him; and loves them only in him. In him, they were loved from eternity; in him, they are loved in time; and in him, they will be loved to eternity. His *loving-kindness will he not take away from them,* because his loving-kindness he will not, and cannot take away from him, Psal. lxxxix. 33. It is a matter, therefore, of the greatest moment unto us to know this great letter of the Father's name, which he repeats three times over, *Thou hast loved me.* Now, if Christ bear this golden letter on the breast-plate of his mediation, and shews himself thus clothed with the robes of his Father's loving-kindness, then they that see him, must see the Father's favour to him, and to them in him, according to the measure of faith; and this is the very thing that he does, John xvii. 26. *I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it; that the love wherewith thou hast loved me, may be in them, and I in them.* O matchless mystery! They that have Christ in them, they have the Father's love that he bears to Christ in them. But again,

6. *He that hath seen Christ, hath seen the Father,* because he is the *image* and *representative* of the Father. I distinguish this from the likeness that is between the Father and him; for one may have a likeness to another, and yet not be such an one's actual representative, as Christ is of the Father, 2 Cor. iv. 4. Christ is *the image of the invisible God,* Col. i. 15.; the *brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person,* Heb. i. 3. In his divine person, absolutely considered, he is the essential image of God, even the Father; but thus he is as invisible as the Father; therefore, in his incarnation, he becomes the representative image of God unto the church, that we may have *the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus,* 2 Cor. iv. 6. It is true, the saints are said to be *the image of God,* when they are renewed in a conformity to the nature and will of God; but great is the difference betwixt the image of God in *man,* and the image of God in *Christ.* The image of God in the believer, is like Cæsar's image in his coin; but the image of God in Christ, is like Cæsar's image in his son; his only son and representative. Christ is the image of the *invisible God,* but man is the image of the *visible God*; that is, of Christ, Rom. viii. 29.; in whom God is made visible to us. Christ indeed, as God, is not only the *image of God,* but *the invisible image of the invisible God*; but as man he is the *visible image of the invisible God.* It is true, he is out of sight now, and we cannot see him with our bodily eyes; but as he was visible on earth, and is visible in heaven in our nature; so the only saving sight of him that a sinner can have, is by faith. Suppose it were possible for a sinner on earth, to see Christ in heaven, merely with his bodily eyes, it would not be a saving sight; but now, when, by faith, we see Christ as the representative image of the Father, then we cannot but see the Father in him. He bears the image of all the Father's glorious excellencies; and, therefore, to see his glory, is to see his Father's glory also, and that for the following reason. Further,

7. *He that hath seen Christ, hath seen the Father,* because he is *sent* and *sealed* of the Father for this very end, that he might represent, manifest, and declare the Father; hence, *No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, that is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him,* John i. 18. *All things are delivered to me of my Father,* says Christ, Mat. xi. 27.; *and no man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father*

ther save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him. He was sealed and anointed for this very end: *The Spirit of the Lord God was upon him, that he might bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.* And hence, *God, who, at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake, in times past, to the fathers by the prophets, hath, in these last days, spoken to us by his Son, who is the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person,* Heb. i. 1, 2. Whatever Christ did, either by his preaching, working of miracles, or laying down his life, it was by the appointment of his Father, and to lead us to the Father. He is the way, the new and living consecrated way to the Father. He, therefore, that sees him as the way, does see the Father as the end to which the way leads by divine appointment.

8. *He that hath seen Christ, hath seen the Father,* because the *Spirit*, that *discovers and testifies of Christ*, is equally the Spirit of the Father and of the Son. The Spirit of the Son is the Spirit of the Father; and the Spirit of the Father is the Spirit of the Son; *When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceeds from the Father, he shall testify of me,* John xv. 26. He cannot, therefore, testify of the Son, without testifying of the Father. The Spirit of the Father testifying of the Son, cannot be without reference to the Father; nay, when he discovers Christ, and the things of Christ, he discovers, at the same time, in the same light, the Father, and the things of the Father; *He shall glorify me,* says Christ, *for he shall receive of mine, and shew it unto you,* John xvi. 14, 15. Now, if it be asked, what things of mine he will shew? The answer is, they are the things of the Father; for, *all things that the Father hath, are mine.* The things of Christ are the Father's, and the things of the Father are Christ's. The glory of Christ is the Father's glory; and the glory of the Father is Christ's glory. The fulness of Christ is the Father's fulness; and the fulness of the Father is Christ's fulness. Therefore, he that is the Spirit, both of the Father and of the Son, when he glorifies Christ, and shews the things of Christ, he glorifies the Father, and shews the things of the Father; consequently, *He that hath seen Christ, hath seen the Father.*

VI. The *sixth* head proposed, was, to draw some *inferences* from the whole for the *application.* This doctrine is so vastly great and prolific, that it is not possible for me to overtake all the purposes that ly in the bosom of it, and are deducible from it. The special inferences I design, are for *information, trial, reproof, comfort,* and *exhortation.*

First, For *information.* O how many truths ly in the bosom of this doctrine! That such is the *oneness* betwixt Christ and the Father, *that he that hath seen Christ, hath seen the Father.* There are two great truths here that lead us into many other truths. 1. That there is an *oneness* betwixt Christ and the Father. 2. That he that hath *seen* Christ, *sees* the Father.

1st, Is it so, that there is such an *oneness* betwixt Christ and the Father as I have shewn? Hence we may learn the following lessons.

1. Hence learn, that the *object of faith* is very *great* and *glorious*, far beyond what natural reason, or human understanding can fathom; therefore, our Lord Jesus here, as he makes his essential oneness with the Father the foundation of his assertion, *that they that see him, see the Father:* so he lays down this great mystery, as absolutely necessary to be believed, and apprehended by faith, though it cannot be comprehended by reason. Christ's question to Philip hereupon, is a fundamental question of the gospel catechism: *Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?* Without the faith of this, there is no right worshipping of God; no right apprehension of one God in three persons. This is no indifferent thing to be believed or not. Our eternal life depends upon it. God hath born witness to it from heaven, as I have already shewed.

2. From this *oneness* we may learn, that the doctrine of *Arianism* is *damnable blasphemy*, that denies the supreme Deity of our Lord Jesus, and his essential oneness with the Father. Many affronts have been offered to the crown, and dignity, and royal prerogatives of our Lord in these lands, since we first broke, and then burnt the Covenant of our God, and were ashamed of our glory. But the spreading of Arianism now, in Britain and Ireland, is like a pulling up Reformation by the roots, and a saying, *We will not only pull off the jewels of the Mediator's crown, but we will take the crown itself, and cast it into the mire.* If this error be subtilly maintained among us, pray that God may discover and destroy it, otherwise it will destroy the very foundation of our holy religion. That pernicious error strikes directly against the doctrine of our Lord Jesus here; for, if there be not an essential oneness betwixt him and his Father, then it is not true, that *he that hath seen Christ, hath seen the Father.* If he be inferior to the Father in point of essence, self-existence, independency, or any other essential perfection, then we cannot see all the Father's glory in him *: But let Christ, who is truth itself, be true, and every man a liar. What I have said refutes this abomination.

3. From this *oneness* betwixt the Father and the Son, you may learn the *danger of denying Christ.* To deny the Son is to deny the Father, 1 John ii. 23. *And he is Antichrist that denies the Father and the Son,* ver. 22. And *who is a liar, but he that denies that Jesus is the Christ?* To deny the unity of the same undivided essence betwixt the Father and him, is to deny him to be the true Messias; IMMANUEL, *God with us,* Isa. vii. 14. O the danger of deviating from the doctrine of Christ! *Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son,* 2 John ver. 9. Hence he that deviates from it hath neither. Why? because of their undivided essence, notwithstanding of their personal distinction. It is not possible to deny the one and not the other.

4. Learn hence, how *fearfully Christ was humbled:* what! one with the Father, the Father's *fellow*, and *equal*, and yet a *babe*, a *servant*, a *sufferer*, a *worm!* Psal. xxii. Should an emperor

* When this sermon was delivered, the Arian tenets were not only getting up their head, and overspreading the nation, but there was a process commenced and depending before the supreme ecclesiastical court, against one of our professors of theology, as hinted above, p. 322. for teaching and propagating these tenets. The kindly reception the Arian sentiments were meeting with, the many friends this propagator of them was, at this time, like to have, and in the issue really had, and the small number that appeared courageously against them, no doubt, influenced our Author, both to observe more frequently, in his discourses, the spreading of them, and to express himself more zealously upon the head, justly dreading the dismal consequences thereof.

become

become a fly; yea, ſhould all the glorious angels in heaven become one crawling inſect upon earth, it were not to be mentioned with this humiliation of Chriſt. Oh! how ſadly was the world miſtaken concerning Chriſt, when they took him up to be a mere man, the carpenter's ſon, and did not ſee him to be the eternal Son of God, and eſſentially one with the Father.

5. See here how *gloriouſly adorned Chriſt is with all divine perfections*, and ſo how *infinitely valuable and efficacious all his mediatory actings are*. If he had not been God, equal with the Father, his active and paſſive obedience could not have profited us; for, they had not been dignified with infinite merit, value, and virtue. But now, being one with the Father, his divine nature is the altar that ſanctifies the whole gift; therefore, his blood, is the *blood of God*; his righteouſneſs, the *righteouſneſs of God*: we may ſafely depend hereupon for peace with God, and acceptance to eternal life.

6. Here we may learn the *infinite ability of Chriſt*, to apply, by his power, what he purchaſed by his blood. His *oneneſs* with the Father declares, that as he was able to make all things out of nothing, and does ſtill *uphold all things by the word of his power*; ſo he is *able to ſave to the uttermoſt*: his arm, is the arm of God; his power, is the power of God. It is ſaid, *The ſon of man, even on earth, had power to forgive ſins*, Mat. ix. 6. The Phariſees had made the objection, *Who can forgive ſins but God?* Chriſt takes their own argument to prove that he was God, becauſe he could forgive ſins: and, indeed, to take way the guilt of ſin requires omnipotency; the guilt of ſin hath the whole ſtrength of God's law to back it; and God's law hath the whole ſtrength of his infinite juſtice to maintain it; therefore, there muſt be an infinite power to take away the guilt of ſin, even that power that can break the force of God's law, and ſatisfy the demands of infinite juſtice. The ſame power and ability alſo is requiſite to take away the power of ſin; for, guilt and power are the two great attributes of ſin: infinite power only can deſtroy them. It is to ſome a known maxim, *Ejuſdem eſſe poteſtatis inſtruere & deſtruere.* "No leſs power is required "to deſtroy the world than there was to create "it." In the firſt creation, there was ſomething made out of nothing; yet that *nothing* did not reſiſt: and if God ſhould annihilate the frame of heaven and earth, and reduce it to nothing again, it would ſuddenly ſink; there would be no reſiſtance. But to bring together things that are contrary; to do away ſin, and bring in grace, that are ſo oppoſite one to another, and meet one another with the utmoſt reſiſtance, requires an infinite power to effect it. Sin is not only an enemy, but *enmity againſt God*; and as the mind muſters up millions of objections againſt Chriſt, when he comes to deal with a ſinner; ſo the heart and affections oppoſe him, as it were, in battle array: *In the laſt days perilous times ſhall come; for men ſhall be lovers of themſelves*, 2 Tim. iii. 1—4. There goes the captain *Self-love*, after which follows the body of the army of luſts, *Covetous, boaſters, proud, blaſphemous, diſobedient, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, falſe accuſers, incontinent, fierce, deſpiſers of thoſe that are good; traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleaſure more than lovers of God*, &c. The *weapon of the warfare*, that can defeat this oppoſition, needs to be *mighty through God. Thy people ſhall be willing*, but when? *in the day of thy power:* this is ſaid to, and of our Lord Jeſus, Pſal. cx. 3. Being one with the Father, ſee his infinite ability.

7. From this *oneneſs* betwixt the Father and the Son, we may learn, that *Chriſt was not alone in the work of redemption*; John xvi. 32. *I am not alone, becauſe the Father is with me.* How could he fail, or be diſcouraged, in his work? The power and preſence of the eternal God-head, Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, was with him. O ſee and admire the joint concurrence of the Father with the Son, together with the Holy Ghoſt, in carrying on this great work of redemption! It was the pleaſure of the Father, the pleaſure of the Son, the pleaſure of the Holy Ghoſt, that this work ſhould be carried on and proſper.

8. Hence learn, how *glorious and ineffable is the love of the Father in giving Chriſt*, the ſame in ſubſtance with himſelf, to aſſume our nature, and die for our ſins: *He took not on him the nature of angels, but the ſeed of Abraham:* and the Father put the robe of our nature upon him; *A body haſt thou given me.* Behold, how he loves the nature of theſe whom he hath given to Chriſt, that though he hath them not all with him in heaven, yet he loves to have their picture, his Son in their nature, to ſee them in him, and love them in him. In the faith of this, O what ground of encouragement is there, and what foundation of confidence in coming to the Father in him! that our advocate is ſo near to the Father, ſo nearly related to him, and yet ſo nearly related to us, one with the Father in nature; and yet one with us in nature alſo: *Great is the myſtery of godlineſs, God manifeſted in the fleſh;* and great is the myſtery of divine love, in making him, that is one with himſelf, to be the way to himſelf. Surely, if you come to the Father by this way, you may be ſure you come with the Father's allowance; you may come boldly. Is there acceſs to Chriſt, and yet the Father inacceſſible that way? Nay, that is impoſſible, if you believe this *oneneſs* that *Chriſt is in the Father, and the Father in him.*

9. Hence learn the *neceſſity of divine revelation*, objective and ſubjective: the neceſſity of *ſcriptural* revelation; without which we had wandered in the dark without knowing Chriſt in his *oneneſs with the Father.* O bleſs God for the Bible, and for eyes to look upon it; and ſtudy to improve that privilege. See alſo the abſolute neceſſity of *ſpiritual* illumination and divine teaching, in order to our apprehending this divine myſtery of *Chriſt's oneneſs with the Father.* When Peter confeſſed this, by ſaying, *Thou art Chriſt the Son of the living God*, Chriſt anſwers, *Bleſſed art thou, Simon Barjona; for fleſh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven*, Math. xvi. 16, 17. Let us be humbled under a ſenſe of our ignorance of God and Chriſt, and cry for the Spirit of wiſdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, and in this way.

10. Let us learn, from this *oneneſs* betwixt Chriſt and the Father, the *glorious excellency of Chriſt being one with the Father.* Is he not a glorious object of adoration? *The Lord our God is one Lord.* And, O believer, *He is thy Lord, worſhip thou him*; crying out with Thomas, *My Lord, and my God.* Being one with the Father, is he not a fit portion for your immortal ſouls? His rich-

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es are indeed unſearchable; for they are *all the fulneſs of the Godhead.* It was ſaid, *Who can count the duſt of Jacob?* but much more, who can tell the thouſand part of the believer's treaſure, that hath a right to ſay, *The Lord is the portion of my ſoul!* O immenſe and everlaſting portion!—Being one with the Father, is he not *the fountain of living waters;* the fountain of *all grace,* as well as the channel through which it runs? As *God,* he is the fountain; as *man,* he is the mean of conveyance; that *out of his fulneſs we may receive grace for grace.*—Being one with the Father, is he not the fountain of authority equal with the Father? yea, his law is his Father's law. They that ſin againſt him, ſin againſt the Father: the original authority of the law is not annulled by being put into Chriſt's hand. Are believers under leſs obligation to obedience to the law, as a rule, than before? No, by no means: ſee what gives authority and efficacy to the words of Chriſt, and what obliges us to obey him, otherwiſe we diſobey the Father alſo; *The word which you hear is not mine, but the Father's that ſent me,* John xiv. 24. And this he grounds upon the *oneneſs* betwixt the Father and him, in the preceding part of the chapter. Conſider therefore, man, woman, who it is that ſpeaks to you in the goſpel. Why is the neglect of his word ſo dangerous? It is the Father's word. Why is his voice ſo efficacious, and able to make the dead to hear and live? and why ſhould his word have weight with us, and be credited by us? O! it is the Father's word.—Being one with the Father, is he not a terrible enemy? How ſadly are unbelievers, and enemies to Chriſt, circumſtantiate, and how dreadful will their day be, when he ſhall ſay, *Bring forth theſe mine enemies, that would not that I ſhould reign over them, and cut them in pieces before me! O kiſs the Son leſt he be angry;* for, his anger is God's anger; his wrath is the Father's wrath. It is true, he does not appear now in this goſpel diſpenſation, clothed with robes of wrath, but rather in his robes of grace and mercy; *He is not come to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be ſaved:* but if this Saviour and ſalvation be neglected, he will put on his robes of fury, *And come in flaming fire to take vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the goſpel;* and then his wrath will be ſeen to be the Father's wrath.—Being one with the Father, is he not a glorious, bleſſed, and amiable friend, whoſe friendſhip is worth courting an intereſt in? How happily are they privileged that are intereſted in him, and united to him? What! to be his followers and favourites is a great matter; but, believers, you are more, being the body of Chriſt, and members in particular. O the dignity of union with Chriſt! what a great thing is this to be one with him who is *one with the Father!* John xiv. 20. O believer, you little know and conſider the honour of this relation: *But,* ſays Chriſt, *at that day ye ſhall know that I am in the Father, and you in me, and I in you.* O what is that to be wrapt up with Chriſt in the boſom of a Trinity, *Being one with the Father!* Is he not a ſtrong tower, and mighty ſhield! Is it poſſible that his church on earth can be totally ruined, let men and devils rage as they will? No, no: *The King of Zion is one with the Father.* Is it poſſible that the true believer can totally and finally periſh and fall away? No, it cannot be; his perſeverance is founded upon Chriſt's *oneneſs* with the Father: *There is no plucking them out of my hand, nor my Father's; I and my Father are one,* John x. 28, 29, 30.—In a word, being one with the Father, we need not think it ſtrange that ſuch glorious things are ſpoken of him: let this confirm our faith of all his mediatorial actings. Is it any wonder that he could *ſpoil principalities and powers, and triumph over them in his croſs, and bruiſe the head of the ſerpent?* Could not the power and wiſdom of heaven defeat and outwit the power and policy of hell? Is it any wonder that he could conquer death, and riſe from the dead, being the living and eternal God? Is it any wonder that he, who is one with the Father, could appeaſe the Father's wrath, and bring in everlaſting righteouſneſs, and that the Father is well-pleaſed for his righteouſneſs ſake?—Finally, being one with the Father, what a fit repreſentative is he of the Father's perſon and glory? and what a native poſition does the Lord Jeſus build upon this foundation of *his oneneſs with the Father?* namely, *He that hath ſeen me, hath ſeen the Father.*

2*dly,* Is it ſo, *that he that hath ſeen Chriſt, hath ſeen the Father?* then, in the light of this truth we may *ſee light clearly,* and learn many other great leſſons. As,

1. Do they that ſee Chriſt ſee the Father? Hence I infer, the *groſs darkneſs of our natural ſtate,* and the *groſs ignorance of God in all natural men,* ſo long as they are not enlightened in the knowledge of Chriſt. The mind of man is but a maſs of ignorance: *The underſtanding is darkened,* Eph. iv. 17, 18.; *Yea, darkneſs itſelf,* 1 John ii. 9, 11.; *Under the power of darkneſs,* Col. i. 13. *Partial* ignorance of Chriſt in believers, is the reaſon why they *know God but in part;* therefore Chriſt ſays to his diſciples here, *If ye had known me, ye would have known my Father alſo,* ver. 7. *Total* ignorance of Chriſt in others, is the reaſon why they are *wholly ignorant* of God: therefore Chriſt ſpeaks in the ſame terms to the proud Phariſees, John viii. 19. *Ye neither know me, nor my Father; if you had known me, you would have known my Father alſo.* They that ſee not the glory of Chriſt, as the Father is repreſented in him, they *neither know God nor Chriſt;* they have neither the Father nor the Son: they know not *God,* becauſe they know not the holy perfections of *God's nature* in the principal way deſigned of infinite wiſdom for their manifeſtation: they know not *Chriſt,* becauſe *they ſee not the glory of God in him:* whatever other notions men may have of God, they are utterly ignorant of the heavenly myſtery; and *know not the wiſdom of God in a myſtery.* Again,

2. Hence we may infer, both the *greatneſs of the glory of God,* that is repreſented to us by ſuch an one as Chriſt, and the *greatneſs of the grace of God,* in providing ſuch a repreſentative, in whom we might ſee his glorious perfections, as his eternal Son in our nature. To ſee the natural ſun ſhining in its ſtrength, would ſpoil the ſight of the ſtrongeſt eye; but to look on it through a vail is not offenſive. If God ſhould manifeſt himſelf in his naked glory, we would be dazzled and confounded; but to look to God, in our nature, bringing down his glory to our eye, it invites us to behold it. *God manifeſted in the fleſh:* O Sirs, wonder and be amazed, that God will, in a manner, be no more God, but take another nature, rather than that the brightneſs of his own glory ſhould undoe us! O how willing is he to reveal and make himſelf

ſelf known to poor ſinners that had loſt ſight of him, in that he exhibites Chriſt, *the brightneſs of his glory*, to us, that in him we may ſee all his glory?

3. Do they who ſee Chriſt, ſee the Father? Hence learn the *preciouſneſs of Chriſt*. As in his oneneſs with the Father, we may ſee his infinite glorious excellency in himſelf; ſo in his repreſenting the Father to us, we may ſee the infinite preciouſneſs of Chriſt, and the excellency of the knowledge of him; and the neceſſity of this knowledge unto us; as he is the notable mirror, and looking-glaſs, wherein God is to be ſeen; ſuch a living mirror as can diſcover itſelf, and bring men to look unto it. O wonderful mirror! God in our nature repreſenting God in his nature and perfections, and ſaying, *Look to me, and be ſaved; for I am God, and there is none elſe!* O the preciouſneſs of Chriſt, in whom all the beams of divine glory are contracted, that we may ſee and look upon them through the vail of his fleſh, becauſe we could not endure one glance of the immediate rays of divine glory! O precious Chriſt, as he is thus the only way to the Father! God could get glory to his juſtice in our deſtruction; but, behold, his wonderful love, in laying his Son as a bridge betwixt him and us, that we might return to God upon him: And, O the wonderful love of Chriſt, that he was content to ſtoop ſo low! May not all the creation of God wonder at this? Angels are wondering; and what are we doing that are more concerned than they? O precious Chriſt, as he is the only meeting-place where God meets with us, and we with him! In him we ſee God, and God ſees us; we cannot ſee God ſavingly but in him; and God cannot look on us favourably but in him; for, he is the temple where God dwells, and manifeſts his glory. Where can we meet with God, but in a place where alone we can ſee God? O precious Chriſt, in reſpect of the glory and honour that the Father hath given him as Mediator! As he is the *Son* of God, *the Father, who hath life in himſelf, hath given to him to have life in himſelf*, John v. 26. As he is the *Sent* of God, *all power in heaven and earth is given unto him;* and particularly he is crowned with this glory and honour, of being the *viſible image of the inviſible God*, and of all the divine glory. O the precioufneſs of Chriſt, when ſuch beauty is in him! It is a promiſe of the New-Teſtament days, *Thine eyes ſhall ſee the King in his beauty*. What is this beauty of king JESUS, but that God is in him, and all his glory to be ſeen in him? God is ſaid, under the law, to have dwelt *in thick darkneſs;* but now, when the Son of God hath appeared in the fleſh, in the diſcharge of his office, the ſun of righteouſneſs hath ariſen in his ſtrength and beauty. God himſelf, as to his being and manner of his exiſtence in three diſtinct perſons, with all the glorious properties of his nature, is illuſtriouſly manifeſted to believers. Thus Chriſt is the great light of the world; *They that follow him ſhall not walk in darkneſs, but have the light of life*, John viii. 12. O precious Chriſt! in that hereupon *he is the deſire of all nations*, the deſire of all ſaints, the deſire of all ages! The ſaints of old, that did not enjoy the benefit of the New-Teſtament revelation, expreſs this deſire. See how David prayed for a diſcovery of this glory of God in Chriſt, though he could behold it only in types; *O God, thou art my God, early will I ſeek thee; to ſee thy power and thy glory, as I have ſeen thee in the ſanctuary*, Pſal. lxiii. 1, 2. There was in the ſanctuary an obſcure repreſentation of the glory of God in Chriſt; how much more ſhould we deſire and eſteem that view, which we may now have *with open face, though yet as in a glaſs!* 2 Cor. iii. 18. Whence is it that a hiding Chriſt is ſuch matter of lamentation to believers? Why, the reaſon is, becauſe when he hides himſelf, God is out of ſight; when he ſmiles, the Father ſmiles; when he appears, the Father appears; and, O! how can he be but precious to the believer, when ſuch a precious ſight is to be ſeen in him!

4. Do they who ſee Chriſt, ſee the Father? Hence learn the *excellency of the goſpel*, for there we ſee Chriſt. How highly dignified are we that enjoy goſpel ordinances, and ſacraments? In the goſpel, Chriſt is preſented to the ear; and when we hear him, then we hear the Father. In the ſacraments, he is preſented to our eye; and when we ſee him there, we ſee the Father. How ſad is the caſe of thoſe that want the goſpel! They want the glaſs where Chriſt is ſeen, and ſo are *without God;* and much more ſad is their caſe, that enjoy goſpel ordinances and ſacraments, and yet neglect the great ſalvation, by neglecting to look to Chriſt there exhibited, and are never concerned to get a ſaving ſight of Chriſt there! O how near does God come to them, yet they loſe a ſight of him! How great are the advantages of a clear goſpel diſpenſation? The more bright the glaſs is, the more may Chriſt be ſeen therein; and the more that Chriſt is ſeen, the more is the Father ſeen in him.—The goſpel is a revelation of Chriſt; and herein alſo the difference betwixt the *law* and the *goſpel* appears. The law, as a covenant, yields a terrible ſight of God out of Chriſt; but the goſpel affords a pleaſant ſight of God in Chriſt: *He that hath ſeen me, hath ſeen the Father.*— Which alſo expoſes the malignity of a *legal ſpirit*, and a *legal ſtrain of doctrine*, by the means of which Chriſt is hid and kept out of ſight, and conſequently the Father alſo; or, if he be ſeen, it is not in Chriſt, but, as it were, in the law; and the law not being the *miniſtration of the Spirit* of light, life, and liberty, this is the reaſon why legal doctrine is ſo troubleſome to a goſpel believer; Gal. i. 7. *There are ſome that trouble you, and would pervert the goſpel of Chriſt*, namely, by their legal doctrine, which the apoſtle there ſpeaks of. Again,

5. Do they who ſee Chriſt, ſee the Father? Then hence learn, wherein the very *nature and eſſence of faith lies*, even in the beholding of the glory of God's wiſdom, power, holineſs, juſtice, and mercy, in the perſon and offices of Chriſt, as our Saviour and Surety. In the ignorance of this lies the formal nature of unbelief, 1 Cor. i. 23,—25. Not to ſee the *wiſdom of God*, and the *power of God*, and conſequently all the other properties of his nature in Chriſt, is to be an unbeliever. But to ſee the wiſdom, power, and other glorious attributes of the divine nature in Chriſt, with application, as our Saviour, and Surety, and ſo to ſee God glorifying his perfections thus, is to be a believer. Unbelievers are blinded, ſo as the *light of the glorious goſpel of Chriſt, who is the image of God, ſhines not into them:* but believers are ſeers, as the prophets of old were called; and they *ſee viſions*, as the prophet Joel expreſſes it, Joel ii. 28. What viſions? O! a beatific viſion indeed, to ſee Chriſt, and

and to see the Father in him! What a large field hath faith to travel through; broader than heaven and earth, *even all the fulness of God!* And what a sure footing hath faith also? for when it fixes upon Christ, it fixes upon God in him. Faith looks on Christ as a friend and helper, and so it cannot but see the Father as a friend in him. What solid ground for the *assurance of faith* is here, while faith cannot look to Christ, but it must see the love and good-will of God in him!

6. Do they who see Christ see the Father? Hence learn, whence it is that the *great design of Satan*, from the beginning, hath been to *blind the eyes of men*, and fill their minds with prejudice, *that they may not behold this glory of God in Christ*, 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. And, indeed, this blindness and darkness is gradually cured in believers, by no less means than the almighty power of God; *God, who commanded light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts, to give the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*, ver. 6. And this in a conformity to that promise, Isa. lx. 1, 2. *Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee: for, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people. But the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee.* But, why does the devil raise such opposition to the gospel? and why is he raising a smoke out of the bottomless pit at this day *, to darken that fundamental gospel truth, the *essential oneness* betwixt the Father and the Son, but that people may not see the Father in the Son? Think not strange, that the devil and his instruments are at such pains to cloud and darken the truths of the gospel, wherein Christ is exhibited to us.

7. Do they who see Christ see the Father? Hence learn, what a *happy place heaven is*, and what is the difference betwixt a *fiducial vision here*, and a *beatifical vision hereafter*. Heaven will be the place of the full vision of Christ, and of the Father in him; but the difference is stated, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. *Now we see through a glass darkly*; or, as it may be rendered, BY A GLASS, IN A RIDDLE, a *parable*, or *dark saying*; where our present sight of Christ is spoken of with a double figurative limitation, namely, *through a glass, in a riddle*: THROUGH A GLASS; that is, either a *looking-glass*, which yields but a representation of him; the shadow of Christ is drawn in the gospel, and we have but a representation of him there: or an *optic glass*, or a *prospective*, that helps the sight in beholding things at a distance; as men discover the stars through certain glasses, while the eye itself is not able to discern them: such a glass is the gospel, without which we can make no discovery of Christ at all. Again, the gospel-displays of him are but, as it were, IN A RIDDLE; a parable, or so many dark things, which our weak faith understands but imperfectly. Hence, Song ii. 9. Christ is said *to stand behind our wall, to look forth at the windows, and shew himself through the latteſs*. There is a wall of mortality betwixt him and us, that must be demolished before we can *see him as he is*; we see him now, as it were, through a glass window, through a latteſs; yet when he stands looking forth at the windows of ordinances, shewing and *flourishing himself*, as the word is, through the latteſs of the promise, how unspeakably glorious does he appear? And if so, O what will it be to see him *face to face*, when walls, and windows, and latteſſes, and all will be broken down, so as there shall be no more need of, nor use for these glasses and ordinances! Angels and saints above are so ravished with his glory, and satisfied with his likeness, that they cannot look upon another object. It is said, Isa. xxiv. 23. *The moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his antients gloriously.* O but precious Christ must have a fair face, when the sun blushes and is ashamed to shine before him! Though a child of God were in a hell of misery and trouble all his lifetime in this world, yet the first blink of this fair IMMANUEL in heaven would make amends for all. We may preach this wonderful Lord while we live, but we will never outpreach him; we may praise him to eternity, but shall never outpraise him: *Blessed are they that dwell in his house, they will be still praising him; yea, they will be like him, for they will see him as he is.*

8. Do they that see Christ, see the Father? Hence learn the *grand difference* betwixt the *wicked and the godly*; they differ like darkness and light, blindness and sight: sometimes they wonder at one another as if they were monsters. The godly man wonders at the wicked, to see their carnal life and wicked temper. Oh! how can they laugh and be merry, when they are ready to drop into hell! The wicked also wonder at the saints, and that they *run not with them into the same excess of riot*: why, the one lives upon base, visible, earthly things, the other upon invisible glory, as *seeing him who is invisible*. Give a carnal man the world at his will, he cares not though God's face be hid; he is in his element, as the fish in the water: his language is, *Who will shew us any good*; a good bargain, and a flourishing trade? But the saint is of another temper; the language of his heart is, *Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us*, Psal. iv. 6. Give him all the world, he cares not a straw for it if God hide his face. This makes the difference also betwixt a saint and himself; to-day he is full of joy, though he hath but a bare house, and bare cloaths, and a bare prospect of earthly enjoyments; yea, and be sadly harassed with trouble and reproaches; yet he sings, and rejoices, and triumphs. At another time he is full of heaviness, even though it should be better with him in his outward worldly circumstances, he goes sighing and sorrowing: why? the reason is, one day the Lord shines, and then he is full of joy; another day the *Lord hides his face*, and then *he is troubled*: his heaven lies in seeing Christ's glory, in which he sees the Father's glory also.

9. Do they that see Christ, see the Father? Hence learn, what an *honour it is to be conformed to the Son of God*, as it is said, Rom. viii. 29. *Whom he did foreknow, them he did predestinate to be conform to the image of his Son.* Is it the honour of Christ, as Mediator, to be the representative image of God, *in whom the glory of God is to be seen?* What an honour then is it for the saints to be conformed to the image of Christ? As Christ is in the *form of God*, so they are in the form of Christ, *having Christ formed in them*, Gal. iv. 19. And, being renewed after his image, as the more we see Christ the more we see God; so the more of Christ we see about a man, the more of God we see in him: *This is the honour of all the saints*, according to the measure of their sanctity.

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* See the reason of this assertion briefly accounted for, p. 322, 454.

10. Do they that see Christ, see the Father? Hence learn, what a *dangerous thing it is to slight Christ*, and *contemn him*, who is *the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person*. If any despise the picture, it is an argument of their despising the person represented by it: *They that despise Christ, despise the Father.* And many despise Christ that do not consider that they are doing so; particularly when they despise his sent ambassadors: *He that despises you*, says Christ, *despises me; he that despises me, despises him that sent me.* See John xv. 23, 24. Why, who would be so mad, say you, as to slight Christ? Even all you that slight his counsels, calls, and warnings given you by his word; that slight his people; and slight his ordinances; that slight his worship, such as prayer and praises, whether secret or social, private or public, wherein Christ is honoured and enjoyed. In slighting these you slight Christ himself; and in so doing you despise the Father: for, you despise his representative image; and I will assure you, God will retaliate this treatment, and pay you home in your own coin: *O Lord, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image*, Psal. lxxiii. 20.

11. Do they that see Christ, see the Father? Hence learn, the *awefulness of the day of judgment that is approaching*. Though Christ is constitute to be the judge, Acts xvii. 31.; yet the Father will judge the world in him, and by him; *for God is judge himself*, Psal. l. 6. Then will Christ be seen upon the throne of judgment; *Behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him*, Rev. i. 7.; and when they see him, they will see the Father in him; they will see God in him. It is true, he will not then be God's representative in the capacity of a Saviour to sinners, as now he is, but as a righteous judge of sinners and saints. A sight of God in Christ will not then be a pleasant sight to the wicked; for, he will appear to them, not as a Redeemer, but a revenger: for, he *will appear in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel*: but to believers, who look for him, and to whom he hath appeared graciously, so as they have now seen him, and the Father in him, and who will then be all perfect saints, he *will appear gloriously the second time without sin, to their complete salvation*, Heb. ix. 28. How dreadfully awful will that day be to the wicked that shall see him, and see God in him no other way but as a consuming fire! How joyfully awful also will it be to the saints, who shall see him then, and see the Father in him, as their *everlasting joy*, and *exceeding great reward?*

12. Do they that see Christ, see the Father? Hence also learn, the *great reason and foundation of many other truths*; such as,

(1.) Why is it that a sight of Christ hath such *virtue*, and creates such *blessed effects*, as we see in scripture spoken of it? Even because they who *see him, see the Father.* — Why is the sight of Christ so *astonishing?* because then the *wisdom of God in a mystery* appears. — Why is the sight of Christ so *humbling?* why, because then God is seen in his *majesty* and *mercy* both. — Why, is it such a *strengthening* thing? even because then the *power of God* is discovered. — Why is a sight of Christ so *satisfying?* because then the *grace of God* appears. — The sight is *quieting to the conscience*, for then the *righteousness of God*, in the remission of sin, is declared and manifested, Rom. iii. 25. — The sight is sweetly *filling* and *satiating*, for then the *all-sufficiency* of God is discovered. — Why is a sight of Christ so *heart-chearing*, that the believer can never get his heart up, when prest with guilt, till he get a sight of Christ, and then he gets ease to his mind, and not till then? why, because when he *sees Christ, he sees the Father*; and he finds God is in him reconciled and well-pleased. — In a word, why is a sight of Christ so *sanctifying* and *transforming*, that as they that see him perfectly in heaven are like him? because they *see him as he is*, 1 John iii. 2. So they that even see him *through a glass darkly*, are more and more like him, and *changed into the same image, from glory to glory*, 2 Cor. iii. 18. — Well then, they see the glory of a holy God in him, and the sight affects the heart, both with a sense of their disconformity to him, and with a strong desire of conformity to him; yea, the Spirit darting in the rays of the Sun of righteousness dispels the darkness of sin, and inforces the contrary light of holiness upon the whole man gradually and powerfully, according to the measure of the manifestation and commmunication.

(2.) Why is it that such *honour, worship*, and *adoration* is due to Christ? even because he is the Father's representative image as man, even as he is his essential image as God. It is gross idolatry to worship God out of this image, or by any other image, either mental or real. Ah! shall the devil make men *worship the image of the beast?* Rev. xiii. 1.—8.; and shall not we for ever honour this ever-living, everlasting image of our God? Why is it that what honour is done to Christ, is done to the Father, and what dishonour is done to him, is done to the Father? John v. 23. Because the Father hath ordered, *that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father*; and declares, *he that honours not the Son, honours not the Father.* Why? even as they that see not Christ, see not the Father; and they that know not Christ, know not the Father; so they that do not honour Christ, do not honour the Father. They that disobey Christ, disobey the Father; they that displease Christ, displease the Father; they that believe in Christ, believe in the Father; therefore, says Christ, here in the context, *Ye believe in God, believe also in me*: which intimates this, among other things, that though one may believe in God, in some respect, without believing in Christ, yet we cannot believe in Christ, without believing in God; for, *by him we believe in God*, 1 Pet. i. 21. Again,

(3.) Why is it that the *Father honours them that serve and follow Christ?* John xii. 26. *If any man serve me, him will my Father honour.* Why, they that serve Christ, serve the Father. Why does the Father love them that love Christ? John xiv. 23. Why, the lovers of Christ are the lovers of God; and they are but haters of the Father that are not lovers of the Son.

(4.) Why, is the *anointing said to teach all things?* 1 John ii. 27. Why, when the Spirit makes known Christ, he makes known the Father; and surely they *know all things* necessary to be known; they know all who know him, who is *all in all.* Thus the meanest believer knows more than the wisest philosopher that ever was in the world, if he was ignorant of Christ.

(5.) Why is it that the *Father is employed in glorifying Christ in heaven*, and the *Spirit* sent to *glorify Christ on earth?* See how the Father glorifies

fies him in heaven, Phil. ii. 9, 10. *He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross: wherefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name that is above every name.* What is the reason? see it ver. 11. *It is to the glory of God the Father:* for when the *Son of man is glorified, God is glorified in him*, John xiii. 31.—See also how the Spirit is sent to glorify him on earth, John xvi. 14. Why so? even because when he is glorified, the Father is glorified in him, ver. 15. *All things that the Father hath are mine.* O Sirs, if the Spirit hath been sent to glorify Christ among us to day, then the Father hath been glorified in the Son.

(6.) Why is it that the saints and children of God desire sometimes to be *dissolved*, and to be *with Christ?* why, even that they may see him there, and the Father in him gloriously: for, if they that see him here, see the Father in him, how much more will all his own, and his Father's glory, then be manifested to their everlasting contentment, and full ineffable consolation through the ages of eternity! The sight of Christ that the believer gets is of such an attractive nature, that the heart affected with the glory of Christ, is just like the needle touched with a loadstone; it is in constant motion till it fix on its proper point: so is the believer's heart in a continual motion towards Christ, though yet, perhaps, like the needle, in a weak tremulous manner, the soul sighs, and sobs, and pants, and grones, in reading, in hearing, in prayer, in meditation, yet still pressing forward till it come to its centre in heaven.

13. Hence learn, what reason MINISTERS have to *preach Christ*; what reason PEOPLE have to *learn Christ*; what reason SINNERS have to *receive Christ*; and what reason SAINTS have to *love Christ*. Why, they that preach Christ, preach the Father; they that learn Christ, learn the Father; they that come to Christ, come to the Father in him and by him; and they that love Christ, love the Father. They who do not preach Christ, let them busk up, deck, and adorn their sermons with all the flowers of rhetoric and oratory in the world, and with all the expressions of seeming respect to God imaginable, yet they cast a cloud upon the glory of the Father, when they do not preach Christ. As *he that honours not the Son, honours not the Father that sent him*, John v. 23.: so he that does not preach Christ, does not preach the Father. Little wonder then, that honest ministers are always beating upon this string: O! let none blame them for preaching Christ; for, he is both the ALPHA and OMEGA, the first and last letter and lesson of our religion; *The author and finisher of faith.* We cannot preach the Father's mind and will, concerning any part of our salvation, without preaching Christ. Who can learn the Father's enlightening, justifying, sanctifying and saving grace, without learning Christ, as *made of God to us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption?* Who can learn repentance towards God, which is a turning from sin to God, without learning, in order of nature before it, *Faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ*, Acts xx. 21.? seeing there is no turning to God, but in Christ; no coming to the Father but by him. Repentance, then, toward God is the end; and faith, toward our Lord Jesus Christ, is the mean towards that end: and so, with respect to faith itself, there is no believing in God aright without believing also in Christ, *By whom we believe in God:* not can there be any love to God, but in Christ; we are not lovers of the Father, if we be not lovers of Christ; and good reason have the saints to love Christ, because they see his glory, and the Father's glory in him. *He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.*

Use 2. The *second* use might be by way of *trial* or *examination.* Have you got a saving sight of Christ at this, or any such occasion? Why then, the great mark of it is, if you have *seen Christ*, you have *seen the Father:* if you have seen Christ's glory, you have seen the Father's glory in him; for, *He is the brightness of the Father's glory:* if you have seen Christ's person, you have seen *the express image of his person:* if you have seen Christ, you have seen the Father in all these and the like respects that I mentioned in the doctrinal part. Hath the *God, who commanded light to shine out of darkness, shined into your heart, to give you the light of the knowledge of his glory in the face of Christ?* Then you have seen Christ indeed, if you have thus got the light of the knowledge of the Father's glory in his face. It is possible, indeed, that you may have seen Christ, and yet not know that you have seen the Father, even though it be impossible to see Christ and not see the Father; for, Philip here, had seen Christ, and seen the Father in him also, as Christ declares, ver. 7. *Henceforth you know him, and have seen him.* Notwithstanding this declaration of Christ, Philip's saying, *Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth,* intimates the weakness of his faith, the darkness of his view, and that he knew not that he had seen the Father; upon which Christ, having reproved him for his ignorance, saying, *Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?* he again resumes the doctrine he had delivered, ver. 7. where he had said, *If ye had known me, ye would have known my Father also:* and he resumes it here yet more clearly and expressly, saying, *He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father; how then sayest thou, Shew us the Father?* If any believers here, who think they have seen Christ, be yet at a loss to know if they have seen the Father, let them hearken to what Christ is here saying to them, as he did to Philip, *Have I been so long time with thee, and yet hast thou not known me? He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.* But are you still in the dark, Philip? Do you not yet know, believer, that you have seen the Father in Christ, and would you have this question further opened?

QUEST. *How shall I know, if I have seen* CHRIST *in such a saving manner as to see the* FATHER *in him?*

For helping the weak believer in this matter; if he whose prerogative it is to shew us the Father, would send his Spirit to shine on a mark or two for clearing this, that in seeing Christ, you have seen the Father, there are two ways by which you may try it, namely, 1. By reflecting on the *object.* 2. By the *offspring* of this saving sight.

1st, Take a review of the *object* of this sight, namely, CHRIST, in whom the Father is seen. And if ever you have seen Christ, you may know you have seen the Father: for, there are certain relations wherein he stands to the Father, not only as he is his eternal Son, but also as he is our Saviour. He stands related to the Father, I say, in these respects so closly, that it is impossible to see him without seeing the Father. As he that sees a Son, cannot

not but know, not only that there is a father, ſince the ſon is a *relative* that muſt have a father; but alſo, if the ſon be ſo like him, the very picture of the father, then he that ſees the ſon cannot but be ſaid to ſee the father; much more ſo it is here; Chriſt, the Son, being not only the Father's picture, but, in reſpect of his Deity, being clothed with the very ſame eſſential perfections, the ſame individual attributes and excellencies. Such is his perſonal equality in power and glory, and eſſential oneneſs and ſameneſs in ſubſtance with the Father, that there is no ſeeing of him without ſeeing the Father. But more paticularly, with a view to the relations wherein he ſtands to the Father, even as he is our Saviour.

1. If you have ſeen Chriſt, you have ſeen him to be the Father's *Choice*; *Behold mine Elect*, ſays the Father of him, Iſa. xlii. 1. Why, then you have ſeen the Father chooſing him from all eternity, to be a Saviour and Surety for loſt ſinners.

2. Have you ſeen him as the Father's *Servant*, in this work of our redemption? *Behold my Servant, whom I uphold.* If ſo, then you have ſeen the Father in his *matchleſs love*, putting his ſervice in his hand, and *laying help upon One that is mighty to ſave.*

3. Have you ſeen him as the Father's *Darling* and *Delight? Mine Elect, in whom my ſoul delighteth*, ſays the Father; then you have ſeen the Father taking pleaſure in him, as his faithful and righteous Servant in managing this work. And I will aſſure you, ſuch views of the Father, in Chriſt, are no ſmall thing. Again,

4. Have you ſeen him as the Father's *Ambaſſador*, and *as the Sent and Sealed of the Father*; and that *him hath God the Father ſealed?* Why then, to be ſure, you have ſeen (as imported in this) the Father ſending, ſealing, and clothing him with a commiſſion to this effect, *Of ſaving ſinners, of whom you are the chief.* There is a notable ſight of the Father. Again,

5. Have you ſeen him as the Father's *Gift*; the *unſpeakable Gift of God, given for a Covenant of the people?* This imports a *ſight of the Father*, as giving him freely for that end, to be our complete ſalvation; and ſo *you have ſeen the Father in him.* Again,

6. Have you ſeen him as the Father's *Treaſurer*, *In whom are hid all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge; all the treaſures of divine fulneſs in him?* Then you have ſeen the Father's fulneſs in him. And what better ſight of the Father can you have, than to ſee him in all his *fulneſs*; to ſee him in *Chriſt, in whom dwells all the fulneſs of the Godhead bodily.* Again,

7. Have you ſeen him as the Father's *Secretary*, ſent to reveal the heart, and mind, and will of the Father to you? Then you have ſeen the *Father's councils in him*, yea, the *Father's thoughts*; even though, *as heaven is higher than the earth, ſo his thoughts are higher than our thoughts*, yet when you ſaw *Chriſt*, you ſaw his thoughts towards you to be *thoughts of good, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.* While unbelief prevailed, and a legal ſpirit, you judged he had ill thoughts and deſigns againſt you, and a mind to deſtroy you; but when, by faith, you ſaw Chriſt, then you ſaw he had better thoughts, and a mind to ſave you. And did you not win far forward, and admitted very near, to ſee the Father, when, in Chriſt, you ſaw his very mind, and thoughts, and counſel concerning you? How can you ſay then, if you ſaw Chriſt, that you did not ſee the Father? Again,

8. Have you ſeen him as the Father's *Image* and *Repreſentative?* Then ſurely you have ſeen the Father repreſented by him, *Who is the image of the inviſible God; the brightneſs of his glory, and the expreſs image of his perſon*; his *eſſential* image, as God; and *repreſentative* image, as man. And hence,

9. Have you ſeen him as the Father's *Equal?* the *man that is my Fellow, ſays the Lord of hoſts, who thinks it no robbery to be equal with God?* Then you have ſeen the Father's *power* and *glory* in him; for, therein they are perſonally equal, and eſſentially one.

10. In a word, have you ſeen him, and the Father's *furniture* about him, qualifying him as Mediator for the great work of our redemption, both by price and power? Then you have ſeen the Father's *Spirit* in him, and reſting upon him, as a *Spirit of wiſdom and underſtanding, a Spirit of counſel and might, a Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord*, Iſa. xi. 2. *For he hath put his Spirit upon him, that he might bring forth judgment to the Gentiles*, Iſa. lxii 1. *The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me*, ſays Chriſt, *for he hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and to open the priſon doors to them that are bound.* Got you never an apprehenſion of Chriſt, as being *anointed with the oil of gladneſs above his fellows*, and as having a ſupereminent unction of the *Spirit above meaſure?* If you have thus ſeen the Spirit of the Father in him, it is one of the greateſt ſights that can be ſeen; for, to ſee *the Father's Spirit in the Son*, is to ſee *a whole Trinity, Father, Son*, and *Holy Ghoſt*, with one glance of the eye of faith.—Well then, can you ſay, believer, but that when you ſaw Chriſt in theſe reſpects I have mentioned, *you alſo have ſeen the Father?*—Try it then by the *object* of this ſight.

2*dly*, Take a view of the *fruit* and *offspring* of this *ſaving ſight*. As they that ſee Chriſt ſee the Father, and cannot but ſee the Father's wiſdom in providing him, the Father's love in beſtowing him, the Father's grace in accepting him as the Surety, and the Father's ſatisfaction with him and in him, for his doing and dying in our room and ſtead, according to the Father's will, and council of peace that was betwixt them both; ſo this ſight cannot but affect the hearts of all that have the happineſs to enjoy it. If a prince come to a poor man's houſe, how ſhall we know whether he be ſtill there? Though we ſee him not, we may know by his train, and theſe that attend him; if we ſee his train, we know he is there: even ſo, the believer may know whether Chriſt be revealed in him, and in his heart, though he be at preſent out of ſight, if his train be attending: Iſaiah *ſaw the Lord upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple*, Iſa. vi. 1. Now, it is poſſible the train may be ſeen, when the Lord himſelf is not ſo diſcernable. There is a train of *bleſſings* that attends a ſaving revelation of Chriſt, or a ſaving ſight of him, that you would try yourſelves by. I ſhall name a few of them; for, if *you have ſeen Chriſt, and the Father in him*, then the ſight was generative, *So as to regenerate you, and beget all graces and virtues in you*, John i. 13, 14, 16. There believers are ſaid *to be born, not of the will of the fleſh, nor of the will of man, but of God*: not of their free will, but of God's free grace. Well, but by what means are they thus regene-

rate? It follows, *The Word was made flesh, and we beheld his glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.* The great mean of their being begotten anew is, their *beholding the glory of the only begotten of the Father;* and, as it is by this sight they are begotten, so by this all graces are begotten, as you see, by comparing verses 14. and 16. together, *We beheld his glory,—full of grace and truth: and out of his fulness have we all received, and grace for grace.* A saving sight of Christ then, and of the Father in him, hath a powerful generative quality. Would you know, believer, when you was born again, or the first moment of your regeneration? It was that moment wherein you first got a view of the *glory of the only begotten of the Father;* and if you would try it by the fruits of it, the offspring is so numerous, that we cannot undertake to speak of all. I shall mention some of the many things that this sight begets.

1. This sight begets *faith*, it ushers in believing; *He that sees the Son, and believes in him, hath everlasting life*, John vi. 40. It is by beholding him, we believe in him; *Looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith*, Heb. xii. 2. There is a looking to him by spiritual understanding, in order to our looking to him by faith; a looking to Jesus, the *object of faith;* and, in this way, we are made to find him the *Author of faith.* There is a looking to him *for faith*, and a looking to him *by faith.* Can you say, Alas! I could not believe, though give me a world, till he manifested his glory to me; and when I saw his glory, then I could not but believe that the first act of faith was begotten by the first view of Christ; and that all the after-acts of faith depended upon the further discoveries of Christ; *He manifested forth his glory, and his disciples believed on him*, John ii. 11.

2. This sight begets *hope*, 1 Pet. ii. 3. It is there declared, that *by the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, manifesting himself particularly in Christ's resurrection from the dead*, believers are said to be *begotten again to a lively hope.* O believer, when once you beheld this glory of God in Christ, was not then your languishing despair turned to a lively hope? Was not your fears of hell and wrath, which you was convinced was your natural inheritance, as a child of wrath, and an heir of hell, was not this fear of hell and wrath, I say, in the day when you saw Christ, turned to *a hope of an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away?*

3. This sight begets *repentance* and *sorrow for sin*; Zech. xii. 10. *They shall look on him whom they have pierced, and mourn.* Was it possible, for you, O believer, to look upon this glorious Sun of righteousness without a watering eye, or a mourning penitential heart? Did not the heart, that was harder than a flint, become softer than wax, melting before the warm fire of the love of God, manifested in Christ?

4. This sight begets *love; Whom having not seen*, [*viz.* by sense, but by faith,] *we love*, 1 Pet. i. 8. Love to his person, as being, the *brightness of the Father's glory;* love to his people, as the *excellent ones of the earth;* love to his statutes, saying, *O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes;* love to his ordinances, and to the place where his honour dwells. Is it possible you could see him, and yet not love him in all respects?

5. This sight begets *liberty;* for, *Where the Spirit of the Lord is*, [as a Spirit of revelation, discovering the glory of Christ,] *there is liberty*, 2 Cor. iii. 17. O Sirs, did not the sight of the glory of God, in Christ, enlarge your heart, and loose your bonds, and set you at liberty from your fetters and fears; at liberty from the law and legal bondage? Got you not liberty to unbosom yourself unto the Lord; liberty to plead, and liberty to pray, and liberty to praise, and all the doors of your prison cast open?

6. This sight begets *joy* and *satisfaction; In whom, though now we see him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory*, 1 Pet. i. 8. *Abraham saw my day, and rejoiced*, says Christ; and *then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord.* This is sweetly prophesied of, Isaiah xxxv. 1, 2. *The wilderness and solitary places shall be glad, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose; it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing;* why all this? It follows, *They shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God.* O believer, did not your heart leap within you, when you saw the glory of the Lord? It is true, people may have a kind of joy, in that which will not give solid satisfaction; but here is *full satisfaction*, as well as *fulness of joy.* A man may say, when he is highest in the comforts of this world, Ah! there is no solid permanent satisfaction here; there is a want; there is a want; death and judgment trip up the heels of all that comfort: but it is not so here; the man that hath seen the glory of the Lord, may say, Now, I can trample upon all worldly joy; now, I can triumph in the view of death, judgment, and eternity: *Thanks be to God, which always causes us to triumph in Christ. Now is my soul satisfied as with marrow and fatness.*

7. This sight begets *longing;* yea, longing for more and more of the *knowledge of Christ*, and of the *glory of God* in him; *One thing have I desired of the Lord, and that I will seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord*, Psal. xxvii. 4. So Paul, Phil. 8,—14. It begets a longing to be *above*, where the vision will be full and uninterrupted; and a *desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ.* O to be for ever with the Lord! It begets a longing to be free of *sin* and *unbelief*, and every thing that hinders the immediate vision and enjoyment of the Lord.

8. This sight begets *holiness* and *conformity* to the object discovered; *Beholding his glory, we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory;* and so he becomes thereby *all glorious within.* Notwithstanding of the remainder of corruption, and the prevelance of it; yet there is something within that will have the last word, so as the devil cannot get his work finished in that heart. The devil is said to work *effectually in the wicked;* that is, says one, *He finishes his work:* but in the saints he cannot get that done; for, grace comes after, and overthrows that work some way or other. Thus the devil sifted Peter, and foiled him; but afterwards Peter wept out the devil's work upon Christ's looking upon him, and his looking to Christ. Indeed, a new sight of Christ, gives always a new victory over sin, and makes the soul advance in holiness, purity, and conformity to the Lord Jesus; *Beholding his glory, full of grace and truth, we receive out of his fulness, grace for grace*, as the wax receives letter for letter from the seal. This sight of God in Christ, is not a dry, barren speculation, that leaves you as proud and carnal, malicious, wicked, and worldly as ever, no; you may suspect it is not a saving

a saving sight, if it did not, in some measure, leave an impression of the holiness of God upon you.

9. This sight begets *humility, self-loathing*, and *abasement*; other knowledge puffs up, but this presses down the soul to nothing before the Lord, saying, *Now mine eyes see thee; wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes*, Job xlii. 5. The same light that discovers the greatness of God, discovers the meanness of the creature; the holiness of God seen, discovers the vileness of the creature; the fulness of God being seen, then appears the emptiness of the creature, and the baseness thereof: hence the holiest of men, upon the discovery of the Lord, must cry out, *Behold, I am vile*, Isa. vi. 5. Then is the soul *ashamed and confounded*, when the Lord is discovered as *pacified towards it*, Ezek. xvi. 63. O! did not the sight of the glory of God in Christ, believer, make the *haughtiness of man to fall*, and the *loftiness of man to be laid low!* The fairer that Christ is seen, the viler does the believer see himself; and then self-wisdom, self-righteousness, self-love, are dashed down to the ground, and covered with shame and blushing.

10. This sight begets *holy boldness* and *confidence*. Notwithstanding the humbling nature of this view; yet it is emboldening also, leading the soul to say, *Truth, Lord, I am a dog*; but yet, be what I will, I must have a *crumb*. Now, that thou hast let me know where my supply lies, I will trust and confide in thee alone for it: *They that know thy name, will put their trust in thee; for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee*, Psal. ix. 10.

In a word, if you have seen Christ, and the Father in him, did not the sight beget *peace of conscience* before God? *Being justified by faith, we have peace with God*; and this flowing from the sight and knowledge of God; for, *by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many*, says God. According to the measure of faith, was there never a *joy and peace in believing* that you found?—Did not the sight beget *patience* under crosses that you was compassed with? It is said of Moses, *He endured, as seeing him that is invisible*.—Were not all worldly *troubles, trials*, and *reproaches* made easy to you, when the Spirit of God, and of glory was resting on you?—Did not the sight beget *zeal* for the glory of God, and for the good of the souls of others, and make your heart cry out, O that all the world would come and see this glory, and admire the King in his beauty?—Did not the sight beget *strength* and *fortitude*, so as *the joy of the Lord was your strength*; and you could say, *I can do all things through Christ strengthening me*; for now *he hath strengthened me with strength in my soul*; and made me to say, *In the Lord have I righteousness and strength?*—Did not the sight beget a *chearful gospel-walk*, according to that word, Psal. lxxxix. 15, 16. *Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound; they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance. Thou art the glory of their strength; and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted?*—Did not the sight beget *praise* and *adoration*, saying, *O! what shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits?*—Did it not beget *wonder* and *admiration*, saying, *What am I, and what is my Father's house, that thou hast brought me hitherto; Is this the manner of man, O Lord; and what can David say more unto thee?*—Did not the sight beget *contempt of the world*, and a *selling of your* ALL *for this Pearl of great price?* saying, *I count all but loss and dung, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ*. Could you not trample on the world as dung, when the glory of the Lord appeared to you? Was not Christ more precious to you than a thousand worlds of gold? Hath the sight you got of God, in Christ, such a fair offspring as this? Then it looks like a saving sight.

I shall add, finally, Did not this sight of the glory of God in Christ, O believer, beget in you an *indelible impression of that glory* that time cannot utterly wear out? It is prophesied, Isa. lx. 19. *The Lord shall be thy everlasting light, and thy God thy glory*. This *light of the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, in the face of Jesus Christ*, is, in some respect, everlasting; while the *candle of the wicked is put out*, and the candle of the hypocrite put out. Hence, Heb. vi. 4.—though *once enlightened, they may fall away*; the apprehension and impression of all that common light may utterly fail: but it is not so here with the believer; *the Lord is his everlasting light*, even though his Lord may, for a moment, *hide his face from him*.

Perhaps some believers may now be saying, Whatever be the fair offspring of this saving sight of God in Christ, that you have been mentioning, though I sometimes think, I have got that sight you speak of, and at certain times have found some of these fruits and offspring thereof, yet have I not now reason to suspect, it is but a common light, like that of the hypocrite, and that I never got that saving sight when I find, to my experience, that all the fruit and offspring thereof is now dead and gone, dead and buried, dead and out of sight? For I think sometimes not so much as the least impression thereof remains.

O believer, if you have seen Christ, and the Father in him, examine it over again, and you will find it otherwise than you suppose, and that there is a living impression remains, whether it be lively or not: therefore, I charge you before God, believer, to be ingenuous in this matter; was there not something in Christ you saw, that took such impression on you, that you have never to this day forgotten? It may be you have forgotten many friends and acquaintances, that are dead and away; you have forgotten many sermons that you heard in your lifetime; you have forgotten many words that past betwixt you and your neighbours some years ago; you have forgotten some visits that certain friends made to you; but there was a visit that Christ made to you at such a time, there was some sight that you got of him, and some word that you got from him, and that is a thing you can never forget to this day. I speak either of the first sight that ever you got of him, or of some following remarkable visits that he made to you, in displaying his glory: for a believer may get a thousand views of Christ in his lifetime, but there are some views that he gets, that if he were to live a thousand years, he could never forget them. Have you not a fresh remembrance, believer, to this day, of such a spot of ground where you saw his glory? Was not such a place like a Bethel, a house of God? and such another a place like a Peniel, where you saw God in a manner face to face? Whatever cloudy days have intervened since that time, yet you can never forget it; for, so far as you can judge in the sight of the heart-searching God, it carried all the marks of a saving manifestation along with it. Why then, will you say, that all

all the fruits and impreſſion of it are dead and gone? For there is a living rememberance of it in your heart to this day, and a living wiſh and deſire at the root of your heart, ſaying, O to ſee that glory of God again! What is the reaſon, that this can never wear out of your head and heart? Even becauſe it is an eternal and incorruptible thing; *The Lord is thy everlaſting light:* and you will carry this impreſſion into eternity with you; and heaven will perfect the viſion: *We ſhall be like him, for we ſhall ſee him as he is.*

Uſe 3. The *third* uſe might be for *conviction* to the wicked and ungodly; that is, to all unbelievers that never yet have ſeen Chriſt, and conſequently, never ſaw God the Father in him; and, like Gallio, *care for none of theſe things*, and that are not concerned with ſuch ſpeculations. Why, man, have you no concern in this matter? Is it not of everlaſting moment, whether you got a ſaving ſight of Chriſt, yea, or not? Know you not, *that if our goſpel be hid, it is hid to them that are loſt, in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, leſt the light of the glorious goſpel of Chriſt, who is the image of God, ſhould ſhine unto them?* 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. And that it is *life eternal, to know God in Chriſt*, and conſequently eternal death to want this ſight? Will you tell me, if a phyſician ſhould come into a chamber where there are two ſick perſons, and ſhould ſay, the one will die of that diſeaſe, and the other will recover; would they not think it their concern to enquire after this matter? Much more is this a concern above all ſuch concern. When I tell you that hear me, that one part of you are believers, that have ſeen the glory of God in Chriſt, and you ſhall live, and live for ever; the other part, and, alas! the greateſt part are unbelievers, that have never ſeen the *glory of God in the face of Chriſt;* and if you live and die in that caſe, you die for ever, and will ly eternally under his revenging wrath: and is all this a matter of moon-ſhine to you? If you ſee him not now, you ſhall never ſee him in mercy hereafter. This ſight of Chriſt, and of his Father in him, is no bare empty ſpeculation; nay, it is the very root and foundation of all practical godlineſs: there is no conformity to his image, without beholding of his glory. Many ſpeak of following the *example of Chriſt*, even as ſome write volumes of it, as if it were to be attained by a bare imitation of his actions; but this is impoſſible, without a view and intuition of his glory, which alone is accompanied with a transforming power, to *change us into the ſame image, from glory to glory.* What makes one half of the generation ſo groſly wicked, and another ſo madly ſuperſtitious, but the want of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Chriſt? Why is the throng of the nobility and gentry of our day, beſides the commonalty, running ſo faſt to the devil? And why are ceremonies, and ſuperſtitious human inventions in the worſhip of God, become ſo faſhionable †? Why, people do not ſee the glory of God in Chriſt, in the glaſs of his own pure ordinances and inſtitutions; therefore they make uſe of painted glaſſes: they do not ſee the internal glory, therefore they turn to external pomp and forms: but, as the more paint is put upon the glaſs-window the leſs light is conveyed through it; ſo, the more people pleaſe themſelves with a painted ceremonial worſhip, the leſs, in the righteous judgment of God, do they ſee of the glory of God; yea, the more do they run out of God's way, and *love darkneſs rather than light.* May the Lord pity a poor ignorant generation, that profeſs the knowledge of Chriſt, and yet know nothing of the *glory of God in the face of Chriſt.* But I ſhall not enlarge here.

Uſe 4. The *fourth* uſe might be for *conſolation* to believers that have ſeen Chriſt; for, *he that hath ſeen Chriſt, hath ſeen the Father.* O believer, you have ſeen much that have ſeen Chriſt, you have ſeen his glory and his Father's glory too. —Here is comfort againſt the apprehenſion you have of your own *ignorance of God:* Oh! ſays the man that ſees God in Chriſt, *I am more brutiſh than any man; I have not the underſtanding of a man:* ſo fooliſh am I and ignorant, *I am as a beaſt before God.* Indeed they that ſee him beſt, are under moſt humbling impreſſions that they cannot ſee, and of the impoſſibility of ſeeing him, during the ſtate of ſin and mortality; this keeps the believer's heart in awe, and cauſes him to walk before God with holy fear and reverence, knowing how dangerous it is to think amiſs of God, and yet how difficult it is to think aright of him. However, believer, you that have got a ſaving ſight of Chriſt, you have ſeen farther than you are apt to think you have ſeen, though it is but a ſmall portion of God that at beſt we know; it may be, with Philip, when you ſaw Chriſt, you did not know that you ſaw the Father. There is more glory in the object of faith, than you are ready to take up; but the Lord Jeſus is ready to teach you, and make you know better what you know. There is more knowledge and perſuaſion of the love and grace of God in Chriſt, in the act of faith, than the believer may be aware of upon reflection, till the Lord Jeſus diſcover to him anew what his faith is, and let him know what he ſaw and diſcerned when he ſaw Chriſt; he lets you know, *He that hath ſeen me, hath ſeen the Father.*—Again, O believers, here is comfort againſt all *troubles* and *trials* you can meet with in this valley of tears: let me ſay to you as Chriſt ſaid, Mat. xiii. 16. *Bleſſed are your eyes, for they ſee.* You cannot be unhappy and miſerable to whom the Lord hath manifeſted his glory, though you be a poor man, a plundered man, a perſecuted man, a ſick man or woman, or whatever elſe can be called miſery about you; if you believe Chriſt, who is the truth, you are a bleſſed man, a bleſſed woman. Though you were ſick, and ſhould never ſee health; though you were weak, and ſhould never ſee ſtrength; though you were poor, and ſhould never ſee wealth; though you were baniſhed, and ſhould never ſee your own country or friends; yea, though you were ſtark blind, and ſhould never ſee the ſun in the firmament; yet if you have ſeen Chriſt, and ſeen the Father in him, *bleſſed are your eyes, for they ſee.* All the bleſſedneſs in the world, and that ever mankind enjoyed from the creation, put all together, is not worthy to be compared with one glance that a believer hath of the glory of God in Chriſt. And it may be, there are ſome believers here of ſuch ſtanding, that they have got a

† Epiſcopacy, though reformed from, and abjured by our Covenants, was, at this time, in ſeveral places, meeting with encouragement; and approved by many of high rank.

thouſand

thousand of these glances, since the Lord began to discover himself, and reveal his glory to them. For shame then, believer, be not discouraged with every trifle in the world; *your lines are fallen in pleasant places, and you have a goodly heritage.* Never look dejected any more; envy not the wicked any more, but rather pity them, and weep for them, whatever be their outward pomp and prosperity, you have infinitely greater treasure. *We have this treasure in earthen vessels*, saith the apostle; well, what treasure? even the manifestation of God's glory in Christ, that is there spoken of: therefore you may say, believer, though I have not worldly profit, nor pelf, nor money, nor honour, let the world have all, yet I have a good bargain. O believer, pity the world that know no better happiness than good meat and brave clothes; that know no better enjoyment than cabaling, eating, drinking, dancing, roaring, dicing, carding, hunting, gaming. Alas! if they were not mad they could not be merry in that case, being *without God in the world.*—Here is comfort against *desertion*; have you seen him once, you will see him again; though he *hide himself for a moment*, yet he is the *God of Bethel, where you anointed the pillar, and vowed the vow unto him.*—Here is comfort against *death*; though you should die poor and mean; yea, though you should die distracted, yet having seen his glory, you shall see him in glory, and praise him for ever: your *eyes have seen his salvation*; and therefore, though you know not in what circumstances you shall die, or how soon you shall depart, yet you may well be content to die what death the Lord will, and how soon soever he pleases, saying, *Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.* And whenever death closes your bodily eyes, you shall see him *face to face.*—— Take home all the strong consolations that God allows you who have seen Christ.

Use 5. The *last* use should be in a word of exhortation. And our exhortation shall consist of two branches, 1. To those who have never yet seen Christ, nor the Father in him. 2. To believers, who have already seen Christ.

1*st*, Our exhortation shall first be directed to *unbelievers*. Do they that see Christ see the Father? O then, you that never saw before, *Come and see; come and see this great sight!*

[1.] For *motives* consider, 1. The *excellency* of this sight. 2. The *necessity* of this sight.

1. Consider the *excellency* of this sight. To see all the great works of God is a great thing, but to see God himself, who is invisible, in his own image and representative, is an excellent sight. O the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, in whom we have the knowledge of the Father! The holy properties of the divine nature are not only represented to our faith in Christ, as to their own essential glory, but as they are exerted for our salvation: for in him we see infinite wisdom, power, justice, holiness, and mercy exerting themselves, in the contrivance, constitution, and efficacious accomplishment of the great work of our redemption and salvation. This gives, as to our view, an unspeakable lustre to the native amiableness of these divine attributes. As they are eternally resident in the divine nature, and absolutely the same with it, we cannot so comprehend them as to have any endearing, satiating view of their glory; but as they are exerted to our salvation, these beams of glory shine with unspeakable ravishment; *O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!* Rom. xi. 33. Here is a great privilege, and a great mystery both; a privilege to be valued, as it is a dawning of heaven; and a mystery to be viewed with spiritual wisdom; wisdom from above is absolutely necessary; for, flesh and blood cannot reveal it. How blind were the greatest philosophers in comparison with the meanest disciple of Jesus, that sees this great sight! But then,

2. Consider the *necessity* of this sight. There is no seeing of Christ above, if we get not a begun sight and view of him here; yea, you cannot so much as desire the glory of God in heaven, whatever you pretend, if you never saw the glory of Christ here. If a man pretend he is delighted with, and desires greatly what he never saw, nor was ever represented to him, he does but dote upon his own imagination. The pretended desires of many to behold the glory of Christ in heaven, who have no view of it by faith while on earth, are nothing but self-deceiving imaginations. Therefore, let none deceive themselves; they that see not Christ here, shall never see him, nor the glory of God in him, hereafter. Now, they that do not see the glory of Christ, have no grace; for all grace is begotten only by this sight, as I have shewed already. *He that sees the Son, and believes in him, hath everlasting life;* but they that see not the Son, are unbelievers and heirs of everlasting death.

[2.] For *direction*, if you ask, Where shall we see him? and, how shall we see him?

1. If you ask, WHERE *shall we see him?* God the Father hath given Christ to be the glass wherein you may see him: Christ hath given the gospel to be the glass wherein you may see him: say not then, *Who will ascend to heaven and bring Christ down; or descend to the deep, to bring him up that we may see him?* You may see him in this *word of faith that we preach.* O see him in that word, ver. 6. *I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh to the Father but by me.* If you take a view of him in that word, you will see the Father in him. If you see him as the *way*, you may see the Father in him leading you to himself; if you see him as the *truth*, you may see the Father in him teaching you his mind and will; if you see him as the *life*, you may see the Father in him quickening you that are dead in sins and trespasses. If you see him in that word, *No man cometh to the Father, but by me*, you may see the Father in him, determining the necessity of coming to Christ by faith, in order to your attaining the enjoyment of God. —O see him in his sweet *command*, lined with gospel-grace; *Look to me, and be saved all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else*, Isa. xlv. 22. There he is to be seen, and his Father in him; his call is the Father's call; you see it is the call and command of him that is essentially one with the Father; *I am God, and there is none else.*—O come and see him in his sweet *promises*, all lined with love; such as that, Psal. lxxii. 17. *Men shall be blest in him, and all nations shall call him blessed.* And again, *Surely shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength.* Men shall be blest in him; and surely, one shall say, in the Lord I have all. O! what encou-

raging promiſes are here, even to them that think they cannot ſee him; they cannot look to him! for the very ſtrength to look to him, and the eye to ſee him, is put in the promiſe; they *ſhall be bleſt in him*; they ſhall ſay, *In the Lord have I righteouſneſs and ſtrength. They ſhall look on him whom they have pierced, and mourn.* As the command makes it your duty, ſo the promiſe gives you encouragement to look to him in both; and to ſee him in a promiſe, by faith, is as ſafe a way of ſeeing him, as if you ſaw him in heaven; and better than if you ſaw him with your bodily eyes in the pulpit, and heard him preaching to you: for many ſaw him thus, that never got a ſaving ſight of him by faith.—O come and ſee him in his *purchaſe* that he hath made by his obedience unto death; a purchaſe of grace and glory for you, ſinner. But, ſay you, was it not for the elect only? It may be he did not make the purchaſe for me; that was not his deſign. My friends, we preach the doctrine of election in its own place, and declare, that the *elect only ſhall obtain*; and that *as many as were ordained to eternal life ſhall believe*; but it were impertinent to bring it in upon the general call of the goſpel; it belongs ſo little to that purpoſe, that we could not mention it therein any other way, than to ward it off from that point, when the devil and the wicked unbelieving heart bring it in as an objection againſt, and an obſtruction to your ſeeing Chriſt with application to yourſelves. I only aſk, therefore, whether is his ſecret counſel, or his open command your rule? Whether is his hidden purpoſe, or revealed promiſe to be your encouragement? What have you ado with his ſecret? you are not excluded in his word; and, why then will you exclude yourſelves? As I call you, therefore, to ſee him in his purchaſe that he hath made of grace and glory to you, ſinner, declared in his promiſe, that he is come to ſave ſinners; ſo I would warn you to beware of a trick of the devil and unbelief here, in turning that to a diſcouragement of faith, which is really an encouragement thereof. Hath Chriſt ſaid, *All that the Father hath given me, ſhall come*; why then, come and ſee him, and then you will ſee the Father giving you to him from eternity. Would you deſire to get in to the very heart of God, and read his electing love? You may do it by opening this book of the goſpel-promiſe, and reading it with application to yourſelf; and there you may ſee it.—O come and ſee him in his *robes of grace* and *ſalvation*; ſee him in his garments rolled in blood: behold how *he comes from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah.* See him on a throne of grace inviting you to come to him, and kindly declaring, that it is his greateſt quarrel with you, that *you will not come to him that you might have life*, and ſalvation from all your ſins, and all the wrath that is entailed upon them. Are you afraid to look to him, thinking he hath a quarrel with you for your ſins? Nay, but know it, no ſin that ever you was guilty of is to be mentioned as the ground of his quarrel, but only for this one, that you will not come and look to him for ſalvation and deliverance from all ſin whatſoever. O ſee him then, and welcome him in his kindly offer, and ſay no more, where ſhall we ſee him? for he is here preſent dealing with you in this goſpel.

2. If you aſk, How *ſhall we ſee him, and the Father in him?* I gave many motives and directions alſo, with reference to the knowledge of Chriſt, on the doctrine raiſed from the former part of the text; therefore, I need enlarge the leſs here. I ſhall offer you theſe two or three *advices*, with reference to your ſeeing of Chriſt, in order to your ſeeing of the Father in him; or with reference to your getting a ſaving ſight of God in Chriſt.

(1.) Be convinced, that unleſs he *manifeſt himſelf*, you can by no means in the world ſee him. Even as all the candles and torches in the world cannot diſcover the ſun to you, when under a cloud, till it come forth itſelf: ſo all the means in the world cannot diſcover God in Chriſt to you till he manifeſt himſelf; *I will manifeſt myſelf*, John xiv. 21. It is his prerogative to do it when he pleaſes; therefore, give him the glory of his ſovereignty, ſaying, Lord, I cannot ſee thee; and all the world cannot let me ſee thee; but, O manifeſt thyſelf to me. Be convinced that you cannot poſſibly ſee him, till he open your eyes and ſhew himſelf.

(2.) Be convinced of the *neceſſity* of a *powerful regeneration*, ere you can ſee God; *Except a man be born again, he cannot ſee the kingdom of God*, John iii. 3.; and a God in Chriſt is the chief thing, if not the only thing in that kingdom. The eyes of fleſh and blood cannot ſee this great ſight: theſe eyes of fleſh may ſee the natural ſun; but you muſt have other eyes to behold the Sun of righteouſneſs, otherwiſe though his glory be ſhining about you, your blindneſs and darkneſs comprehends him not. Therefore,

(3.) Be convinced of your own *groſs darkneſs* and *ignorance of God*. A conceit of your own knowledge, and high eſteem of yourſelf, and your own wiſdom, will both be an evidence that you know nothing as you ought to know; and alſo be a hinderance of your knowing and ſeeing the Lord: therefore you muſt *become a fool that you may be wiſe. For judgment am I come into this world*, ſays Chriſt, *that they which ſee not might ſee, and that they which ſee might be made blind*, John ix. 39.

(4.) Be convinced, that it is your *ſin* and *miſery* both, that you *do not*, and *cannot ſee this glory of God in Chriſt.*—It is your *ſin*, your leading ſin, and mother of all your other ſins: for herein lies the formal nature of unbelief, that you do not, you cannot, you will not look to Chriſt and be ſaved.—And it is your *miſery*; for, while unbelief reigns, you are under the power of the devil, hiding this light from you; *And if our goſpel be hid, it is hid to them that are loſt, in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, leſt the light of the glorious goſpel of Chriſt, who is the image of God, ſhould ſhine unto them*, 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. This darkneſs and blindneſs is the ſtrength of the devil's kingdom. Whenever light ſhines into the heart, his power is broken: but darkneſs and ignorance is the chain wherein he leads you to the place of utter darkneſs, to which you will be ſentenced with him, if that chain be not looſed in time. What will be the ſentence of the great Judge? will he give one to the devil, and another to wicked men? No: he will make one to ſerve them both; *Go, you curſed, into everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil:* you joined with the devil in loving darkneſs, and therefore depart with him. Oh! be convinced, poor ſoul, that the devil is cutting your throat in the dark;

dark; and that it is both your sin and misery that you do not see.

(5.) Be convinced, that there is a promise of *divine illumination* left to you to rely on; *They shall be all taught of God. Every man, therefore, that hath heard and learned of the Father, cometh unto me: no man can come except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him*, John vi. 44. Cry, therefore, for the promised teaching, the promised drawing; and seeing his powerful drawing is just his effectual teaching, O cry for the powerful promised illumination of his holy Spirit in the knowledge of Christ, in whom alone you can know the Father: be restless in the use of all appointed means, till the Spirit be sent for this end. It is his sweet counsel to you, that you *buy of him eye-salve that you may see.* Beg his enlightening Spirit: the Spirit is both the promise of the Father and of the Son; *I send the promise of my Father upon you; but tarry at Jerusalm till you be endued with power from on high*, Luke xxiv. 49. Stay about his hand, in the use of ordinances of his institution, till the promised Spirit be poured out; and *when he comes*, says Christ, *he shall testify of me, he shall glorify me*, John xv. 26. xvi. 14. Plead the promise that is left to you of this powerful illumination.

(6.) Be convinced, that however unable and unfit you are for yielding to his call, yet it is both your *indispensible* duty to see and behold this glorious object Christ, in whom you will see the Father; and your *present* duty to essay it with a view to his enabling grace. O Sirs, is not the Father calling you to look to his Son? saying, *Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth*, Isa. lxii. 1. And is not the Son calling you to look to him and be saved? saying, *Behold me, behold me*, Isa. lxv. 1. And does not the *Spirit and the bride say, Come?* Rev. xxii. 17. Is a whole glorious Trinity crying to you, Come and see; come and see the Son, and see the Father in him? Why then, unless you dare say, it is your duty to trample under foot the authority of God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to look to Jesus is your indispensible duty. And since he is dealing with you this moment, it is your present duty: *Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation*: now he is saying, *Behold me, behold me.* Now you may see him in mercy; and if the opportunity be slighted, you may never get another occasion to see him, till you see him in wrath, *coming in the clouds of heaven*; and *coming in flaming fire to take vengeance on them that know not God*, because of their not obeying the gospel-call of seeing God now in the face of Christ. O sinner, then he will be seen upon a throne of judgment; a dreadful sight to his enemies! But now he is to be seen upon a throne of mercy and grace, calling sinners and enemies to be reconciled to him, and to see the Father reconciled in him, that so you may find your justifier; for now, *Christ is set forth of God to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness, for the remission of sin, that he might be just, and the justifier of them that believe in Jesus*, Rom. iii. 25, 26. O Sirs, see and behold him then, as the propitiation and atonement; and there take rest to your guilty soul; and see the Father in him well-pleased and satisfied. O see and behold him as the true Jacob's ladder, reaching between heaven and earth, that you may ascend by, and see the Father at the top of the ladder, with open arms ready to embrace all comers, and you among the rest. O see and behold him as the helper, since you cannot ascend the ladder, or get up of yourself; and see the Father constituting him to be the helper, saying, *I have laid help upon one that is mighty.* Behold this mighty helper standing in the Father's name, at the Foot of the ladder, saying, Man, woman, would you gladly be up? would you have my help? There is my helping hand, take hold of it; *Take hold of my strength*, Isa. xxii. 5.

But, say you, he must take hold of me, and draw me up, otherwise I cannot take hold of him. Well said, man; therefore, see him as the *author and finisher*, as well as the *object of faith*; and see him as the *all of your salvation*, and the Father making him so; for, *he is made of God unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and complete redemption.* If you think you can do any thing without him, you are not worthy of him; and you go cross to this revelation made of him. But if you can do nothing, and have nothing at all, and would have one to do all for you, and to be all to you; then see him, and take him as God all-sufficient, to *do all your works in you and for you*; and to be your all for grace and glory: and thus to see him, is to see the Father and all his fulness in him; and thus to take him into your heart, is to take him indeed, and his Father's blessing with him.

O Sirs, shall we hope he hath come and discovered himself to any soul here in this offer? O! *blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord*, and lets himself be seen; for, *he that hath seen Christ, hath seen the Father.*

2*dly*, I should now close with a word of exhortation to *believers* that have seen Christ. *Have they that have seen him, seen the Father*, in regard of the oneness between the Father and him? Have you see this great sight? Then I exhort you to prove it, and improve it.

[1.] *Prove* it: How do you prove, believer, that you have *seen Christ*, and the *Father in him?* May I ask you, as the Pharisees once asked the man whose eyes Christ opened, John ix. 15. *How did you receive your sight?* Why, says the man, *he put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see.* Can you say in allusion to this, whatever was the clay vessel, the poor, contemptible, and unlikely mean the Lord made use of, yet he put to his invisible hand, and led me to the pool of Siloam; I mean, to the blood of Shiloh, the *Sent of God*; and no sooner did I, through grace, essay to wash there, but I saw; I saw the Son of God as the Saviour and Surety; I saw the face and favour of God in him; I saw the grace and love of God in him: can you say, *One thing I know, whereas once I was blind, now I see?* I see a glory in him that darkens the glory of sun, moon, and stars; I see a beauty in him, that eclipses the beauty of all the world, and makes it seem but trash to me; I see an excellency in him, *that makes me count all but loss and dung, for the excellency of the knowledge of him.* Though I see that I am blind, and cannot see, yet I see what some time a day I saw not. Can you not say, that the sight you got of Christ, at least in the day of believing, did dispel your darkness, and dissipate the gross mists of ignorance, and make them fly away as dark clouds before the rising sun? Did not the sight break the power of your enmity, and make you, like Paul on his way to Damascus, when he saw Christ, drop the rebellious arms, and fall down

before

before the Lord, saying, *What wilt thou have me to do?* Did not the sight dash unbelief out of countenance on that day, and with holy shame for your harsh thoughts of Christ, and make you with Thomas, after his unbelieving jealousy, to cry out, *My Lord, and my God?* Did not the sight loose your heart from all your lusts and idols, and make you to say with Ephraim, *What have I to do any more with idols?* O believer, was it not a wonderful sight, and a marvellous light? was it not a heart-piercing, a soul-humbling, a faith-strengthening, and joy-exciting sight; the most desirable sight out of heaven?

Again, if you ask, how shall I prove, that I have *seen the Father* in *seeing Christ?* Besides what was formerly said, you may enquire,

1. Have you seen the Father's *blessing* in him? We read of the Father's blessing him, Psal. lxv. 2. He hath blessed him in all his offices as Mediator: and, as *God's blessing makes rich*; so, by virtue of the Father's blessing, he is, as Mediator, enriched with all communicative fulness, and store for our supply; and never would we have been blessed, if God had not blessed Christ, and *in him blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places*, Eph. i. 3. The question then is, have you beheld Christ as the blessing of the Father? Then, of consequence, you have seen the Father blessing him. It is a great sight of the Father, to see the Father's blessing on Christ, and in Christ upon you. Many speak of God's blessing, that never saw how his blessing comes, and on whom it principally descends: for, Christ is made of God a public blessing.

OBJECT. How is Christ made a blessing, when it is said, *God made him to be sin for us*, 2 Cor. v. 21. *And made him a curse for us*, Gal. iii. 13.?

Why, man, for this very end was he made *sin* and a *curse*, that he might be made a *blessing*. He was made sin by imputation; sin was imputed to him, that it might not be imputed to us; and the curse fell upon him, that it might not light upon us: and God, in the very act of making him to be sin for us, and a curse for us, in doing so, he made him a blessing to us; and blessed him to be a sacrifice for sin, and to bear away the curse, and bring back the blessing.—Now, this mark excludes all who never saw themselves to be, by nature, under the *curse of God*, and never saw the gospel-way, wherein the blessing of God comes to any sinner, *viz.* through Christ; for, all that are blessed of God, are blessed of him, in Christ; *Men shall be blessed in him*: and to be blessed in him, supposes that he is first blest, and then men in him. However, they who have seen Christ as the Father's blessing, have so far seen the Father. To see God out of Christ, and in the law, is to see him cursing us: and this is the sight all Christless sinners will get of God, sooner or later; either mercifully here to their awakening, that they may flee from that curse; or wrathfully hereafter, when they shall ly under it for ever. But to see God in the gospel-glass, and in Christ, is to see him *blessing us with all spiritual blessings, in heavenly places, in Christ*; and this is the believer's sight of God in Christ, or of the Father in the Son: *He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.*

2. Have you seen the Father's *promise* in him? 2 Cor. i. 20. *All the promises of God are in him, yea*; none of the Father's promises are made out of him: and if we have seen Christ as the centre of the Father's promises, in whom they are all affirmed and confirmed by him, being in him, YEA, in point of affirmation; and AMEN, in point of confirmation; then you have seen the Father as a promising God in him; and that you have no right to any promise, but by virtue of union to him; and as the promise is first made to him, and in him to you; and as it comes running through the channel of his blood and righteousness.—Now, this mark excludes and shuts out all who have not seen themselves to be heirs of all the *threatenings of the law*, by nature, and God to be a threatening God, ready to execute the law-threatening against them, because of their sin; and all that have not been brought to acquaintance with the promises of the gospel, and seen them to be the promises of God in Christ; for they only that have seen this, have seen God in Christ; *He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.*

3. Have you seen the Father's *work* in his hand? the Father's business committed to his management, according as he says, Luke ii. 49.; particularly the work and business of our redemption and salvation. This imports, and carries with it a sight of the Father, as employing Christ in that great work. They that have seen Christ, as the Father's Agent in this affair, have seen the Father in him, which is indeed a great sight; to see the Father intrusting him with such a work, and Christ discharging his trust in the Father's name.—This mark excludes, and cuts off, all those that never saw the *work of salvation* to be any other, but what themselves are capable of, either by their own natural power, or some little divine assistance. Many declare themselves ignorant of God, and under *the law of works*, by their gross notions of salvation; thinking that God still stands upon the old-covenant ground with them, calling them to work for life; and so they reckon, if they do their best, God will pity them; or, though they come short, yet with some of God's help and assistance, their own doing will be sufficient; not knowing that salvation-work is God's work, and that God's work is put in Christ's hand, and that there is no work, pertaining to the law as a covenant, that belongs to us now at all, nor can possibly be performed by us; Christ's everlasting righteousness answers that completely. And for any other work that he works in his people, it is not for salvation, or to be saved, but a part of salvation, *when he works in them both to will and to do of his own good pleasure*: those whom God saves, he saves them to work, but not for them. Works of holiness are a part of the salvation to which we are saved; but we are not saved either *for* our works, or *by* them, or *according to* them. Not *for* them; Ezek. xxxvi. 32. *Not* FOR *your sakes do I this, saith the Lord God, be it known unto you: be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel.* Nor *by* them; Tit. iii. 5. *Not* BY *works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.* Nor *according to* them; 2 Tim. i. 9. *He hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not* ACCORDING TO *our work; but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before the world began.* The scripture then declares, we are not saved either by, or for, or according to our works; for though men are to be *judged* according to their works, yet not *saved* according

according to their works. The rule of *judgment*, and the rule of *ſalvation* are vaſtly different.—The rule of *judgment* will be the law: and therefore men will be judged according to their work, and according as they have a law-biding righteouſneſs, yea, or not. The wicked will not have it; and ſo will be adjudged to eternal death: believers will have it in Chriſt, even a righteouſneſs of merit and ſpirit, both for juſtification and ſanctification; and ſo will be adjudged to eternal life. Men will be thus judged according to their works.—But the rule of *ſalvation* is not the law, but the goſpel, and the free grace of God in Chriſt; and therefore, though men will be judged according to their work, yet let none expect to be ſaved according to them, or by them, or for them. The works that will be available to ſalvation are not our works, or any thing either wrought in us, or done by us; but the work of Chriſt, his perfect obedience: *As by one man's diſobedience many were made ſinners, ſo by the obedience of one many ſhall be made righteous*, Rom. v. 19. Now, have you ſeen Chriſt's obedience to be the Father's work in his hand, and his righteouſneſs to be the righteouſneſs of God? Then you have ſeen God in him; God fulfilling his own law in him; God ſatisfying his own juſtice in him; and God bringing in everlaſting righteouſneſs in him.

4. If you would try if you have ſeen the Father in Chriſt, try if you have ſeen the Father's *wages* beſtowed on him. Chriſt, as Mediator, did not work without wages and a reward; nay, having *drunk of the brook in the way*, he was to *lift up his head. Ought not Chriſt to do and ſuffer theſe things, and then to enter into his glory?* Luke xxiv. 26. See the wages and reward given him, Phil. ii 9. *Wherefore God alſo hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name.* Heaven then is to Chriſt, and to all that get in to him, the reward of Chriſt's *obedience unto death, even the death of the croſs*; ſo it is alſo declared, Heb. xii. 2. Now, they that have ſeen the Father's wages beſtowed upon Chriſt, as Mediator, then they have ſeen the Father in him; or they have ſeen the Father rewarding him for his ſervice, and exalting him to his right-hand on the account of his work. Heaven is called the *recompence of reward* to Chriſt, it is a reward of debt; for, it is juſtly due to his obedience. But, to believers in Chriſt, it is a reward of grace: becauſe to them it is the *gift of God*, through Chriſt.—Now, this mark excludes, and ſhuts out all thoſe that expect heaven and eternal life, as the *reward of any good deed done*, or to be done by them. This declares they never ſaw the glory of the Father in the Son, nor the Father conferring heaven and glory on Chriſt, as the reward of his everlaſting righteouſneſs. Mercenary workers, that expect proper wages for their work from God, are yet under the law, and ſo under the curſe of God. In this manner many work all their days, and may work very earneſtly at a multitude of duties, and work their own ruin and damnation, and yet think they are ſafe, and never dream that they are under the curſe of God, notwithſtanding all they do. See Luke xiii. 24, *Strive to enter in at the ſtrait gate; for many ſhall ſeek to enter in, and ſhall not be able.* Why that? Is it not ſaid, *Seek, and ye ſhall find?* Yea, but they ſhall ſeek to enter, *and ſhall not be able*, becauſe they ſeek in a legal way; not by faith, but, as it were, *by the works of the law*. And this is indeed one of the great things that makes the way ſtrait.

5. Try if you have ſeen Chriſt, ſo as to ſee the Father in him. Have you ſeen the Father *glorified* in him, as Chriſt ſays, John xiii. 31.? Have you ſeen his wiſdom glorified in contriving, his power in accompliſhing; and more of his wiſdom and power here than in the whole creation? Have you ſeen the holineſs of God, the juſtice of God, and the mercy and truth of God glorifying themſelves in him, and exerting themſelves in Chriſt unto ſalvation? Do you ſee the wiſdom of God more glorified and glorious in Chriſt, than in contriving the ſun, moon, and ſtars? His power more glorified in Chriſt, than in making a world? His holineſs more in Chriſt's obedience, than it is by all the holineſs of men and angels to eternity? His juſtice more glorified in Chriſt's ſatisfaction, than in the puniſhment of all the damned in hell for ever? His mercy more glorified, and gloriouſly diſplayed in Chriſt, and venting itſelf through his blood and merit, than if he had ſhewed mercy without exacting the debt of Surety, while he freely provides the Surety, and thereby provides both for his own honour, and our happineſs at once? And, do you ſee his truth and faithfulneſs more glorified in Chriſt than any other way? For, if Chriſt had not been ſet forth, God behoved to have glorified his truth, in executing the threatening of the law upon all the ſinners of Adam's family. But now he glorifies his truth, both as a threatening and promiſing God, towards all whom he ſaves in Chriſt, who both bears the ſhock of the threatening of the law, and fulfils the condition of the promiſes of the goſpel; and both by his obedience unto death. Have you ſeen this glory of God in Chriſt?—Surely this mark cuts off thouſands of blind ſouls, that cannot behold this glory of the Lord, whoſe minds *the god of this world hath blinded.*

6. Have you ſeen the Father *reconciled* in him? Here is an evidence of ſeeing the Father, if you have ſeen God reconciled in Chriſt. Here is a threefold reconciliation to be ſeen in Chriſt, 1. God reconciling himſelf with himſelf. 2. Reconciling himſelf to the world. 3. Reconciling the world to himſelf.

(1.) In Chriſt you will ſee God *reconciling himſelf with himſelf.* What do you mean by that, ſay you? I do not mean, as if God were ever at variance with himſelf; but upon man's fall, and the propoſal of man's recovery and ſalvation again, there was, in the apprehenſion of all creatures, men and angels, a ſeeming inconſiſtency betwixt ſome things in God, that ſpoke for man's ſalvation, and other things in God that ſpoke for man's damnation; but yet in Chriſt they are reconciled; particularly, there are ſome irreconcilable like names, attributes, words, and works of God, that are in Chriſt reconciled.

1. There are ſome irreconcilable like *names* of God, that in Chriſt you will ſee reconciled; for example, theſe names, Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7. *The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-ſuffering, and abundant in goodneſs and truth; keeping mercy for thouſands, forgiving iniquity, and tranſgreſſion, and ſin; and yet that will by no means clear the guilty.* How will that name of *merciful and gracious to ſinners*, agree with that name, *he will by no means clear the guilty*, ſince all ſinners are guilty? Why,

Why, have you seen Christ to be the propitiation? then you can see these names reconciled: he will not shew mercy to the dishonour of his justice; but justice hath got a satisfaction in Christ, therefore mercy will vent, not to the prejudice, but to the honour of justice.

2. There are some irreconcilable like *attributes* of God, that in Christ you will see reconciled; *Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other*, Psal. lxxxv. 10. Men and angels could not contrive how *mercy and truth should meet together*; how *righteousness and peace should kiss each other* in the salvation of a sinner; yet in Christ they harmoniously conspire for our redemption, as I have formerly cleared upon the text,* therefore I insist not.

3. There are some irreconcilable like *words* of God, that in Christ are reconciled, such as Exod. xxiii. 7. where God says, *I will not justify the wicked*, and yet, Rom. iv. 5. he is said *to justify the ungodly*. In Christ you will see these words of God reconciled, as you may observe, Isa. xlv. 25. *In him shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory*; justified in their sins they cannot be, nor justified in themselves, but in Christ they shall be justified.

4. There are some irreconcilable like *works* of God, that in Christ are reconciled; for example, his work of *rooting the law out of the heart*, and *writing the law in the hearts of his people*. Do you understand this, man? that the law as a covenant must be razed out of the heart. Christ is *made of God to us righteousness*; and God, in this work, razes the foundation of the old covenant, and roots out all hope of life by the righteousness of the law in our own persons. Christ is also *made of God to us sanctification*; and, in this work, he *writes the law in the heart*, as it is a rule of holiness, and the transcript of the divine image, and so makes the person conformable to the law upon gospel grounds, and in a gospel manner. And this is the root of a gospel-becoming conversation. ——Now, have you ever seen any thing of this glory of the Father in the Son, or of God in Christ reconciling himself with himself, in all these things wherein he seemed to be at odds with himself? If you have never seen God reconciled in Christ, even in this sense, you are but a stranger in Israel.

(2.) In Christ you will see God *reconciling himself to the world*. O! have you ever seen any thing of this glory, even the great and glorious God, in the person of his Son assuming our nature; and in that nature have you ever beheld God satisfying his own justice, fulfilling his own law, appeasing his own wrath, quenching the flames of it with his own blood? *Awake, O sword, against the man that is my fellow, says the Lord of hosts*. And thus glorifying his own name, and laying a foundation for revenues of praise to be brought in to his crown by men and angels for ever. To see this glory by faith of divine operation, is to see the Father in the Son: where this is not seen, neither Christ nor the Father is seen.

(3.) In Christ you will see God *reconciling the world to himself*; 2 Cor. v. 19. *God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, and not imputing their trespasses to them*. This is the *word of reconciliation*; and it is further explained, ver. 21. *For he hath made him to be sin for us, that we might be the righteousness of God in him*. How does God reconcile any sinner in the world to himself? even by not imputing their trespasses to them, but imputing their sins to Christ, and imputing Christ's righteousness to them, and discovering this by the gospel, that he does thus reconcile the heart of the sinner to God, and kill the natural enmity. The faith of this mercy is the root of peace and reconciliation; *Being justified by faith, we have peace with God*: when God in Christ is seen, he is seen to be reconciled in him. And when I see God is reconciled to me, I cannot but be reconciled to God: his mighty love destroys the mighty enmity that was in the heart; this sight of God in Christ cannot be without some persuasion and confidence, and particular application: for hence comes that peace and satisfaction, upon a sight of Christ, and of God as reconciled in him. If faith had no particular assurance or persuasion of divine favour to the soul in it, the man could have no peace nor pleasure: but so much hope, peace, and joy in believing that a man hath, so much assurance is at the root of it; I mean, the *assurance of faith* founded upon the word of God. It is said of the forgiven woman, *She loved much, because much was forgiven her*. They that have the faith of the forgiveness of their sins, and that much is forgiven them, will love much: they that have little faith of forgiveness, or think little is forgiven them, will love but little, and are hardly reconciled to God. They that have no faith of forgiveness, and believe not that any sin is forgiven them, they will love none at all, they are not reconciled at all to God. Indeed it is impossible for a man that hath no faith of God's forgiveness, to love God: for he believes that God is his enemy, imputing sin and guilt to him unto condemnation; that man cannot but hate God. Indeed, many pretend to be lovers of God, that yet have no true love to him: but yet that pretended love of theirs is founded upon a false faith and ignorant fancy, that God loves them, and will not send them to hell for their sins. But when that refuge of lies is destroyed, and that they see God in arms against them, as they will see it in hell, then will they hate him like the devil; and their enmity will be perfect and at its height: but, *true faith works true love to God*. ——Thus you may *prove* whether you have seen this great sight or not. And as you would prove it, so,

[2.] *Improve* it. O have you seen him, and the Father in him? O improve this privilege.

1. Improve it as an *evidence of your interest in him*: for, you may be sure, that *this God is your God for ever and ever, and will be your guide even unto death*. There is no better evidence of it under the sun than this, *that you have seen his glory in the face of Christ*. It is a solid mark of grace, and a sweet spark of glory.

2. Improve it as an *antidote against all temptations*. When the devil, and the world, and the vanities of time, would draw away your hearts and eyes after them, you may say, "*O mine* "*eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts*; I have "seen Christ, and the Father in him; and "therefore, with disdain, I turn away mine "eyes from beholding vanity." Think shame, O believer, after this to feed your eyes with these base objects, that a blind and sensual world is taken up with.

3. Improve it as a *cordial against tribulations and difficulties*, whether temporal or spiritual. When *deep calls unto deep*, and *all his waves and billows* pass

* See Sermon VII. p. 112, 116.

paſs over you; you may *remember him from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, and from the hill Mizar*; you may remember him from the place where he ſhewed you his glory, and that he is the *God of Bethel*; and will be for ever the ſame to you at your worſt times, that ever you ſaw him to be to you at your beſt times.

(4.) Improve it as a *confirmation of your experience*, and of his having *loved you with an everlaſting love*, and *drawn you with loving-kindneſs*. I ſeek no better experience than a *ſight of the glory of God in Chriſt*; and every new ſight is a new confirmation thereof: and when you ſaw him with an eye of faith, it is an argument he ſaw you with an eye of love and mercy. It may be, it was in a corner that you got a remarkable ſight of him, or under the ſhadow of an ordinance; but where-ever it was, now he is ſaying to you as to Nathanael, *When thou waſt under the fig-tree I ſaw thee*; when in ſuch a place I gave thee a kindly blink of my beauty, and laid my hand upon thy heart, and made it glow with holy fire from my altar. Something paſt betwixt you and me that none in the world knows of: *I ſaw thee*. Again,

5. Improve it as a *ſpur to all the duties of religion*. O! have you ſeen his glory, and do you not love that glorious object you ſaw? Shall not then the love of Chriſt conſtrain you to duty? This is goſpel-ſervice, goſpel-holineſs, when love makes you to read, and love makes you to pray, and love makes you meditate, and love makes you wait on ordinances, and love influences your whole practice. Hath he manifeſted his glory to you? then he hath begun to glorify you; and, O does it not well become you to glorify him? *O let your light ſo ſhine before men, that others, ſeeing your good works, may glorify your Father that is in heaven*. Again,

6. Improve it as an *encouragement to your fellow brethren*; you ought to meet together and encourage one another, ſaying, *Come hither all ye that fear God, and I will tell you what he hath done for my ſoul*. And as an *excitement to your graceleſs friends and neighbours*, you may excite them, by telling them how the Lord convinced you, enlightened you, and ſhewed you his glory, to the quickening of your ſoul, and killing of your corruption; you may excite them not only by your talk, but by your walk: your converſation ſhould be ſuch as they may take notice of you, that you have been with Jeſus, and that you have ſeen him, and the glory of God in him, ſo as to *change you into the ſame image*. As you have ſeen God in Chriſt, ſo what an honour will it be to you, if any ſhall ſee God in you; if they ſee the grace of God, the love of God, the fear of God, and the image of God in you? It may be, they will long to ſee God as you have done; and may go and ſeek him with you as the daughters of Jeruſalem, Song vi. 1. upon the back of the ſpouſe's commending her Lord to them. Again,

7. Improve it as an *argument to prove the ſupreme Deity of Chriſt*, and his *oneneſs with the Father*; that whenever you ſaw him, you ſaw the Father in him; you ſaw God in him; and all the glory of God in him: thus you have an antidote againſt damnable Arianiſm in your own boſom. Let your faith, therefore, be confirmed in his being *God over all, bleſſed for ever*; and let your zeal for his glory be thereupon ſtrengthened and inflamed; your zeal for his precious goſpel-truths; your zeal for his royal prerogatives. In a word,

8. And *laſtly*, Improve it as a *ground of hope*, that you ſhall ſee him for ever face to face, becauſe now you have ſeen him, though it was *through a glaſs darkly*. Though grim death were ſtaring you in the face, you may ſay, The ſight of you, O death, ſhall not trouble me, for I have got a ſight of Chriſt; I have ſeen his glory, and the Father's glory in him; and this being eternal life to know God in him, death needs not be matter of grief and trouble, but matter of joy and triumph to me, ſince eternal life is begun. What is heaven, but the everlaſting viſion of the glory of God in the face of Chriſt, to *be for ever with the Lord*, and to *be like him*, by *ſeeing him as he is*; and ſeeing all the glorious attributes of God, in their brighteſt ſplendor, ſhining in his perſon! Then ſhall you have the happineſs of the perfect knowledge of that myſterious oneneſs betwixt Chriſt and the Father, which is the reaſon, why they that ſee him, ſee the Father; yea, ſuch a cloſe view, as to found a perfect oneneſs alſo betwixt Chriſt and you. O wonderful word, John xiv. 21. *At that day you ſhall know, that I am in the Father, and you in me, and I in you!* O! who can expreſs the thouſand part of that happineſs which is imported in that word? For it ſays, Chriſt will be in your arms, and you in Chriſt's arms, and Chriſt in the Father's arms; you will be in Chriſt's boſom, and Chriſt in the Father's boſom, where he lay from eternity; there will he and you ly together to eternity. O the near and immediate ſight and fruition of Chriſt, and the Father in him, that then you will have! O *rejoice in the hope of the glory of God*: it is heaven to ſee him, and to ſee the Father in him, this is the beſt ſight in all heaven, and your Lord declares, believer, that this heaven, this beatifical viſion is begun in you. *He that hath ſeen me, hath ſeen the Father*.

SERMON XLIII, XLIV*.

The GRADUAL CONQUEST; or, *Heaven won by little and little.*

DEUT. vii. 22. *And the Lord thy God will put out theſe nations before thee, by little and little.*

YOU that have been right communicants at this occaſion, you have been upon the field of battle, fighting in the name and ſtrength of the Lord againſt your ſpiritual enemies; what victory you have got, I cannot tell: but ſome may, perhaps, be ſaying, Oh! I find my enemies to be yet ſtrong and mighty; *iniquities prevail againſt me*; and, I fear, I never get

* This ſubject was diſcuſſed in two ſermons, preached at the ſacramental ſolemnity at Carnock, July 3d, 1727.

to the full poſſeſſion of the heavenly Canaan, there are ſo many and ſtrong nations of enemies in the way, which I cannot get conquered. To ſuch as may be thus exerciſed, the words of my text may be welcome news, *The Lord thy God will put out theſe nations before thee, by little and little.* We have here God's promiſe to Iſrael of old, concerning their being brought to the poſſeſſion of the earthly Canaan, which you know was a type of the heavenly Canaan; and, leſt they ſhould be diſcouraged by the difficulty of the conqueſt, ſo many enemies being in the way, he animates them againſt the greateſt diſcouragement. 1. If they objected the *number* of their enemies, and their ſtrength; he anſwers that objection, ver. 17, 18. He had deſtroyed greater enemies than theſe for them; and he that had done the greater, would eaſily do the leſs; he that began the work, would finiſh it. 2. If they objected the *weakneſs* of their own ſtrength and forces; he anſwers that objection, ver. 20, 21. Their greateſt encouragement was, that they had God among them, a mighty God, and terrible; and if God be with us, if God be for us, we need not fear the power of any creature againſt us. 3. If they objected the *ſlow progreſs* of their arms, and feared that the Canaanites would never be ſubdued, if they were not expelled at the firſt; to this it is anſwered in the words of our text, *The Lord thy God will put out theſe nations, by little and little.* Where you may notice two things,

1*ſt*, Iſrael's *enemies* deſcribed; they are called *nations*, becauſe of their multitude and power.

2*dly*, Iſrael's *conqueſt*; *The Lord thy God will put them out before thee, by little and little.* Where you may notice both the glorious Conqueror, and the manner of the conqueſt.

1. The *Conqueror* is God, deſcribed by his ſovereignty over them, *the Lord*; and by his propriety in them, *thy God*. He it is that fights their battles.

2. The *manner* of the conqueſt: he will do it, 1. *Effectually*; He *will* put them out. 2. *Remarkably*; He will put them out *before thee*. 3. *Gradually*, which is the ſpecial thing here noticed in the manner of the conqueſt, namely, *by little and little*. The ſame you read, Exod. xxiii. 29, 30. The wiſdom of God is to be remarked in the gradual conqueſt of his peoples enemies; and it is in real kindneſs to the church, that her enemies are ſubdued by little and little.

Now, Iſrael, being typical of the church; and the land of Canaan typical of heaven; and Iſrael's conqueſt over the nations, their enemies, typical of the ſpiritual conqueſt of the Lord's people over their ſpiritual enemies; and the manner of God's dealing with them for the moſt part, typical of the way of God's dealing with his people in all ages: therefore I would deliver to you the goſpel of this text, and open it in this one doctrinal obſervation;

> DOCT. *That as the true Iſrael of God have nations of enemies in their way to the poſſeſſion of the heavenly Canaan; ſo the Lord their God will conquer theſe nations, by little and little.*

I ſhall endeavour to open and confirm this doctrine in the following method.

I. Enquire who are the *true Iſrael* of God.
II. Speak a little of the *heavenly Canaan*, which they will be brought to the poſſeſſion of.
III. Enquire what *nations of enemies* they have in their way.
IV. Speak a little of the *Conqueror*, the *Lord their God*.
V. The *manner* of the conqueſt, his putting them out before them by *little and little*.
VI. The *reaſons* of this gradual conqueſt.
VII. Make *application* of the whole, in ſeveral uſes.

And in all theſe, I ſhall endeavour as much brevity as poſſible. Mean time, look to the Lord, that he would give ſome word with power, and with a bleſſing.

I. The *firſt* thing, Who are the *true Iſrael* of God, to whom this promiſe is made in the myſtical and ſpiritual ſenſe of it? *They are not all Iſrael that are of Iſrael.*

1. The true Iſrael of God, whom he will bring to the heavenly Canaan, are a people whom he hath *ſet apart for himſelf*, and *ſeparated from the reſt of the world*, as Iſrael was. The true Iſrael are ſet apart, not only by election, from eternity; but by effectual calling, in time. As, in the firſt creation, God ſeparated the *light* from the *darkneſs*, and made the one *day*, and the other *night*; ſo, in effectual calling, he ſeparates the elect from others, as light from darkneſs: he leaves the reſt of the world buried in their own obſcurity, and makes the others children of light. By effectual calling, they get convincing grace, others are left ſtupid and ſeared; they get enlightening grace, and others are left in the dark; they get renewing grace, and others are left in their enmity; they get perſuading and enabling grace to believe, others are left in their unbelief, and remain *children of diſobedience* and unperſuadableneſs: *This people have I formed for myſelf, they ſhall ſhew forth my praiſe.* Hence,

2. The true Iſrael of God are a people whom he hath *brought out of Egypt*, in a ſpiritual ſenſe, as Iſrael was in a temporal; and that with a *high hand*, and *outſtretched arm*. He hath brought them out of the Egypt of a natural ſtate, and out of the houſe of bondage; from their natural bondage to ſin and Satan, their bondage to the law, as a covenant of works, putting them to the hard taſk and intolerable labour of *doing for life*; a taſk much worſe than the Egyptian bondage, of making *brick without ſtraw*: he hath brought them, I ſay, out of the *houſe of bondage* with a high hand: no power in the world being able to looſe their bonds, if the power of a God had not been put forth for that end. They are a people redeemed, not only by the price of the Mediator's blood, but alſo by the power of his Spirit: by his power he hath begun to plague their enemies, and to drown them in the Red-ſea of his blood; for, they *overcome by the blood of the Lamb*.

3. The true Iſrael of God are a people acquaint with *travelling in the wilderneſs*, from Sinai to Zion, as Iſrael was; I mean, from the law to the goſpel; from the covenant of works to the covenant of grace. As Iſrael at Sinai was amazed at the ſight of God appearing in his terrible majeſty, and afterwards were brought into covenant with him; ſo the true Iſrael of God are a people that have been humbled with the views of God's holineſs and infinite juſtice in the command and threatening of the law; and been made to *flee for refuge to the hope ſet before them*, in the goſpel-covenant: they have come

from

from Sinai to Zion; *to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling.*

4. The true Israel of God are a people acquaint with the *conduct of the pillar of cloud and of fire*, as Israel was; I mean, they have gotten the Spirit of Christ to be their guide in the way to Canaan: *If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his*; and if any man have the Spirit of Christ, he is guided thereby, and *led into all truth*, and out of all the paths of damnable error. There is a leading of the Spirit by a secret invisible hand, and by the means of the word, that all the Israel of God are partakers of; even a voice behind them, saying, *This is the way*, and that is not the way; and all *his sheep know his voice.*

5. The true Israel of God are a people *fed with manna from heaven*, in a spiritual sense, as Israel was in another sense: they are a people that eat the *hidden manna*; that *have bread to eat, the world knows not of*; even *the bread of life that came down from heaven*: they live by faith on the Son of God; Christ is the ALPHA and OMEGA of their life; the food and medicine of their life; the restorer and preserver of their life: they cannot live without him. The worldling lives upon his riches, the carnal man lives upon his lusts, hypocrites live upon their profession, legalists live upon their duties; but the true Israel of God live, in the way of duty upon Christ himself, as their *wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.* If I have any wisdom, Christ is my wisdom; if any righteousness, Christ is my righteousness; if any holiness, Christ is my sanctification: Christ is my ALL; my life, my strength, my treasure, my hope, my deliverer, my friend, my Saviour, my complete salvation.

6. The true Israel of God are a people acquaint with *wrestling with God for the blessing*, as Jacob was, who thereupon obtained the name of ISRAEL; and all believers are thereupon called the *seed of Jacob*, that shall *not seek his face in vain.* They are a people, whose life of faith is acted much upon their knees; or in a way of praying in the name of Christ, and in the Spirit of Christ; *Praying in the Holy Ghost: This is the generation of them that seek thee; that seek thy face, O Jacob's God.* They are always wanters, and that makes them constantly seekers and beggars.

II. The *second* thing was, to speak a little of the *heavenly Canaan*, that they will be brought to the possession of. I would hold it forth in these four particulars, namely, in its *types, epithets, parts*, and *properties.*

1st, In its *types.* The types of the heavenly Canaan were many. I shall name a few of them.

1. The *earthly* Canaan was a type of the *heavenly* and *celestial* Canaan. How magnificently does the Lord speak of Canaan? It is called *a goodly land; a holy land; a land flowing with milk and honey*: yet this land was but a type and shadow of the heavenly.

2. *Paradise* was a type of this heavenly Canaan. Though all the pleasant orchards, and comely things in the world were unite in one, they could not come that length as to compete with the earthly paradise for pleasure and comeliness, when God placed our first parents there in their innocent state: yet, what was it but a faint resemblance of the heavenly paradise? nothing but a shadow of it.

3. The *Sabbath* was a type of this heavenly, happy, and eternal Sabbath of rest. Indeed it is unsettled rest the Lord's people have here; when they rest in the Lord at any time, their rest is soon disturbed: even though they can say at times, *Return to thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee*; how soon does the devil, the ill heart, and the world disquiet them again? But *there remains a rest*, [a SABBATISM,] *for the people of God*, when *they shall rest from their labour*; rest from sin and sorrow.

4. The *tabernacle* was a type of the heavenly Canaan: the *Lord's presence filled the tabernacle.* O how does his glorious presence fill heaven, and fill all the hearts of the heavenly inhabitants! glorious things are spoken of the earthly Zion: how much more glorious things may be spoken of the new Jerusalem above! But then,

2dly, We may consider the heavenly Canaan in its *epithets*; as,

1. It is called a *house*, John xiv. 2. A *mansion-house, a prepared place. In my Father's house are many mansions; I go to prepare a place for you.* O what a noble house is it, where glory dwells! What an excellent house will it be, when the Father of the family will be in the midst of the house, and all his children about him; all his elect gathered together from all the corners of the earth; where the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Christ himself, the elder Brother, and all the younger brethren will dwell together!

2. It is called the *joy of the Lord: Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.* Joy here enters into the believer; but there the believer enters into joy: he enters, as it were, into an ocean of joy; and it is the joy of his Lord Jesus. How great is the joy that our Lord entered into, as the reward of his obedience unto death? of which it is said, Heb. xii. 2. that, *For the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right-hand of the throne of God.* That same joy the saints are to enter into; *In thy presence, there is fulness of joy, and at thy right-hand, there are pleasures for evermore.*

3. It is called *life, eternal life*; Rom. vi. 23. *The gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.* Life is sweet; and the more excellent the life is, the more sweet. A living fly is more happy, by reason of life, than the glorious sun in the firmament. The rational life is yet more sweet; the life of grace is yet sweeter than any of these: but the life of glory is sweetest of all; and this life is eternal; it is life for evermore.

4. It is called a *kingdom*, a *heavenly kingdom*; 2 Tim. iv. 18. *The Lord shall preserve me to his heavenly kingdom.* Yea, such a kingdom, that all the subjects here are kings. One said of Rome once, that it was *Respublica regum*; "A "commonwealth of kings:" it is true of heaven, it is a commonwealth of kings; they are all *kings and priests unto their God.* And there all the kings have their *crowns*; a crown of glory, righteousness, and joy. They will have their *thrones*; *To him that overcomes, will I give to sit with me on my throne*, &c. They will have their *royal robes*; their *robes of glory, and palms of victory.* But again,

3dly, We may consider this heavenly Canaan in its *parts.* There are especially these four parts of heaven and glory mentioned in scripture, namely, *vision, likeness, love, satisfaction.*

The *first* part of it is the *vision* of God; 1 Cor. xiii. 12. *Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face. Father, I will, that these whom thou hast given me, may be with me where I am, to behold my glory.* New cabinets of rich treasure will be opened up to them every moment to eternity.

2. The *second* part of it is *likeness*, which follows upon the former; *We shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is*, 1 John iii. 2. This is the native fruit of beholding Christ, to be thereby brought to conformity to him, 2 Cor. iii. 18.

3. The *third* part of it is *love*: this follows upon the former. Likeness breeds love, even upon earth: then will the saints be made *perfect in love*, 1 John iv. 18. O what flames of love will burn in heaven! Every saint will be a flame.

4. The *fourth* part of it is *satisfaction*, which proceeds from the rest; Psal. xvii. 15. *I will behold thy face in righteousness; when I awake, I shall be satisfied with thy likeness.*—All this is begun on earth in the heirs of glory. The brighter view a believer gets of Christ, the more likeness; the more likeness, the more love; and the more love, the more satisfaction. But, O when there shall be perfect seeing, there will be perfect likeness; when perfect likeness, perfect love; and when perfect love, perfect satisfaction and joy: then *the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come unto Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away*, Isa. xxxv. 10.

4thly, We might consider this heavenly Canaan in its *properties*. It is another sort of inheritance than the earthly Canaan.

1. It is a *glorious* inheritance: it is glory itself; yea, an *exceeding great and eternal weight of glory*, 2 Cor. iv. 17. God, who is every-where present, is there gloriously. To make a weak allusion: The sun in the firmament, is in this or that place, by his rays and beams; but in the firmament, in a glorious manner: so God is here on earth, in his grace, and the rays of his countenance; but in heaven, in a glorious way. O Sirs, there the saints are, indeed, *all glorious within*, and without both; their bodies glorious, *like unto Christ's glorious body*, when once they are raised; their souls glorious, because *perfect in holiness*.

2. It is an *heavenly* inheritance; therefore called *a heavenly kingdom*, as I said, in opposition to earthly kingdoms. There the great King is heavenly, the subjects are heavenly, the work is heavenly, the reward heavenly, the company heavenly, the converse heavenly, all heavenly.

3. It is a *purchased* and *promised* inheritance; called a *purchased possession*, Eph. i. 14. The crown is purchased, the throne purchased, the robes purchased, and all purchased by the blood of the Lamb; which makes them sing that melodious song, *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain.* And as it is purchased, so it is *promised in Christ before the world began*, 2 Tim. i. 9. and Tit. i. 2. The earthly Canaan was a promised land; they had it by promise made to Abraham first, and in him to them: so is heaven promised to Christ, and in him to all the spiritual Israel.

4. It is an *eternal* inheritance; 1 Pet. i. 4. *An inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.* The earthly Canaan was but temporary, subject to be laid desolate for the sins of the inhabitants thereof; and accordingly it was laid waste, and remains so to this day: but the heavenly Canaan is an inheritance that is not liable to corruption nor defilement, and therefore it fades not away. It cannot, like the former, be infested with enemies or ill neighbours, nor with any plague or malady: *The inhabitants of that land shall not say, I am sick.* It is a place of perfect health without any sickness; and a happy immortality, without any death, or fear of death: a blest eternity; for, when thousands, thousands, thousands of years are gone, their happiness is but beginning. Earthly kingdoms fade, and this world's monarchs die; but, in that everlasting kingdom, *death is swallowed up in victory.* If it were to have an end after millions of years, it were enough to make them live in perplexity and trouble; but it is eternal and everlasting.—— There is a short description, from the word, of that heavenly Canaan.

III. The *third* thing is, to show what *nations of enemies and oppositions* are in the way to this heavenly Zion. See how many and mighty nations stood in the way of Israel's possessing the earthly Canaan, ver. first of this chapter where our text lies: *Seven nations greater and mightier than they.* And after they came to that land of promise, some of these nations were suffered to dwell among them, particularly the Jebusites, that were like prickles in their eyes, and thorns in their sides. And, in process of time, God stirred up other nations against them, for just and holy causes; as the Philistines, the Moabites, the Ammonites, that coasted near their dwelling; besides the Assyrians and Babylonians from remoter countries, that led them captive. And, besides outward enemies and foreign invasions, they were not a little vexed and disquieted with civil and intestine dissentions: there was Saul's house against David's, and David's against Saul; Israel against Judah, and Judah against Israel; Manasses against Ephraim, and Ephraim against Manasses: nations thus both without and within, and enemies on every side. Now, in like manner, there are great and mighty nations that oppose the true Israel of God in their way to the heavenly Canaan above, and that hinder their peaceable possession of any part of heaven that, through grace, they possess on earth. In allusion, therefore, to the seven nations here, that God cast out before Israel of old; I shall show seven of these nations of spiritual enemies and oppositions that are in the way to the heavenly Canaan, and that disturb the Israel of God in any begun possession that they may have here, through grace.

I only premise, that as, in an outward sense, all nations of the earth proceed from one root and original, namely, the first man Adam; so, in a spiritual sense, most part of all the nations that oppose our happiness do spring from one root; and the grand root is original sin and natural corruption: here is the great commander, that leads forth multitudes of nations of actual oppositions against God, and the Israel of God that are bound for the heavenly Canaan. *A body of sin and death* is the fertile womb that brings forth swarms in one day; yea, there, as it were, *whole nations are born at once.* But more particularly, there are these *seven nations* that oppose and vex the Israel of God in their way to Canaan.

1. A nation of *vain thoughts*. We are by nature *vain in our imaginations*, Rom. i. 21.: and these vain

vain thoughts lodge within the walls of Jeruſalem; *O Jeruſalem, waſh thine heart from wickedneſs; how long ſhall vain thoughts lodge within thee?* Jer. iv. 14. Theſe nations lodge within, take bed and board with you, and eat up the very ſap of your ſouls; therefore, when David ſays, Pſal. cxix. 113. *I hate vain thoughts*, he expreſſes them with a word that ſignifies the *ſprig* and *branch* that grows in a tree, which draws the ſap out of it, and makes it fruitleſs. Do you not find a nation of this ſort ſwarming about your heart every day, and every hour of the day? Yea, I am miſtaken if theſe Philiſtines have not been upon you, and if theſe nations have not been beſetting you, and beſieging your ſouls in time of hearing, praying, communicating at this occaſion; and, I imagine, they who are exerciſed and bound for heaven, will find a need of almighty power to put out this nation before them, though there were no more. And, indeed, theſe vain thoughts are like the flying poſts to the reſt of the nations that may be named. But then,

2. There is a nation of *worldly cares*, which Chriſt compares to *briars* and *thorns*, that *choke the ſeed of the word*, Mark iv. 9. and Luke viii. 14. This nation goes under the name of *Frugality*; but, if you look narrowly to its armour, you will find the motto thereof to be *careful about many things, but neglecting the one thing neceſſary*: and yet this is ſuch a powerful nation, that many people are ſubdued by it, ſo as they can do nothing but mind earthly things, and ſo loſe heaven, and come ſhort of ſalvation; yea, ſuch is the power of this nation even over the Iſrael of God, that he is obliged, in a manner, to ſmite them, and extirpate the world out of their heart with a rod of correction; *For the iniquity of his covetouſneſs was I wroth, and ſmote him*, Iſa. lvii. 17.: yea, the rod of God will not do it, till the grace of God efficaciouſly be exerted; *I hid me, and was wroth; and yet he went on frowardly in the way of his heart:* but ſovereign powerful grace ſteps in; *I have ſeen his ways, and will heal him.*

3. There is a nation of *doubts* and *fears*, and *ſinful diſcouragements*, and *unbelieving objections*, Pſal. xlii. 6, 7. The ſoul is overſet and overwhelmed oft-times with them. They may well be compared unto a nation; they are ſo many, that no ſooner does a miniſter begin to anſwer objections, but the unbelieving heart will raiſe a thouſand more; and ſo mighty, that there is no ſubduing of them, till Chriſt himſelf rebuke them, as he did the raging waves of the ſea, with a word of power, and ſo create a calm in the ſoul. This is a nation that *rages*, like the *heathen* ſpoken of, Pſal. ii. and *imagines* many *vain things againſt the Lord, and his Anointed*; but the Lord ſtills the rage with the *rod of his ſtrength*, that he *ſends out of Zion*, when he *makes a people willing in the day of his power*. He anſwers the doubts and objections of unbelief, and ſtills the fears and diſcouragements of his people, either by a word of power let into the heart, ſuch as that, *Fear not, it is I; be not afraid; O thou of little faith, wherefore didſt thou doubt?* Or by a breathing of his Spirit, accompanying a word that is ſpoken to the ear.

4. There is a nation of *ungodly men* from without, that alſo vex and oppoſe the Iſrael of God in their way to the heavenly Canaan; *Judge me, O God, and plead my cauſe againſt an ungodly nation*, Pſal. xlv. 1. This is a nation that many times ſuppreſs and bear down the work of God in the ſoul. The company and influence of the ungodly, that mock at religion, and laugh at ſacred things, is a great let and impediment to the ſalvation of a ſoul. And as it was with Iſrael of old, ſo it is with the church in all ages; ſhe is never without enemies that annoy her: there are four ſorts of ungodly men, that the church of God generally complain of; the *tyrant*, the *atheiſt*, the *heretic*, and the *hypocrite*: ſome of theſe would ſubvert, and others pervert her. The *tyrant*, by heart-hatred and open perſecution; the *atheiſt*, by profanity of life; the *heretic*, by corruption of doctrine; and the *hypocrite*, by pretences of holineſs. Theſe nations of ungodly men do oppoſe the Iſrael of God, partly by force, and partly by fraud: and, indeed, the ſecret enemies are uſually the moſt dangerous of the two; they that uſe fraud, more dangerous than theſe that uſe force, for theſe, being ſeen and known, are more eaſily avoided; but the other not ſo eaſily ſhunned, becauſe not ſuſpected.

5. There is a nation of *mighty kings*, and *powerful giants*, as the ſons of Anak are called, Num. xiii. 33. How many great kings did the Lord give unto the hand of Iſrael? ſuch as, Og, king of Baſhan; Sihon, king of the Amorites, Pſal. cxxxvi. 18, 19, 20. Pſal. cxxxv. 10, 11. But there are greater kings and potentates than theſe, that ſtand in the way of the poſſeſſion of the heavenly Canaan. There are more eſpecially, four kings, mighty kings, to be ſubdued: for,

(1.) As *ſin* is a mighty king, that reigns in us, and over us naturally; therefor ſays the apoſtle, Rom. vi. 12. *Let not ſin reign in your mortal body*: ſo,

(2.) *Satan* is a mighty king in his own territories; therefore called the *prince of this world*; the *prince of the power of the air, that rules in the hearts of the children of diſobedience*, Eph. ii. 2.

(3.) *Self* is a mighty king; it competes with king Jeſus, and keeps his throne, ſo long as the *loftineſs of man is not brought down*, and the *haughtineſs of man made low*, Iſa. ii. 11. that the *Lord alone may be exalted* in the heart: and, even after Chriſt is exalted to the throne of the heart, Self is ſtill fighting and working for the throne. It is a king that all the world adores.

(4.) *Death* is a mighty king; therefore called the *king of terrors*, Job xviii. 14. He is a king, that is the terror of kings, as well as inferior ſubjects. This is called the *laſt enemy* of God's Iſrael; *The laſt enemy to be deſtroyed is death*: and happy they that get the *ſting of death* removed, which is *ſin*. See 1 Cor. xv. 54,—57. *Death ſhall be ſwallowed up in victory*. Chriſt is the victorious conqueror of this and all other enemies: however, theſe are mighty kings in the way; and ſome of them have mighty giants in their armies, particularly theſe three, *viz.* king *Sin*, king *Satan*, and king *Self*; theſe three have powerful armies to fight their helliſh battles. And there are,

6. A nation of *deceitful luſts* in the heart; ſo called, Eph. iv. 22. Theſe are like ſo many deputies and officers, captains and lieutenants, fighting under the banner of king *Sin*, king *Self*, and king *Satan*, againſt king JESUS, the God of glory. O what ſwarms of luſts make up this army of hell! If you will travel through the camp of your heart, you will ſee an armed regiment of gigantic luſts: there you may ſee *grim-faced revenge*, armed with the devil's black livery:

livery: there you may see *cursed atheism* and *unbelief*, armed with lies, and blasphemies, and bitter invectives against heaven: there you will see *cruel enmity*, armed with a bloody sword of forcible opposition unto God and Christ: there you will see *subtile hypocrisy*, armed with fraud and flattery: there you will see *brazen-faced hardness of heart*, armed with a brow of brass: there you may see *dullish security*, armed with a fearless spirit, and a stupid conscience; *bold presumption*, armed with a daring countenance; *towering pride*, armed with a robe of gaudy attire, and an eye of scorn, contempt, and disdain; as also *self-righteous confidence*, armed with gross ignorance both of the spirituality of the law, and mystery of the gospel. There is a powerful nation of heart-plagues and deceitful lusts, that reign over the ungodly world, and many times rage in the hearts of unbelievers, to the leading of them captive.

7. There is a nation of *actual out-breakings* in the life, and *sins* in the conversation: these are, like the common soldiers of the army of hell, making daily excursions into the camp of Israel; yea, every hour of the day they are breaking out on this hand, and on that hand, and round about us on all hands, in innumerable omissions and commissions. Here breaks out *intemperance* and *insobriety*, in eating, drinking, and using of the comforts of life; there breaks out *idle words*, *vain talking*, *unprofitable conversation*: here appears *negligence* in duty, and *carelessness* and *indifferency* in hearing, reading, praying, communicating; and there appears *mis-spending* of time, Sabbath and week days both, wasting our precious opportunities, and mis-improving our talents, without endeavouring to do good or get good, to glorify God, or edify these that are conversant with us. The former nation I mentioned was the *lusts of the flesh*, and this nation is the *works of the flesh*: the lusts of the flesh are deceitfully hidden within the walls; the works of the flesh are open and manifest, making continual outward excursions. You may have a list of them, Gal. v. 17, 20, 21. *Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, envyings, murders drunkenness, revellings.* Another list of the names of the soldiers of this army you may read, 2 Tim. iii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. *Men shall be lovers of themselves:* there goes the king and commander in chief SELF-LOVE; and then follows a list of the common soldiers, *Covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures*, &c.

Now, these are the seven nations continually in arms, and at work for hell, and against heaven; the nation of *vain thoughts* continually flying post through the rest of the nations for intelligence; the nation of *worldly cares* continually making *provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof*; the nation of *doubts*, and *unbelieving fears*, and *jealousies*, is still keeping watch, and standing centry at the door of the heart, to keep out all heavenly messages, and exclude all proposals of peace with heaven; the nation of *ungodly men*, continually guarding the out-works of hell, and plying their large artillery and battering rams, to beat down what God, and Christ, and the gospel would build up; the nation of *mighty kings*, that I mentioned, are still issuing forth new commands and orders for war against heaven; the nation of *deceitful lusts*, like officers of the army, are still mustering the host, leading them forth to the field of battle, and setting them in battle-array; and the nation of *actual sins* and *out-breakings*, are still brandishing their swords and spears, and other impliments of war, making daily and hourly excursions out of the camp of hell, and incursions upon their opposites and antagonist; running upon the camp of Israel, to destroy them, and hinder their march to the heavenly Canaan.

Now, to these seven nations all the world of mankind are, by nature, kept in subjection; and, which is worse, they are willing slaves and captives to them: and even the Israel of God, that have left their camp, and fled under the colours and standard of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Captain of salvation, are many times led captive to them: they are still giving battle to Israel.—Now, O thou that art bound for the celestial Canaan, what thinkest thou of these nations? Are they not seven nations greater and mightier than thou? Surely, if thou hast found, to thy sad experience, the power, and the policy, and the pernicious influence of these mighty nations upon thee, it will be welcome news to hear that *the Lord thy God will put out these nations from before thee, by little and little.*

IV. The *fourth* thing that I proposed, was, to speak a little of the *Conqueror* of these nations; that is, *The King of Glory; the Lord, strong and mighty; the Lord, mighty in battle.* Indeed, they that have such mighty nations to fight and debate with, have need of a mighty conqueror to subdue them: and he is here said to be *the Lord thy God;* where he is described, 1. By his name, JEHOVAH. 2. By his relation to them in Christ, THY GOD.

1st, Israel's Captain, that fights their battles, is described by his great name JEHOVAH, *the* LORD, in capital letters; which is ordinarily used in all our English translations, to intimate, that in the original it is JEHOVAH: and it is a name that points out the perfection of his nature. It is remarked, that all along the first chapter of Genesis, while God was yet upon his creating work, he is called ELOCHIM, *a God of power;* but in the second chapter of Genesis, ver. 4. God having compleated his work, he is then called JEHOVAH-ELOCHIM, *a God of power, and perfection.* And as he here takes that name, when he perfects what he had begun; so we find him making himself known by this name, when he appears to perform what he had promised to Israel, Exod. vi. 3. *I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, by the name of* GOD ALMIGHTY; *but by my name* JEHOVAH *was I not made known to them.* God would now be known by his name JEHOVAH, as being, 1. A God *performing* what he had promised, and so giving a being to his promises. 2. A God *perfecting* what he had begun, and finishing his own work. And now, the subduing of the Canaanites before Israel, was a work that God had promised, and a work that now he had begun; therefore, he makes himself known in this work by his name JEHOVAH, a *performing* and *perfecting* God. This is the powerful Conqueror, that all the true Israel of God have to look to, and depend upon, for destroying the nations of spiritual enemies for them. This name belongs to our Lord Jesus Christ, equally with the Father and the eternal Spirit. It is he that led

led Israel out of Egypt by the hand of Moses, wrought wonders for them, and brought them to Canaan, and delivered their enemies into their hand; by all which was typified the greater salvation and deliverance that he was to work, in accomplishing the business of our redemption in our nature. And by taking to himself the name JESUS, he hath not lost the name JEHOVAH; nay, he could not be a JESUS, if he were not JEHOVAH: he could not destroy these nations I have named, the sum of which is *sin*; for to destroy sin, is more than to make a world: sin cannot be destroyed, without satisfying that infinite justice that sin offended, and glorifying that infinite holiness that sin affronted, and fulfilling the law that sin had violated, and appeasing the wrath and vengeance that sin had kindled. Further, sin could not be destroyed, without destroying the devil that begat it, and the wicked heart that brought it forth; all which requires a new creation, more great and glorious than the first, and belongs to none but JEHOVAH. This name points out the divine glory of our Redeemer and Conqueror, which I offer in these two further remarks upon it.

1. This great name JEHOVAH, (as these that investigate the Hebrew root, observe) signifies *being*, *essence*, *simple-existence*, or *self-subsistence*; and imports his most *simple*, *absolute*, *eternal*, and *independent being*, and *existence*; having his being in, of, and from himself; and from whose infinite being, all creatures have their finite being.

2. This name JEHOVAH comprehends in itself the three Hebrew tenses; the *preterit*, signifying the *time past*; the *present*, signifying what *is now*; and the *future*, signifying the *time to come*: and imports that designation given to Christ, Rev. i. 4, 8. *Which is, and which was, and which is to come.* Thus he is the I AM THAT I AM, as he is called, Exod. iii. 14. The ALPHA and OMEGA, the *First* and the *Last*: the first, without beginning; and the last, without end. O but they that have such a glorious General to follow, need not fear to take the field against the nations! He is JEHOVAH.

2*dly*, Israel's Captain-general is here described by his relation to them, THY *God*; *the Lord* THY *God*. This relation is stated upon the ground of a new-covenant dispensation, even a covenant of promise in Christ Jesus. Of this covenant there was an Old-Testament dispensation, under which this people of Israel were; and a New-Testament dispensation, under which we are: the former was a darker, and this is a clearer and brighter dispensation of the same new covenant. The old covenant of works being broken and violated by the sin of man, God could not, in honour, come under this relation again to sinners, but upon the ground of a new covenant, established in Christ.—This covenant of promise was first discovered to Adam in paradise, afterwards to Abraham, and others. The promise of that new covenant was sealed by the blood of Christ *typically*, under the Old-Testament, by the sacrifices then offered; and *actually* at Jerusalem, when he *gave his life a ransom for many*. Upon the footing of this covenant, I say, it is, that he asserts this relation, *The Lord* THY *God*. But more particularly, for explaining this relative designation, THY GOD; we may take a fourfold view thereof.

1. As it is expressive of the *antient* federal relation betwixt God and Israel of old, the church of the Jews under that dispensation. He became their God, and they were chosen of him to be his peculiar people, beyond all other people in the world; as you see, Deut. vii. 6. *For thou art a holy people to the Lord thy God; the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people to himself, above all people on the face of the earth.* He made known his mind with respect to the way of salvation to them, and they to others; *He shewed his word unto Jacob, and his statutes and judgments to Israel; he hath not dealt so with any nation*, Psal. cxlvii. 19, 20. And having taken them visibly into a covenant-relation, he establishes his covenant with them and their seed; *The Lord hath delight in thy Fathers to love them, and he chose their seed after them*, Deut. x. 15. And thus he said to Abraham, Gen. xvii. 7. *I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, to be a God to thee and thy seed.* Hence says God to them, *You only have I known of all the families of the earth.* All this is said of them, even with respect to their church-state, abstract from the singular saving privileges of true believers among them, who, through grace, were enabled to improve these great advantages they enjoyed above other people. By virtue of this relation that he stood in to them, he engaged, as the Lord their God, to put out the nations of the Canaanites before them *by little and little*.

2. You may view it as expressive of the *present* federal relation that God stands in to the visible church under the New Testament, even to us the Gentiles, as succeeding to the Jews in their church-privileges, together with superadded advantages, in so far as the New-Testament dispensation does excell that of the Old. As it was said to the Jewish church, *The promise is to you and to your children*, Acts ii. 39.; and that *to them belong the adoption, and the glory, the covenant, and the promise*, Rom. ix. 4.: so, in like manner, do they belong to the Christian church, we being *grafted in among them, to partake of the root and fatness of their olive-tree*, Rom. ix. 17. Hence flows a common interest that all the members of the visible church have in God, as their God; and Christ, as their Head: not only as a head of eminency, but as an head of influence and government. All the common influences shed among the members of the visible church come from this source; and from thence result also many excellent privileges, all which are sealed in baptism, which succeeds to the seal of circumcision among the Jews. Baptism seals to us, and to all the visible church, a common general right to God's covenant, so as we may warrantably plead the promises, and that promise in particular, *I will be your God, and you shall be my people*; which is the fundamental promise. Great are the privileges that belong to the visible church, that do not belong to these that are without: God commits to them his ministry, his oracles, and ordinances; by the means of which, he brings forth children, and gathers his elect; so as out of the church "visible "there is no ordinary possibility of salvation," Acts ii. 47. As all the baptized members of the visible church have a sealed interest in the covenant of promise, such as lays them under a special obligation to believe in Christ; so they have a claim, beyond the rest of the world, to God as their God in Christ, and as their Saviour: yea, all the church visible are said to be *in Christ*, John xv. 2.; even these branches that bear

bear not fruit, and that ſhall be taken away, and caſt into the fire. Baptiſm ſeals our ingraftment into Chriſt; that is, an ingraftment common to all that are members of the viſible church, beſides the ſaving ſpiritual ingraftment of true believers. Now, that common relation that you all have to God, as church-members, though it be common to believers and unbelievers; yet it is, in itſelf, a ſpecial privilege, whereby you are exalted above the reſt of the world that are without the church; and gives every one of you a right to plead this promiſe to be accompliſhed to you in a ſpiritual ſenſe, *The Lord thy God will put out theſe nations before you, by little and little*, even ſuch nations of ſpiritual enemies as were typified by the Canaanites that Iſrael had to deal with. But then,

3. You may view this relative deſignation, *Thy God*, as expreſſive of the *ſpecial* relation he ſtands in to the church inviſible, militant here upon earth; I mean, to true believers, the living members of Chriſt, and true Iſrael of God, whom he makes ſo, by becoming their God, in a way of ſovereign free grace, in and through Jeſus Chriſt, in whom they have a peculiar intereſt in God as their God, and a ſpecial title to all the promiſes of the new covenant as their charter; all the promiſes being *Yea* and *Amen* in Chriſt Jeſus. Now, it is in this ſenſe eſpecially that I conſider this deſignation, *The Lord thy God*; becauſe it is the ſpiritual intent of the text that I treat, namely, as it does typify and repreſent the ſpiritual deliverance of the true Iſrael of God from their ſpiritual enemies, in order to the poſſeſſion of the heavenly Canaan; yet not excluding the great appearances the Lord makes for his church viſible on earth, collectively conſidered. And here it is proper you obſerve, that though this title, *The Lord thy God*, be oftentimes in ſcripture ſpoken of with reſpect to a viſible church, a mixt people of good and bad; as when he ſays to Iſrael, *I am the Lord thy God, that brought thee out of the land of Egypt, and houſe of bondage*; and whereas in many inſtances it is ſpoken collectively of the whole body of the church: yet this rule is to be noticed, that where the Lord is mentioned in relation thus to a mixt people, all the privileges that flow from ſuch a relation of God to that people, are but common privileges; I mean, common to all that viſible church. Thus the privilege of bringing out of the land of Egypt, was a common privilege, common to all that people, good and bad among them; and ſo was this privilege of cutting off the nations of the Canaanites before them in a literal ſenſe, and poſſeſſing them of the earthly Canaan: and, therefore, though God be called the God of a church or people collectively, which infers many excellent privileges, though common to them all, as was ſhewed above; yet, he is not their God, in the ſame reſpect, as he is the God of the believer, or of the true Iſrael. As they *are not all Iſrael that are of Iſrael*, (for the whole viſible church, God's profeſſing people, are of Iſrael; but only true believers are Iſraelites indeed, and Jews inwardly, the true ſpiritual circumciſion;) ſo theſe true Iſraelites have a courſe by common, having a ſpecial and peculiar propriety in God as their God; which infers ſpecial and peculiar privileges. And hence,

4. You may view this deſignation, *Thy God*, as expreſſive of all the *bleſſings* that are imported in this ſpecial relation that he ſtands in to this true Iſrael. And, indeed, the privileges imported this in the word, *Thy God*, are innumerable and unſpeakable. His being their God, imports, that they have an intereſt in all that he is, and all that he hath, and all that he can do, and is wont to do for theſe whoſe God he is. Here is a field that would take a long eternity to travel through: *Happy is the people whoſe God is the Lord.* All happineſs in time, and for ever, is imported in it: his being their God, imports all the relation that he can be in to them, for making them holy and happy for ever in himſelf; that he is, and will be, their *Sun*, to enlighten them; their *Portion*, to enrich them; their *Father*, to pity them; their *Righteouſneſs*, to clothe them; their *Guide*, to conduct them; their *Glory*, to crown them; and their ALL *in all*. But the text confines me to theſe relations imported in this title, *Thy God*, which hath a reſpect to his deſtroying their enemies before them by little and little. I only mention two of theſe: 1. His being their God, imports, that he is their *Friend*, though their enemies be many. 2. His being their God, imports, that he is their *Shield*, though their enemies be mighty.

[1.] Amidſt the multitude of enemies, their God is their *Friend*. And, indeed, no matter who be our enemies, if God be our friend: *If God be for us*, ſays the apoſtle, *who can be againſt us?* Rom. viii. 31. And he is a friend to all theſe to whom he is a God in a peculiar manner. And his being their friend, imports, the removal of feud and enmity; his anger being turned away, and reconciliation made up thro' Chriſt, whatever was the former difference. It imports, the acceptation of their perſons into favour, and the obligation he lies under, as a friend, by virtue of the new covenant of grace and promiſe, to help them in every time of need; and to *do all their works in them, and for them*; and to fight all the battles. Therefore,

[2.] Though their enemies be mighty, his being their God, imports, that he is their *Shield*: *The Lord God is a ſun and ſhield* to them, Pſal. lxxxiv. 11. The ſhields of the earth are his; and his being their ſhield, is to be underſtood both in a *defenſive* and *offenſive* way.

(1.) He is the Lord their God and ſhield to *defend* them; *My defence is of God, which ſaves the upright in heart*, Pſal. vii. 10. Hence called a *ſtrong tower*, and *rock of defence*, a *hiding place*, a *covert*, a *ſhadow*, to ſhelter them from the aſſaults and attacks of the nations of enemies that are within them, and round about them; *A man ſhall be a hiding place from the wind, a covert from the tempeſt; as rivers of waters in a dry place, and as the ſhadow of a great rock in a weary land*, Iſa. xxxii. 2.

(2.) He is the Lord their God and ſhield, for *offending* all their enemies: hence he is ſaid to have a ſword of power girded on his thigh, for executing judgment on their enemies; Deut. xxxii. 41, 42. *If I whet my glittering ſword, and mine hand take hold of judgment; I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and a reward to them that hate me. I will make mine arrows drunk with blood.* Read alſo ver. 43. and compare it with Iſa. lxiii. 1,—4. *The day of vengeance is in mine heart, for the year of my redemption is come.* O! it is a happy vengeance to the Iſrael of God, when he, as their mighty Conqueror, ſubdues the nations under them, and takes vengeance on all their

their powerful lusts and spiritual enemies. A day of vengeance to the enemy, is a day of redemption to his friends. But this leads me to

V. The *fifth* thing proposed, namely, to speak of the *manner* of the conquest. We have heard of the Conqueror, here designed, *The Lord thy God*; and now the manner of the conquest is, *He will put out these nations before thee, by little and little.* And here three things may be noticed with reference to the manner of the conquest, 1. It is obtained *powerfully* and *effectually*; *He will put out these nations.* 2. *Visibly* and *remarkably*; He will put them out *before thee.* 3. *Gradually* and *piece-meal*; *by little and little.* To each of these I would speak a word.

First, The manner of the conquest is, that it is obtained *powerfully* and *effectually*: *The Lord thy God* WILL PUT OUT *these nations*; or, as it is rendered in the margin, *he will* PLUCK OFF *these nations.* And so it is further explained, ver. 23. of this chapter; he will *deliver them unto thee, and shall destroy them with a mighty destruction, till they be destroyed* utterly. *And he will deliver their kings into thine hand,* ver. 24. And, Exod. xxiii. 30. *By little and little will I drive them out.* Now, thus, in the spiritual conquest, the nations must be put out: and the Lord's putting them out, does import,

1. That these nations of lusts, and spiritual enemies have *strength* and *power* upon their side; so that is no easy work to get them driven out; yea, utterly impossible, unless the Lord our God undertake it. If you ask, where the strength of these nations lies, and particularly the strength of sin? I answer, In these four things.

(1.) The strength of the nation of *sin* and of *lusts* lies in their *root*; *viz.* the *body of sin and death*: as the strength of a tree lies in the root; so that the ax must be laid to the root, if you would destroy it; and as the strength of the water is in the fountain, so that if you would destroy it, the fountain must be stopt up: so the strength of sin is in the root and fountain of sin that is within. And hence,

(2.) The strength of these nations of *lusts* lies in the relation they have to *ourselves*: and hence, for a man to destroy his lusts, is to *deny himself.* These nations of lusts and sins are such a part of himself, that they seem to be the best part, and the most useful part of himself; his right-hand, his right-eye, his members; *Mortify therefore your members that are upon the earth,* Col. iii. 5.

(3.) The strength of these nations lies in the *commander* and *captain-general* that leads them forth; that is, the DEVIL; the great quarter-master that fills the heart, as it is said of Ananias, Acts v. 3. *Why hath Satan filled thine heart, to lye to the Holy Ghost, and keep back part of the price.* It is the devil that fills the heart of people to lye, and fills their heart to swear, and fills their heart to drink and debauch, and fills their heart to keep back what service is due to God. This commander is a strong man, and cannot be conquered but by a stronger. Yea,

(4.) The strength of these nations of sin lies in the *law of works*; 1 Cor. xv. 56. *The strength of sin is the law.* Sin hath dominion over all that are *under the law*, and not *under grace*, Rom. vi. 14. and that on many accounts, that I cannot now insist upon; but particularly, among the rest, because, by reason of the original breach thereof, they are under the curse of it, of which curse the strength of sin is a great part; so that no less power than that which can pull up the root, a body of sin and death, and pull down self and all the members of it, and that can destroy the devil, the captain of hell, and, at the same time, give full satisfaction to the law of the God of heaven; no less power can destroy these nations, for here their strength lies.*—The Lord's putting them out, supposes and imports this strength and power that they have upon their side.

2. It imports, that these nations of lusts and spiritual enemies have the *possession*; which, indeed, is also a great part of their strength. There would be no need of driving them out, if they were not in: nay, they are in possession; they are in actual possession of the *understanding* of all men by nature, who are therefore *alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them.* They have actual possession of the *will*; hence men are not only unwilling to let these nations go out, and as unwilling as Pharaoh was to let Israel go, though plagued from heaven for his wilfulness: but also the will is filled with *enmity against God*, and rises up in arms and opposition against him, and in favours of these lusts. Yea, they have possession of all the powers and faculties of the soul; they are deeply rooted in the heart and nature, as the Jebusites were in the land of Canaan; and there they strongly fortify and deeply intrench themselves, so that it is no easy work to drive them out: yea, as they have no will to go out, so out they will never go, till they be driven by a superior power, as Christ drove the buyers and sellers out of the temple, who turned the temple of God to a den of thieves. Therefore,

3. It imports, an *exerting of the divine power* in opposition to these nations, in order to their being put out and destroyed; and that is even the almighty power of God in Christ, by the Holy Ghost; *If you through the Spirit mortify the deeds of the body, you shall live,* Rom. viii. 13. It is not by the power of nature, or free-will; *Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts,* Zech. iv. 6. When the conquest is actually commenced in a soul, the Spirit of God comes and gives battle to the nations of the Canaanites; the lusts and old inhabitants of the heart, and takes possession. How he does so, may afterwards more appear: only, I say here, the Lord's putting out the nations, imports, that his almighty power is actually put forth for this end.

4. It imports, that this power is and shall be *effectual*; for it is said, *He* WILL *put them out*: he will drive them out of their old quarters, and destroy them; he will drive them out of the heart, out of the house, out of the will, out of the affections, out of all the forts where they strengthened themselves, and at last out of the world, when he completes his work of sanctification; for, *He that hath begun the good work, will perfect it,* Phil. i. 6. And sure there is no true-hearted Israelite here, but will say, AMEN; Lord, hasten the time when these nations of lusts shall be driven out of my heart, and driven out of the world; Lord, let them be driven to hell with the devil, their captain, and let me be quit of them for ever. Well, the day of their complete extirpation is a coming; *The Lord thy God will drive out these nations.* But then,

Secondly, The manner of the conquest here exprest, is *visible* and *remarkable*; he will drive them

* Wherein the *strength of sin* lies, is copiously opened up in the next discourse, from these words, *The strength of sin is the law.*

them out *before thee*. I think this word may import the visible and remarkable manner of the conquest: and more particularly,

1. That the Israel of God get a *sight* of their enemies. These nations are in their view, while the Lord their God is driving them out, and while they, through grace, are led to the field of battle against them: he will drive them out *before them*. They that never got a view of their sins and lusts, nor of the strength of their arms; that never saw their own corrupt nature, nor experienced the power of corruption in their hearts; they are yet living at their ease, in the midst of these nations, and under the power thereof: they are *alive without the law*, Rom. vii. 9. The commandment hath not come, nor sin revived, to discover its strength to them: they are yet soldiers under the devil's banner: they have not taken on with Christ: the battle with the nations is not yet begun; for they never yet saw them, nor viewed and reconnoitered their strength.

2. His driving out the nations before them, imports, that, through grace, the Israel of God are made *active* herein. It is *before thee* they shall be driven out. Being acted by his grace, they act; being armed by his Spirit, they fight; and, through the Spirit, *mortify the deeds of the body*. It is true, sometimes the Israel of God have nothing ado at all, but just to stand still, as it were, to see how the waters will divide to let them through, and how they will return to drown and overwhelm their enemies: but, for ordinary, their work is to *go forward*, in the name and strength of the Lord their God, and give battle to their enemies, that they may be destroyed before them; and, under the banner of Christ Jesus, the glorious Captain of salvation, to *fight the good fight of faith*. Yea,

3. His driving out the nations before them, imports, that, even when they are called to act and fight, they shall have no *ground of boasting*, but rather of blushing, when they consider what part it is they act in this matter: for the Lord himself must be the agent; *The Lord thy God will put out the nations before thee*. Israel's Captain goes before them, and leads the van; the Lion of the tribe of Judah must go before them, and tear their enemies to pieces: it is he that subdues the nations under them. He hath gone before them already, and had a bloody battle with all the nations of hell upon mount Calvery; there he fought, and *overcame principalities and powers*; there he *condemned sin in the flesh*, and *destroyed the strength* of it, by *nailing the law to his cross*, Col. ii. 14. And however the nations may rally their forces again, and seem formidable and dreadful, yet their strength being broken at this bloody engagement, the believer hath no more ado, in effect, but to hold up the red flag of the blood of Christ by faith, and then he *overcomes by the blood of the Lamb*, Rev. xii. 1. The great battle is already fought, and the great art of the believer, in all the lesser battles and skirmishes, lies in setting his Captain before him, saying, *I will go in the strength of the Lord; for in the Lord only have I righteousness and strength*; viewing him as before them in the field, according to his promise, *The Lord thy God will put out these nations before thee*.

4. It may import, that as the Lord their God will make their enemies to flee before their face, so they shall be *witnesses* to the wonders of his power in overthrowing the nations in their way. The true Israel of God dare hardly call themselves warriours against their enemies, but rather witnesses to the battle of the Lord, when he fights for them, and makes them overcome, and then gives them the name of *conquerors*; yea, *more than conquerors, through him that loved them*. He overcomes for them, and then crowns them as the overcomers, saying, *To him that overcomes, will I give to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne*. They are witnesses to his grand atchievements and valiant exploits against their enemies; for, his ordinary time of fighting remarkably for them, is, when their *strength is gone*, and when he *sees their power is gone*, and there is *none shut up or left*, by reason of the power of their enemies, Deut. xxxii. 36.; then he steps in, and takes vengeance on their enemies. And, indeed, the day of power is a day remarkable for victories over sin, Satan, the world, and the lusts thereof. Do you mind the day, believer, when you thought there was a legion of devils, a nation of lusts, an army of corruptions, a regiment of hell within you; but, behold, you got a view of the Captain of salvation ready to put out these nations before you; and you got grace to take hold of him, to believe in him, and so to *turn to flight the armies of the aliens*? Are there not some remarkable times, when you got your feet set upon the neck of your lusts? *By thee I have run through a troop*, says David, Psal. xviii. 29.; *and by my God I overleap a wall*. It is true, the conquest is not always remarkable; for sometimes the nations *compass them about like bees*, and sting them, and torment them, and prevail against them; *Iniquities prevail against me*, says David: yet they never prevail so far, but that grace still renews the fight, and at last obtains the victory; though yet, through many ups and downs, and fallings and risings, vicissitudes and changes. Therefore,

Thirdly, The manner of the conquest here expreſt is *gradual*, by *little and little*. This is the main point here intended, with reference to the manner of the Lord's destroying the nations: Therefore I would here, 1. Show what may be *imported* in this his putting out the nations by *little and little*. 2. By what several *steps, stroaks*, or *degrees*, he puts out the nations in a spiritual sense.

1*st*, As to the *import* of this phrase, *by little and little*. It says,

1. That the Israel of God are not to expect that their spiritual enemies will be *all vanquished at the first onset*. Though the victory be begun, whenever the soul gets in to Christ, and under his colours, who is the Captain of salvation; yet the commencement of the spiritual war is not the completement thereof; nay, there may be many a battle before the war be at a close, and the victory complete: for, though the enemy hath got a dead stroak, and though the nations of lusts, like the beast mentioned, Dan. vii. 12. *have their dominion taken away; yet their lives are prolonged for a season*; which occasions the war to be prolonged. Also,

2. *By little and little*, it imports, that the visible advantages over the nations of spiritual enemies may be *very small*; Israel may be at a time but *holpen with a little help*, Dan. xi. 34.; and get a *little reviving in their bondage*, Ezra ix. 8.; a little victory at a time; a small advantage against the enemy: but though it be small, yet the

the *day of small things is not to be despised*, Zech. iv. 10.; for, as we say, Many smalls make a great. Therefore,

3. The Lord's putting them out *by little and little*, imports, that though the several foils be small, yet they are *successful*; for, by little and little, the nations are thus put out and discomfited: every new battle tends to the ruin of the enemy more and more. Let not the believer say that nothing is done, because so little is done, and the enemy is yet alive. O be thankful, if, by *little and little*, the Lord be putting them out, and gradually diminishing their forces.

4. *By little and little*, it imports, the *continuation and progress of the war*, until there be a *total extirpation of the nations*. There may be an intermission of stroaks, now a stroak and then a stroak given to the enemy; but no intermission of the war during the militant state; no cessation of arms; no proclamation of peace with the enemy; no league with any lust among the true Israel of God. Lusts may, indeed, rise and rage, and rally their forces again, even after they are routed, and a multitude of these nations may gather together; and the believer may be in great fears of the issue, lest he be swallowed up and destroyed before them; till, by faith, he get a new recruit of auxiliaries and reinforcement of strength from heaven, and then he will say, with the psalmist, Psal. cxviii. 10, 11. *The nations compast me about, but in the name of the Lord will I destroy them*; for then *the right-hand of the Lord does valiantly*. Yet still it is by little and little; *here a little, and there a little*; here a little stroak given to Satan's kingdom, and there a little stroak; here a little dash given to the old man and his lusts, and there a little dash; a little at this duty, and a little at another; a little at this sermon, and a little at another sermon; a little at this sacrament, and the other sacrament, till the finishing stroak be given. But this leads to the other question here,

2dly, By what *steps* and *degrees* is the conquest over the nations advanced to a total extirpation of them? Here I might enquire, 1. By what degrees the conquest is advanced by Israel's Captain in his *own person?* 2. By what degrees it is advanced by him in *their persons?*

(1.) By what degrees the conquest is advanced and completed by the Captain of Israel, the Lord Jesus Christ, in his *own person?* I will tell you four remarkable periods of his conquest, wherein you may see four remarkable degrees thereof.

1. The *first* period was the *commencement* of the war in paradise, immediately after the fall of Adam: there he proclaimed war between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent; and, after the proclamation, during that Old-Testament period, he kept all his soldiers in expectation of his appearing, according to that promise and proclamation, as their Head and General; so that, in the faith of this coming Messias, they overcame.

2. The *second* period was in the remarkable *combat* that was betwixt the two heads of the two contending parties on mount Calvary, Christ on the one hand, and the serpent on the other; when, though the serpent bruised his heel unto blood, yet he brake the serpent's head with his bloody heel, while *by death he destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil*; and vanquished the nations of hell, by destroying their commander's power.

3. The *third* period was in the *after-game* that followed upon this memorable combat; when, in his resurrection and ascension unto heaven, he dismantled all the garrisons of Satan, *divided the spoil with the strong, and led captivity captive*: which laid the foundation for a successful war to his Israel, carried on between Michael and his angels, and the dragon and his angels; where the dragon having got a deadly stroak, cannot prevail, Rev. xii. 7, 8.; though he continue thus to rally his forces against heaven, and all that bend heavenward to the end of the world. And then comes,

4. The *fourth* period, in that consummate stroak which the Captain of salvation will give to the devil and his armies at the *great day*, when *he will come in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory*: then death, and he that had the power of it, shall be utterly destroyed; for, *the last enemy to be destroyed is death*, 1 Cor. xv. 56. From the first to the last enemy, not one shall be spared from destruction: then sin, and death that was brought in by sin, shall be under an eternal banishment, never more to appear among the Israel of God. —— Thus you see by what steps and degrees the conquest is effectuated by the Lord Jesus in his own person.

(2.) By what degrees, say you, is it actually obtained by him in *his members* and *soldiers*, when he drives out the nations before them? Why, 1. By little and little, he *brings them to the field of battle* against the nations, in a *day of power*, when the spiritual war is begun. 2. By little and little, he *carries on the conquest*, till the *day of death*, when the warfare is concluded.

[1.] I say, by little and little, he brings them forth to the field against the nations of lusts that stand in their way to the heavenly Canaan, and that in a *day of power*, in a *day of conversion*, when the spiritual war is commenced in the man's person.

QUEST. *How does the Lord their God bring them forth against the enemy?*

I do not limit the Lord to this or that way; he is Sovereign: but I speak of the ordinary steps and degrees, by which he brings any poor sinner that was under the power of sin and Satan, mixed with, and under the power of the nations of hell; by which, I say, he brings them to the field. There are several fields that the Captain of salvation leads them through, before they be on the field of battle, where the nations are put out before them.

1. He leads them to the field of *consideration*, and makes them there bethink themselves what a sad state and condition they are in, while waging war against heaven, under the devil's banner. What am I doing? and, where am I going? and, what will be the end of these things, and of living in the service of these nations of lusts? And, oh! where will be my landing-place to eternity, if this be my course? Many never go so far towards the heavenly Canaan, as to step in to this field of consideration: *The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, my people do not consider*, Isa. i. 3. But, ah! many never so much as turn their faces towards the field of battle against their lusts, so long as they do not enter on this field of consideration: therefore, when the Lord begins a good work on his people, he brings them first to consider their ways; *I thought upon my ways, and turned my feet to thy testimonies*. May be he brings them to it by some

ſome rouzing providence, whereby he ſtops their career in wickedneſs, and *hedges up their way with thorns*, as he ſtopped Manaſſes, and held him in the thorns of Babylon, till he began to conſider and know that the Lord was God, and that he was fighting againſt God.

2. Another little advance, where by little and little he leads them forth to battle, is his bringing them next to the field of *concern*: this natively follows upon due conſideration. The man is brought to ſee the hazard and danger he is compaſſed with, and to be afraid of the iſſue. Some may make a ſtep into the field of *conſideration* a little, but they preſently ſtep back again, without going forward to the field of *concern*: but, when the Lord hath a mind to bring one forward to the camp for war, he brings them in to the field of *great concern*, where they are filled with a greater concern about ſalvation than ever they had about any thing in the world, ſaying, with the jaylor, Oh! *what ſhall I do to be ſaved?* And with Peter's hearers, *Men and brethren, what ſhall we do?* Is there any ſalvation for me, that have been fighting againſt God all my days?

3. Another little advance, is, his bringing them from the field of *concern* to the field of *reſtleſneſs*, even to a reſtleſs endeavour to come out of Satan's camp, and out of that ſad condition they ſee themſelves into: for this concern about ſalvation, and fear of everlaſting damnation, makes them to fall about the means of relief; and ſo they read, and pray, and hear, and meditate, and mourn, and weep, and reform; and you would think they are by this time beginning to fight againſt the nations of their luſts: but, however theſe means be good in themſelves, and a reſtleſneſs in the uſe of them may be wrought under the awakening influence of the Spirit of God; yet there is ſome other field the man muſt be taken through, before he be capable to lift arms againſt his luſts in an evangelical and acceptable manner: for, as yet, his legal heart leads him to nothing but a legal warfare, under which his ſpiritual luſts remain ſtill in their ſtrength and dominion. The man is yet under the law, and ſo under the *dominion of ſin*, Rom. vi. 14. And hence, while he is yet in this field, he is ready to be filled with vain imaginations, and legal dreams, like the young man in the goſpel, that it is by doing ſome good thing or other he is to have eternal life. In this caſe, he may be doing a great deal of duties, and doing what he can with the greateſt natural ſerioufneſs, and yet to no purpoſe; becauſe he is doing upon the principle of the old covenant of works, *Do and live*. Therefore,

4. Another little advance, is the Lord's bringing them from that field of *reſtleſneſs* to the field of *deſpair*; ſo as to deſpair of help in themſelves and in their endeavours; to deſpair of ever getting victory by their legal diligence; to deſpair of life by the law, and their own obedience thereto. When the ſoul is upon this field, it meets with the law, and ſees the extent and ſpirituality of it, as exacting no leſs than perfection; internal perfection, in heart and nature; external perfection, in lip and life; eternal perfection, in point of continuance and duration: for, *Curſed is every one that continues not in all things written in the book of the law to do them*. And ſo all this perfection it requires upon pain of eternal death and damnation. Now, the *commandment comes*, Rom. vii. 9.; and though the man was *alive without the law once*, and reckoned he was right enough, and fairly bound for the heavenly Canaan, as well as his neighbours; yet the commandment thus coming, *ſin revives, and he dies*; his hope and expectation by the law, or by his legal endeavours, give up the ghoſt. Now, till a man be brought to this field of *deſpair*, he is not brought half-way to the field of battle againſt the nations of enemies in his way to Canaan; but when the Lord brings a man to this deſpair in himſelf, and to deſpair of relief from creatures and means, then there begins to be *ſome hope in Iſrael concerning him*. Therefore,

5. Another little advance, while the Lord is bringing the man by little and little to the goſpel-camp, is this: he brings him from the field of *deſpair* to the field of *hope*; I mean, to a diſtant ſight of the cape of good-hope, in the hearing of the glad news of the goſpel, concerning the Captain of ſalvation, in whom alone poor enſlaved ſinners may be made more than conquerors over ſin, Satan, and the world; over death and hell, and all ſpiritual enemies. The ſoul hears of this mighty Captain, that *he is able to ſave to the uttermoſt*; and ſo conceives hope, that perhaps he will ſhew mercy, and deliver a poor captive. I ſpeak not here of the *new and lively hope*, that is the fruit and effect of faith; for, on this field of hope that I ſpeak of, the man is yet between hope and deſpair, as it were: this hope cannot be a *helmet* to him, while he yet wants the *ſhield of faith*; yet it is ſuch a hope, wrought by the objective revelation of the goſpel, as keeps him from ſinking into utter diſcouragement; and excites, enables, and encourages him to go forward, becauſe he ſees a door of hope open, in the call of the goſpel, wherein he hears Chriſt calling him to come to him freely, and receive his grace. O there is the door of a new covenant open, ſays the man within himſelf; I ſee it is open for the like of me, and I am particularly called to come in at this open door: and now, when the man is brought to this, he is truly not *far from the kingdom of heaven*; not far from the field of battle: he needs but to be holpen with a little help further, and then this courſe is complete. Therefore,

6. Another little advance is, after the ſoul is brought over all theſe fields, by the good hand of God upon him, he is brought to the field of *ſaving faith*, getting ſuch a diſcovery of Jeſus Chriſt, the Captain of ſalvation, by the *Spirit of wiſdom and revelation in the knowledge of him*, as powerfully determines him to take on with him, as a volunteer, being *made willing in the day of power*; and being charmed with the glory of his perſon, the freedom of his grace, the holineſs of the ſtandard, and ruddy enſign dyed with his own blood. Here the man ſees him *girding his ſword upon his thigh*, even his *glory and majeſty*. By this ſword of glorious grace, the ſinner is made a willing ſubject, a willing ſoldier, to follow the glorious Captain, and employ him to fight all his battles, and drive out all the nations of his luſts before him. And now the man is a believer, and is come, indeed, to the field of battle, being joined to the Lord Jeſus, and diſjoined from his old general: now he is, by virtue of union to Chriſt, intitled to a complete victory over all the nations of enemies in his way, and intitled to all theſe new

recruits

recruits and reinforcements from heaven, that are neceſſary for the gradual ſubduing of the nations before him, till he win to the poſſeſſion of the heavenly Canaan.——Thus you ſee how, *by little and little*, the Lord brings them forth to the field of battle; and by what *various degrees* they are brought from ſlaves to the devil and their luſts, to be ſoldiers of Chriſt. But now, as by little and little he brings them to the field of battle againſt the nations in a day of power; ſo,

[2.] *By little and little* he *carries* on the conqueſt, till the *day of death*, when the warfare is accompliſhed. The text leads me to ſpeak of the Captain's part; *The Lord, thy God, will put out theſe nations before thee, by little and little.* And indeed his part is the leading part in the All of this conqueſt; for, *without him we can do nothing.* To engage with the enemy alone, and encounter the nations in our own ſtrength, were madneſs; every luſt will laugh at the ſhaking of our ſpear. It is Chriſt alone, and his Spirit, that can deſtroy the nations before him. But now, the *gradual conqueſt*, till the day of death, by little and little, ſpeaks out theſe two things: 1. That the Iſrael of God hath many *ſad experiences* all their days, that their enemies, the nations, are not *utterly deſtroyed*; but are living and lively, ſtrong and prevalent many times. 2. That they have alſo many *ſweet experiences*, all their days, of ſome *little aid* and *auxiliaries* from heaven, whereby the enemy is driven out, and deſtroyed, by little and little, from time to time.

1. I ſay, this *gradual conqueſt*, taking place till death, and the warfare, ſpeaks out many *ſad experiences*, that the nations of their luſts, and corruptions, and ſpiritual enemies are not *utterly deſtroyed*; and that, notwitſtanding of their being got fairly under the colours of their glorious Captain, yet they will find, all their days, that their enemies are living, lively, ſtrong, and prevalent: for, their deſtruction being but by *little and little*, the conqueſt may be many times undiſcernable, while the power of the enemy appears great and formidable, notwithſtanding any little advantage gained at a time, and while they find many dreadful ſallies and ſucceſsful excurſions that the enemy makes upon them. Now, may I not aſk the Iſrael of God here, if they have not too many ſad experiences of the yet remaining life and ſtrength of the enemy?—Does not your ſad experience ſay, that there is a *law in your members, warring againſt the law of your mind, and bringing you into captivity to the law of ſin, that is in your members*, Rom. vii. 23.; and that *you wreſtle not againſt fleſh and blood only, but againſt principalities and powers?* Eph. vi. 12.—Does not ſad experience witneſs, how *violent your corruptions* are, and how impetuouſly they break through every hedge, notwithſtanding of your being ſure to be ſcratched with thorns; and how eagerly they follow the bait, even when the hook is moſt diſcernable?—Does not ſad experience witneſs, that it is *within you* that troubles and aſſaults you moſt; and that your greateſt adverſaries are the *men of your own houſe*; and that in the worſt of times, there is always more cauſe to complain of an *evil heart*, than of an *evil world*; and that it is this carnal heart eſpecially, that clogs and incumbers your flight and motion towards God, and makes, many times, your choiceſt duties to be like a grievous taſk?—Does not ſad experience witneſs, even ſince you was brought to the field of battle againſt your ſpiritual enemies, that there is more *wickedneſs in your heart*, ſiding with the enemy, than you could have believed, though it had been told you? When once a day you got your feet upon the necks of your enemies, you could never have thought they would ever ſo fearfully prevail again; or, if you had thought it, would it not have been a terror to you?—Does not ſad experience witneſs ſuch a *power of corruption*, that no ſooner did you ever begin to parly with a temptation at a diſtance, and adventure to ſport therewith, but it quickly hath turned to earneſt, and carried all before it? So much feuel and gun-powder for the enemy do you carry about with you, that you take fire upon the ſmalleſt touch, and are ready to be blown up with the flame?—Does not ſad experience witneſs, how ſoon the *ſtrongeſt reſolution*, even under the ſweeteſt gales, will evaniſh; that you are not oft in the evening what you was in the morning, nor for many hours do you keep the ground you had attained; and how quickly you deſtroy that which grace hath built, inſomuch, that if grace were not ſtronger to ſave and preſerve, than you are to mar and deſtroy, you would be undone for ever? Is it not paſt reckoning, how oft your heart hath thus deceived you? And is it not plain that the word of God knows your heart better than you do, declaring it to be *deceitful above all things, and deſperately wicked?*—Does not ſad experience ſhow you, that the *devil*, who heads and leads the nations of luſts and corruptions, hath the *advantage of the ground?* and knows how to correſpond with your corruption, and ſuits his temptation to your natural temper, to your calling and company, and predominant inclination, and even to your retirement and ſolitude; and that he can even then moſt dangerouſly tempt, when the temptation is leaſt ſeen and diſcovered; and that by his temptation he drives not only at the bringing ſin to the thoughts, but to the act, for putting ſome blot upon your walk and converſation?—Does not ſad experience ſhew you, that it is hard, difficult, and dangerous, to *dance about the fire*, and *not be burnt*; and that the temptation, which, at a diſtance, ſeemed ſmall, upon a nearer approach you have found had more bands on your heart than you could have dreamed it would have had; and how impoſſible it is, many times, to ſtop the current to which, through unwatchfulneſs you have given a vent?—Does not ſad experience witneſs, how the power and prevalency of corruption hath *conſumed the vitals* of your ſpiritual life, and tumbled you down headlong into confuſion; eſpecially when you have given conſcience a wramp, by doing violence to light, in ſiding with the enemies, and adventuring on the occaſions of a temptation? When you have gone, with Peter, to the high-prieſt's hall, without a warrant or a call, hath it not coſt you dear, inſomuch, that you have found bold ſinning hath made faint believing, and turned all your comfort to the door, leaving nothing behind but bitterneſs and death?—Do you not find your ſins have a *weakening*, *captivating*, *vexing*, and *tormenting* power?——But many ſad experiences of this ſort, and thouſands of them in their life-time, may even the true Iſrael of God have, whereby they find, to their ſad coſt, that the nations of corruptions are alive and powerful;

powerful; as this gradual conquest, *by little and little*, declares.

2. It shows also, that they have many *sweet experiences*, on the other hand, of some little succours and auxiliaries, some small aids and supplies from heaven, whereby the enemy is driven out, and destroyed, from time to time, and this all the days of their life also, till the warfare be accomplished at death. I am speaking of these that have been brought to the field of battle, as I shewed before; and how the Lord, by little and little, makes the nations of lusts sometimes to flee before them. But by how many *littles*, in the believer's life-time, this warfare is carried on, who can tell? And how many little recoveries, little revivings, little supplies, little supports, little strengthening meals, little sin-killing antidotes, little soul-restoring cordials; how many of these little sweet things, or sweet little things, the Lord their God allows them, from time to time, that by little and little they may gain the day, is not possible to tell, they are so many. The poor fighting believer may get a thousand of them in a year; and ten thousands of them in his life-time; and, perhaps, more than half a score of them at one communion.—Sometimes he gets a *little new discovery* of the *glorious Captain*, after he hath been long out of sight, and hiding himself: and a new sight of the glory of the Lord fills the Israelite's heart with new life and courage, and hope of prevailing; for then he sees Christ to be a full magazine of all military provision, and an open magazine to give out armour for the war, and so he becomes *strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might*. Indeed, so many little glances of the glory of Christ that the believer gets, so many little victories does he get over the enemy.—Again, sometimes he gets a *little out-pouring of the Spirit of prayer*, and of the *Spirit of adoption*, crying, ABBA, *Father*: O Father, may he say, pity a poor child, harrassed with the devil, and captivate by the power of indwelling lusts and corruptions. O! but this gives the believer a little ease and relief, when he can get his heart poured out into the bosom of his best and most glorious friend, complaining of the tyranny of the temper, and the prevaling of the nations. Here is a little victory, when he gets a little grace to put the enemies of his soul into the hands of his Captain, saying, Vengeance, Lord; vengeance be executed upon these enemies, that dishonour thy name, and disturb the peace of my soul.—Again, sometimes he gets a *little discovery of the enemy's power* and *policy*, and *strongest holds*; so as, knowing the *depths of Satan*, and not being *ignorant of his devices*, the believer is thereby put in case to be upon his guard: and especially he is made to see and observe the old man of sin, that deadly cut-throat, that lies within his bosom: and while he is *bemoaning himself*, with Ephraim: and crying out with Paul, *Oh wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?* The enemy is losing ground.—Again, sometimes he gets a *little communication of life*, after a deadness of spirit that seized him; and a little recovery, after a fit of the falling-sickness and backsliding: and the new communication of life and health to the soul, makes him start up to his feet again, renew the assault, and pursue the enemy with more vigour and resolution than ever; like a man that grows stronger than before. Indeed, that spiritual sickness of the believer is *not unto death, but unto the glory of God*, which his being recovered from, makes him fight more courageously, and watch more carefully against the enemy than ever he did.—Again, sometimes he gets a *little grip of a promise*, such as that, *I will subdue thine iniquity; sin shall not have dominion over thee; fear not, for I am with thee; the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly*: and having these promises, he is encouraged to the holy war, namely, to *cleanse himself from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit, and to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord*. Why, the promise takes hold of his heart, and his heart takes hold of the promise, and therein he sees that the strength of Israel is engaged to carry him through the host of his enemies. And thus, every little grip of a promise by faith, is a little victory; there needs no more to give a chase to the enemy, than a little upstirring of faith, on a promising God in Christ, and dependence on him under the conduct of his Spirit.—Again, sometimes he gets a *little grace to wait upon the Lord*, while the promise is not yet accomplished, until he *bring forth judgment unto victory*; and *the Lord is a God of judgment, blessed are all they that wait for him: he that believes, shall not make haste*; knowing *the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong*: and hence the believer will find that his *strength is to sit still*, and *quietly to wait for the salvation of the Lord*.—Again, sometimes he gets a *little godly sorrow*, that works *repentance unto life*: gospel-repentance, issuing from a sight of crucified Christ, brings along with it a train of artillery for subduing the enemy; *What carefulness does it work*, says the apostle; *yea, what clearing of ourselves; yea, what indignation; yea, what fear; yea, what vehement desire; yea, what zeal; yea, what revenge?* 2 Cor. vii. 11. When the heart is melting before the Lord in godly sorrow, O what revenge is it meditating against the nations of lusts and corruptions! O how glad would the believer be then to wash his hands in the blood of all his spiritual enemies! For, at the same time, he gets a little resentment of his own ingratitude, saying, *O do I thus requite the Lord, O foolish and unwise?* A little holy shame and blushing before the Lord, at the thoughts of his own brutishness, saying, *Behold I am vile*; and a little soul-debasement, casting indignity upon himself, and giving glory to the Lord, saying, *Truth, Lord, I am a dog*, I am a beast, I am a devil; but yet I come to thee, to cast out the devil, and get glory to thy name.—Further, sometimes he gets a *little intimation of peace and pardon*, a *little sprinkling of the blood of Christ upon the conscience*, to purge it from dead works; and a *little application of that blood* by the hand of the Spirit, shewing him that the *blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin*. And this bloody banner of the Lamb, being displayed, makes the nations to flee before him; *They overcome by the blood of the Lamb*.—Sometimes they get a *little opening of the heart*, like Lydia, at the hearing of the word; insomuch, that their hearts, that were dead within them like a stone, or ever they are aware take life and need-fire, with a word of grace, a word of power; and the more the heart opens to let in the King of glory, the more is the enemy shut out.—Sometimes they get a *little freedom and boldness at the throne of grace*, when they come thither to *obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need*: and when there they get a little strength to wrestle with the Lord for a

blessing,

bleſſing, ſaying, *Lord, I will not let thee go, till thou bleſt me*; they get even *power with God* himſelf, as it is ſaid of Jacob, Hoſ. xii. 4, *He had power over the angel, and prevailed*. And when a man is an overcomer in this ſenſe, to have power with God; much more will he have power over the nations of enemies. *To him that overcometh, will I give power over the nations*, Rev. ii. 26.—Sometimes they get a *little anointing of the oil of gladneſs* wherewith Chriſt is anointed above his fellows; and then *the joy of the Lord is their ſtrength*; and a little ſhower of the ſanctifying and comforting influences of the Spirit of Chriſt, for watering their graces, and drowning their corruptions.—Sometimes they get a *little look* and *glance* of the kind and compaſſionate eye of Chriſt, even after a denial, as he gave to Peter; and when they find him thus graciouſly looking to them, and kindly rebuking them, they *go out and weep bitterly*: and while they are ſhedding the tears of faith, they are ſhedding the blood of their enemies.—Sometimes they get a *little back-look upon an old experience* of the *Lord's putting the enemy to flight before them*, ſaying, *I will remember thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, and from the hill Mizar*: or a little back-look upon an old promiſe that the Lord gave them with power: and when they are helped to plead it, ſaying, *Lord, remember the word on which thou haſt cauſed me to hope*; the enemy gets a new daſh.—Sometimes they get a *little opening of the door of hope in the valley of Achor*, the lively hope of the heavenly Canaan through the reſurrection of Chriſt: and this hope is the ſinews of the holy war; for as *hope makes not aſhamed*, ſo *he that hath this hope purifies himſelf*; and, according to the meaſure of this hope, is the meaſure of victory.—Sometimes they get a *little pull of the cord of love*, ſo as to get the *love of God ſhed abroad upon their heart*, and then the *love of Chriſt conſtrains them*; the love of the Captain draws them to the field, where love is the ſignal for war; Chriſt's love, I mean: *His banner over me was love*, ſays the church. His love both leads the van, and fences the rear; and when the flame of his love to them kindles a flame of love in their hearts to him, then a flaming ſword is drawn in the face of the enemy, the banner of love beats down the nations.—Again, they ſometimes get a *little ſpiritual ſenſe* to carry on the ſpiritual war; for inſtance, ſometimes a little hearing of the voice of Chriſt, ſo as to know the powerful ſound of it among a thouſand voices; and then their heart leaps within them, ſaying, *It is the voice of my Beloved; behold, he cometh ſkipping on the mountains, and leaping upon the hills*.—Sometimes they get a *little ſight of God in Chriſt*, and then they can *endure hardſhip, as good ſoldiers of Chriſt*: thus they *endure, as ſeeing him that is inviſible, counting the reproach of Chriſt greater riches than all the treaſures of Egypt*.—Sometimes they get a *little touch* of the *hem of Chriſt's garment by faith*; a little touch of his *name*, his *offices*, his *blood*, his *righteouſneſs*, or whatever hem it be; virtue comes from him to ſtop the bloody iſſue, and ſtop the enemies motion.—Sometimes they get a *little taſte that the Lord is gracious*; and it is like the taſte of Jonathan's honey-comb: the more they taſte of the honey of free-grace, the greater is the ſlaughter they make among the Philiſtines.—Sometimes they get a *little ſmell of the roſe of Sharon*, and the *Lily of the valley*, and it reſtores their fainting ſoul: all Chriſt's garments are ſaid to *ſmell of aloes, myrrh, and caſſia*: and the believer may be ſaid to get a ſmell of the raiment, a ſmell of the roſe, when Chriſt is precious to him above all things. And when all theſe ſpiritual ſenſes are exerciſed, then they may be ſaid to be exerciſing their arms, making havock among their enemies, and ſucceſsfully gaining ground upon them.—In a word, he gives them ſometimes a *little breathing in the air of ſpiritual meditation; My meditation of him ſhall be ſweet*: and when Chriſt is ſweet, ſin is bitter, and the battle againſt it a bitter battle. He gives them *here a little*, and *there a little*; and, *by little and little, puts out the nations before them*.

I have mentioned many particulars; but yet there is no ſpeaking of all the littles that believers will experience, during the time of their warfare; only, thus you ſee how, by little and little, their Captain brings them to the field of battle; and how, by little and little, he carries on the conqueſt in their hand: it is the Lord their God alone that does it; it is he that conquered their enemies; it is he that helps them to chaſe the conquered, for it is he that bought their armour; he bought their ſhield, and ſword, and breaſt-plate, and helmet; and it is he, that as he bought them with his blood, ſo he puts on their weapons, and girds them with ſtrength for war. It is he that rubs off the ruſt off their arms, when at any time they are out of uſe, by blowing up their graces, and giving them ſtrength to exerciſe grace: and it is he that carries on the victory to perfection, by *giving power to the faint; and to him that hath no might, he encreaſeth ſtrength*, from time to time, till in death he end the warfare, by driving out all the nations, ſo as never to be ſeen again. *The Lord, thy God, will put out theſe nations, before thee, by little and little*.

VI. The *ſixth* thing propoſed, was, to give the *reaſons* of the doctrine. It might here be aſked,

1*ſt*, Why the Lord their God, and he alone, does put out the nations before them? The reaſon is, becauſe he alone can do it, for he is the *Lord*; they would never be put out, if he did it not: and he alone will do it, becauſe he is *their God*; and thus ſtands engaged by promiſe and covenant ſo to do: *The Lord thy God will put out theſe nations before thee*. But,

2*dly*, Why will he do it ſo *gradually*, by *little and little?* Why does he let enemies without and within live to annoy his people, ſeeing it is eaſy for him to deſtroy them all inſtantly? Why will he deſtroy them gradually, by little and little? There is much of infinite wiſdom to be obſerved in this diſpoſure; and therefore I would offer ſome particulars for repreſenting the beauty of this method.

1. It is by *little and little* he puts them out, without deſtroying them at once, that by them he may *prove his people*, Judges ii. 22. Some Canaanites were ſtill left remaining, to *prove whether they will keep the way of the Lord*: theſe Canaanites were enemies to their peace, enemies to their profeſſion, that ſought their bodies overthrow, and their ſouls ruin; and they are left to prove whether they will cleave ſtill to God's command, or whether they will follow the abominations of the wicked. Obſerve it then, Sirs, we muſt look to find enemies; outward enemies to the peace of the church,

and to the truth of the gospel; inward enemies to the graces and comforts of the soul: and this combat, thus continued in Israel, serves to prove whether our graces be counterfeit or not; for they only are true Israelites, that are still taking up arms against the devil, the world, and the flesh, and all the nations of the Canaanites. By this then it is evidenced who are true Israelites, and who not.

2. It is by *little and little* that he will put out the nations before Israel, that thus they may be *still learning to exercise their arms*; I mean, that their graces may be exercised, and particularly their militant graces. There are some graces would be for little or no use, if no Canaanites and corruptions were left: the special use of *faith*, *hope*, and *patience*, is for helping the believer to surmount the difficulties that are now in his way. Many other graces there are, that there would be no use for, if all our enemies and corruptions were destroyed at once: triumphant graces, such as *love* and *joy* in their perfection, would make a perfect heaven. But there are militant graces, that must be exercised also, while we are on earth, and which there are no use for in heaven: for example, if all *wants were supplied fully*, there would be no need of *poverty of spirit*; if all *sins were wholly destroyed*, there would be no need of *godly sorrow*; if *death* were already *swallowed up in victory*, there would be no need of the *desire of death*, nor longing for heaven; if *vision* were already come, there would be no need of *faith*, as it is a militant grace, fighting its way many times through doubts and fears, and want of sight and sense; if *fruition* were come, there would be no need of *hope*; if all *trouble* were at an end, there would be no need of *patience*. But this *shield of faith*, and *helmet of hope*, and other parts of the Christian armour, must be exercised: therefore the nations are not wholly destroyed, but by little and little. Again,

3. It is by *little and little* they are put out, for the advantage of the *militant saints* in many respects: as it is fit they should fight, before they triumph; and that they war as soldiers on earth, before they reign as kings in heaven; since *no man is crowned, except he strive lawfully*, 2 Tim. ii. 5. So it tends to enhance heaven, and make them prize and value it more, when it is attained through many difficulties, troubles, and oppositions: and by this means they come to have sweet conformity to their blessed Captain of salvation, who was *made perfect through suffering*; and it is their honour to tread his steps, who *endured the contradiction of sinners* against himself, and fought his way. — This contributes also to the believer's *comfort* at the issue of every conflict, as a safe haven is very comfortable to a mariner that hath been tost at sea. — This method serves not only for the believer's comfort, but for his *instruction* and *correction*: for his *instruction*, because thus he learns more and more to be humble and dependent; all boasting is excluded by this means, while he finds his enemies still living, and lively, and strong; for he looks with a humble eye upon himself, knowing his own utter insufficiency for grappling with these enemies, and difficulties, and oppositions in his way; and with a dependent eye upon Christ, that his *grace may be sufficient for him*, and his *strength perfected in weakness*: thus he *glories in his infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon him*. And as it is advantageous for their necessary instruction, so for their necessary *correction*, when they are sparing and remiss in using the means, and improving the advantages for driving out the Canaanites, indulging the flesh and the corruptions thereof; as it is said of Israel, Num. xxxiii. 55. *If they would not drive out the inhabitants of the land, then it should come to pass, that those which they let remain should be pricks in their eyes, and thorns in their sides, to vex them.* This is one of the severest ways of chastising them, when, to reprove them for one sin and lust, he lets them fall into the hands of another; and yet, in mercy to the true Israel of God, curing their disease in the issue: as he let Peter fall into a threefold pit among his enemies hands, for curing his self-confidence. One would think, the cure was worse than the disease; but our Lord hath sometimes very fearful ways of correcting and curing the souls of his own people.

4. It is by *little and little* that the Lord puts out the nations before them, to *commend the excellency of the deliverance we have by Christ*. Though there be *no condemnation to them that are in Christ*; yet, for their humiliation, God suffers their enemies to live among them, and sin to live in them, and oftentimes to afflict them, that they may know the benefit they have by grace, while they make continual recourse to him for help. It is but little we can take up at once, by reason of our want of capacity; therefore he gives one deliverance at this time, and another deliverance at that time, and a third deliverance at another time; and so on from time to time, that we may know how much we are obliged to him.

5. He delivers them by *little and little*, to shew the *greatness of his glory*, as the Captain of salvation. He shews the glory of his power, in keeping us, notwithstanding the great danger we are continually in, while the enemy is alive within us, without us, and round about us. How greatly does his power appear, in preserving the tossed ark amidst all the waves and billows of adversity that dash against it, and in keeping the burning bush from being consumed? He shews the glory of his triumphant arms, like some famous conquerors in battle, who, though they may, yet will not put all their enemies to the edge of the sword, but will take some captives, and others they will keep alive against their day of triumph, and then to suffer death, to the greater shame of the conquered, and the greater glory of the conqueror. When Joshua had discomfited these five kings that fought against Gibeon, chap. x. he would not slay them instantly, but shut them up in a cave closly, intending, when the battle was fully ended, to put them to death openly: so our great General and Captain, the Lord Jesus Christ, *He strikes through kings in the day of his wrath*; he leads *captivity captive*; he shuts up some of the kings and commanders of the hellish nations, into the cave of the heart, where they may rage, yet they cannot rule any more; and at last crowns the solemnity of his triumph, by making a show of them openly, and destroying them utterly.

6. He destroys them by *little and little*, that he may *counterplot the enemies in their own plot*, and *fight them with their own weapons*. It is the plot of hell, by little and little, to destroy sinners; yea, and to *wear out the saints of the most High*, Dan. vii. 25. by one temptation on the back of another;

another; therefore, by little and little the Lord will defeat the design of the devil, and *take the wise in their own craftiness*. The wisdom of heaven can easily counterplot the policy of hell; yea, thus he fights the enemy, and beats him with his own weapons. The tempter comes sometimes, and bruises the believer's heel, as he did Christ's; upon which the believer is stirred up to look again to him that was bruised for his iniquity, and then the devil is sure to get as good as he gave; for the bruised heel, he gets a broken head. Perhaps, some temptation gives the believer a trip, and down he falls; but the wise Captain makes use of that very fall for giving the devil, and his hosts, a greater foil than ever; for, after that fall, the believer goes alone, with Peter, and weeps it out; and watches, and prays, and fights better than he did before.

7. It is by *little and little* that the Lord conquers the nations of enemies in the way to the heavenly Canaan, because, by little and little, his people must be made ready for it; *By little and little I will drive them out from before thee, till thou be increased, and inherit the land*, Exod. xxiii. 30. As the Canaanites had kept possession till Israel was grown into a people; so there were to be some remains of them, till Israel should grow so numerous, as to replenish the whole. The land of Canaan had room enough to receive Israel, but Israel was not yet numerous enough to possess Canaan: even so here, the true Israel of God must be made ready for the heavenly Canaan, before they come there. They are not always in actual readiness, therefore there is some service they have to do for their Captain, some battle they have to fight with the enemy: they must have some more experience, and learn some more lessons; therefore their possession of Canaan is delayed till they be ready for it.

8. It is by *little and little* that the Lord drives out the nations before them, lest the *beasts of the field increase upon them*; to allude to that word which immediately follows the text, which we have also, Exod. xxiii. 9. *I will not drive them out before thee in one year, lest the land become desolate, and the beasts of the field multiply against thee.* And thus it is with the children of God; if they had not enemies without and within, and oppositions in their way, there are some dangerous beasts that would be ready to increase upon them: For instance, there is a beast they call *pride*, that might grow upon you, if you had no enemies to fight with; and while yet you are not ready for heaven, and sanctification is incomplete. Hence a *thorn in the flesh* was given to Paul, *that* he *might not be exalted above measure*. Is not the thorn in the flesh well ordered, that prevents *confidence in the flesh?*—There is a beast, they call *security*, might grow upon you; but now enemies are on all hands of you, to prevent your falling asleep, and to keep you both watching and waking, and constantly on your guard.—There is a beast they call *presumption*, that might grow upon you, and make you think you were able to go forward to heaven upon your own legs, and in your own strength, if you found no such enemy in the way.—There is another beast, they call *worldly-mindedness*, that might grow upon you; if you got no adversaries and adversities to vex you, and wean you from the world, you would be in danger of saying, *It is good to be here*: but now the wars and battles, in your way to heaven, make you say with your heart, O it is better to be there.—There is a beast, a filthy brute beast, that they call *sensuality*, that might grow upon you, believer, that might make you lukewarm and formal in all your duties, as well as carnal, and light, and vain in the intervals of duties: but the sight of your spiritual enemies on the field will make you to see a need to be spiritual, zealous, earnest, and *fervent in spirit, serving the Lord*.—There is also a filthy dumb beast, that they call *forgetfulness*, that would certainly grow upon your hand, and be very dangerous to your soul and spiritual welfare, if your enemies were all destroyed; therefore God says, Psal. lix. 11. *Slay them not, lest my people forget.* If the execution were quick and hasty, the impressions of it would not be deep and durable. Swift destructions startle men for the present, but they are soon forgotten; therefore, when we think that God's judgments upon the nations of our spiritual enemies come on but very slowly, we must conclude that God hath wise and holy ends in that gradual procedure; *Slay them not, lest my people forget.* They would forget to pray, if they had not enemies to pray against: they would forget to praise, if they had not still new deliverances to praise him for: they would forget to pity these that are afflicted and tossed with tempests like themselves: they would forget their Captain, and their duty of living by faith and dependence on him: they would forget to take with their proper name, saying, *Truth, Lord, I am a dog*; they would forget to mourn for sin, and repent: they would forget their own weakness, and their deliverer's power; and, like Jeshurun, in prosperity would *wax fat, and forget God that made them, and lightly esteem the rock of their salvation*: they would forget to sing the song of Moses and the Lamb at the side of the Red-sea of the Lamb's blood, where their enemies are always drowned; even to sing, saying, *The Lord hath triumphed gloriously, the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea; the Lord is a man of war, the Lord is his name*, Exod. xv. 1, 2, 3, &c.: they would forget to speak of the wonders of his mercy from time to time, and to give him the glory due unto his name: they would forget to employ him upon every new attack of the enemy, saying, *Lord, thou hast delivered; and in thee we trust that thou wilt deliver.* Better the enemy live and rage, and be not utterly destroyed, than that Christ want employment at your hand, and get not the glory of executing his saving office in your time of need. You would hardly think that so much advantage should accrue to the Israel of God, by the nations of their enemies not being destroyed at once, but by little and little.——You see some of the filthy beasts that would increase upon you, if the Lord did not spare some of your spiritual enemies, devils and lusts; which, though they may be called all beasts together, yet herein shines infinite wisdom in sparing one beast to destroy another, one corruption to devour another; he may let *carnality* live in a believer sometimes, to kill his *pride*; much *ignorance* remain, to kill his *self-wisdom*; much *wandering* in, and *indisposition* for duty, to kill his *self-righteousness*.

Now, as it is with believers in particular, so with the church in general; why does God suffer tyrants, and atheists, and hypocrites, and heretics

heretics to live among them, and vex them, but for reaching many, if not all, of these ends that I have been naming. When the church was in adversity under the primitive ten persecutions, then religion flourished; the life of the tyrants tended to the life of religion in the persecuted church: but when the Roman emperors became Christian, and friendly to the church, then pride and security crept in with their prosperous state; the beasts of the field increased so much, that, by degrees, a blasphemous beast assumed the very name and office of being the *head of the church*, even a *beast with seven heads and ten horns*, mentioned, Rev. xiii. 1.; I mean, the Roman Antichrist. And then, why hath a nation of heretics, with erroneous principles and doctrines, been spared and continued in the church from time to time, but that the friends of truth might have occasion to clear and vindicate it, and to *contend for the faith once delivered to the saints? There must be heresies*, says the apostle, *that they that are approven may be made manifest*; there must be errors, that truth may be more clearly discovered and mantained. Some precious truths had never been set into such a clear light, if opposite errors had not been vented for darkening the same. Thus our Covenant-obligations in Scotland are denied by some, that their obligation may be the more asserted by others: thus also there is an ungodly nation left alive, that the godly may be distinguished from them, and exercised the more unto godliness; and a hypocritical nation, that true Israelites, that are so indeed, may try themselves, and become the more sincere and upright.

VII. The *application* now remains to be spoken to. Is it so, that as the true Israel of God have nations in their way to the possession of the heavenly Canaan, so the Lord their God will conquer these nations by little and little?

1*st*, It may be applied in a word of *dehortation* and *caution*, in these four particulars;

1. Beware of thinking that you may *safely neglect the means*, because this work of putting out the nations belongs wholly to the Lord. This were a lazy Antinomian conclusion, drawn from such promises, as rather bear the greatest encouragement in the world to make a diligent use of the means. If it be a good reason of *working out our salvation with fear and trembling*, that the *Lord works in us both to will and to do*, which is the apostle's argument, Phil. ii. 12, 13.; then it is as good a reason for warring, and using all the means necessary for accomplishing this spiritual warfare, that it is the Lord our God that conquers the enemy for us by little and little. Yea, this is such a necessary consideration, that, take away this argument, and there remains no encouragement to use the means at all: and hence it is only believers that are capable of this spiritual warfare; and only believers in Christ that are capable of the right and diligent use of the means that relate thereunto: for they cannot be used duly, but in the faith of this encouragement, *The Lord thy God will go before thee*, to conquer the nations of enemies in your way. Unbelievers, indeed, ought to use the means, because the Lord commands the use thereof; and therefore, for the Lord's sake, neglect no commanded duty and ordinance wherein the Lord uses to be found. But yet, I say again, never will any soul use the means aright, and acceptably, till something of the real true faith of this encouragement excite him: therefore, O believer, neglect not to read, and hear, and pray, and meditate, and use all commanded duties and ordinances; for there you must expect to meet with your Captain, that hath engaged to put out the nations before thee.

2. Beware of thinking that the *stress of the warfare lies upon you*, because you are obliged to use the means; and that it is your using the means that will do the business. As the former is a lazy, so this is a legal thought, and as pernicious and destructive as the other: for, if you lean upon the means, and think that your reading, praying, hearing, and the like, will drive out the nations, bring down the body of death, or subdue one corruption, that were a beating your enemies with a sword of straw: such a fleshly weapon will never draw blood of your spiritual enemies; and, instead, of getting victory over your sins by such legal weapons, you are brought under greater bondage; *For as many as are of the works of the law, are under the curse*: and to be under the law, is to be under the dominion of sin; for, *the strength of sin is the law*. This legal method then were to be opening a fore-door to let out the enemy, and, at the same time, opening a back-door to let them in, and that with more advantage against you than ever. As it is a dangerous extreme to neglect means, upon pretext that Christ must do all, since his doing all is the greatest encouragement thereunto; so it is as dangerous on the other hand to use means, upon a notion that you must do all, or that the weight of the warfare depends upon you, and your duties: for your entertaining that notion, is the greatest discouragement in the world to the use of the means, and gives your enemies the greatest advantage against you, even in that wherein you think to defeat them.

3. Beware of thinking that you may *lawfully enter into a league with any of your enemies*, because they are not to be destroyed but *by little and little*. See what God says to Israel, with respect to the Canaanites, ver. 2. of this chapter where the text lies, and elsewhere; *Thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy to them.* While we are showing that sanctification and mortification is not perfected in the saints while they are here, and that the nations of lusts even in their heart, are not all to be destroyed in this world; some carnal heart may be ready to think, My blessing on the minister, who, by this doctrine, makes me think I may get to heaven though my lusts be not all destroyed, and though I indulge myself in some of the pleasures of the flesh; and, I hope, *I may have peace, though I walk in the imagination of my heart, adding drunkenness to thirst*, and one sin to another. Say you so, man, woman? I must tell you, that your speech bewrays you, that you are not an Israelite bound for the heavenly Canaan; for, cursed is that peace that is consistent with a standing league and covenant with any lust whatsoever. Such are *in covenant with death*, and *at agreement with hell*; and, *There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.* The children of God dare not maintain a league with any lust, nor will they shew mercy on their most darling lusts: nay, as it is said of some, that their *tender mercies are cruelty*; so I may say of the believer, in this case, that his most tender mercy toward his

his moſt beloved luſt is cruelty: when he acts like himſelf, he is ſo cruel-hearted, he would cut the throat of it, if he could, and even of all his luſts.

4. Beware of thinking that believers have *no advantage againſt the nations of their enemies, ſins and luſts*, more than others, becauſe they are not utterly deſtroyed: nor let believers themſelves think, that becauſe their deliverance is not effected preſently, therefore it will never be effected; for the Lord their God is upon the deſtroying work, only he will take his own time and his own way to his own work, and his time and way both is the beſt: *The Lord thy God will* do it *by little and little.* Hence a believer may be getting advantage, and gaining ground upon corruptions and luſts, even when he feels them ſtirring and raging moſt violently: it may be they have got a dead ſtroak for all that; as a beaſt that hath got a death's blow, may break off from thoſe that are holding it, and turn more mad than ever, and yet will die at length of the ſame blow. The devil may rage moſt, when he knows that his time is ſhort, and that he will be ſoon caſt out, and bruiſed under feet. Corruption is not always ſtrongeſt, when its motions are moſt felt; it may be ſtrongeſt, when the ſtrength of it is not ſeen.

Uſe 2. The *ſecond* uſe may be for *information.* Many things might be here inferred; as,

1. Hence we may ſee the *privilege even of a viſible church*, whom the Lord hath not *utterly forſaken*, though *filled with ſin*, as it is ſaid, Jer. li. 5. As they have the Lord for their God, in the ſenſe that I explained before, and as Iſrael here was privileged; ſo, by virtue of that relation to God as their God, they may have manifold mercies in common among them, as a mixed viſible church, beyond the reſt of the world: the Lord may appear for them againſt the heathen nations that are about them, and that are among them; and he may do great things for them, by virtue of that relation that he ſtands in to them as their God, and they his profeſſing people. As this text relates to Iſrael of old literally, it repreſents a privilege common to all that people, namely, the Lord's driving out the nations of the Canaanites before them; and may we not ſay, The Lord hath in like manner dealt with us, particularly in the church of Scotland, ſeveral times?—As the Lord *planted a church here very early*, not many years after Chriſt's aſcenſion; ſo by little and little he drove out the heathen nations before us: when our own forefathers were a race of blind pagans here, the Lord deſtroyed that idolatry, and gradually enlarged his church, till, in proceſs of time, Popery entering in, we were over-run with Antichriſtian nations. But lo, when the time to favour Zion was come; I mean, the time of the Reformation from Popery, the Lord was pleaſed to drive out theſe other nations before us by little and little, and gradually carried on the Reformation-work, and that by the method of ſolemn covenanting with him; and this covenanting work was carried on by little and little, again and again, till the whole nation came under ſolemn obligations this way.—As Iſrael *avouched the Lord to be their God*, by ſolemn covenants, that were binding and obligatory upon them and their poſterity after them; ſo, in this duty of *vowing to the Lord*, which is a moral duty, and conſequently incumbent on the church of God under the new, as well as old diſpenſation, and not like the types and ſhadows that were to be done away: in this moral duty, I ſay, we in our forefathers followed the example of the church of God in ſcripture, by entering into ſolemn Covenant with him; which work the Lord, in many ſignal ways, countenanced with his preſence, in the remarkable effuſion and out-pouring of the Spirit, to the converſion of multitudes. It is the glory of a church, when God avouches them for his people, by the external diſpenſation of the covenant of grace; and it is alſo the glory of a church, when they avouch God to be their God, in a ſolemn Covenant of duty and ſervice. This was a part of Scotland's glory, attended with internal diſplays of the power and glory of God in the ſanctuary.—To prove the obligation of theſe Covenants upon poſterity to all generations, were, I ſuppoſe, needleſs in this auditory; neither would time allow me to inſiſt here: but I think, to diſparage theſe Covenants, and to deny the obligation thereof, is to caſt dung upon our glory, and to tread our honour in the duſt; yea, I think it worſe than the breaking, burning, and burying of them: for a broken covenant may be mended again; a burnt covenant may come forth out of the furnace again; yea, a buried covenant may riſe again, when God raiſes up a Reformation ſpirit: but to beſpatter the reputation of them, and impugn the obligation of them, is, I think, to render them odious to all generations, inſtead of binding upon them.—But now, as our Reformation was carried on by little and little; ſo, when it is under a decay in many reſpects, let us look to the Lord our God, that, by little and little, it may be revived again, in the Lord's own time and way.

2. As we ſee hence the privileges of a viſible church; ſo the ſpecial and peculiar privilege of the *true Iſrael of God*, the church *ſpiritual and inviſible*, though militant on earth: the Lord their God will caſt out the nations before them in a ſpiritual ſenſe, and that by little and little. May it not be ſaid of them, as it is, Deut. xxxiii. 29. *Happy art thou, O Iſrael; who is like unto thee, O people ſaved by the Lord, who is the ſhield of thy help, and the ſword of thine excellency?* And, ver. 27. *The eternal God is thy refuge, underneath are his everlaſting arms; He ſhall thruſt out the enemy before thee, and ſhall ſay, Deſtroy them.* What though all the nations of the world were againſt them, outward and inward; the nations of earth and hell both? Yet he, who is the King of nations, is for them; and if God be for them, who can be againſt them? He can deſtroy nations for their ſake; *I gave Egypt for thy ranſom; Ethiopia and Seba for thee.* The nations may fight, but cannot prevail; nay, the *gates of hell can never prevail againſt them.* Why? they have the Lord for their God; and their God is their guard. And as the common relation, that God ſtands in to a mixed viſible church, intitles them to many privileges while that relation ſtands; ſo the ſpecial relation, that the true Iſrael of God ſtand in to him, as their God in Chriſt, by a ſpiritual, indiſſolvable union, intitles them to all ſpiritual bleſſings and ſpiritual deliverances. However difficult and dangerous their way to the heavenly Canaan is, by reaſon of the numerous oppoſing nations, which they can never deſtroy of themſelves; yet their God and Captain

tain leads the van, and drives out the nations before them.

3. See here the *miserable case of the nations that know not God*, and are *enemies to the people of God*. Why, like the cursed Canaanites, they are *devoted to destruction*; they vex themselves in vain, when they fight against the *Lord and his anointed*. The Lord God of Israel is to drive them out; yea, he will drive them to hell, that continue in their enmity against God and his people. *The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.* Yea, the greatest misery of all the wicked, that remain in a Christless state, lies in this, though they do not see it to be their misery, namely, that they are under the power of all the nations of hell, under the power of the devil and their lusts, and in league with the nations that oppose the true Israel of God in their way to the heavenly Canaan.

4. Hence we may see the reason of the *multiplied experiences of the believer*, both sad and sweet; because the nations are cast out before him by little and little, and not utterly destroyed while he is here. Hence many sad tales he hath to tell of the *nations compassing him about; iniquities prevailing against him*; and lusts again and again, and a thousand times, stirring, and working, and warring, and overthrowing him, and treading upon him. And, on the other hand, notwithstanding all this, he hath many sweet tidings to narrate of the Lord's humbling and healing, convincing and converting him: many convictions, many conversions does he get from time to time; and the next conviction more deep than the former, and the next conversion more sweet than the former; and one conversion on the back of another, because of one defection on the back of another, through the power of the nations of hell within and without him. As a dying saint that was asked, when he was converted? said, *He had been converted a hundred times*: so, in this sense, it is possible some believers, of long standing, may be converted a hundred times, and a hundred too. That saints may need conversion, is plain from what Christ said to Peter who was a saint, *When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.* Yea, every new conversion of the believer, may be more remarkable than another, while the Lord is thus, by little and little, destroying the enemy; because every touch of the nations power and policy in drawing him aside from the Lord, and the recurring power of corruption, is so horrible and monstrous to him, that he thinks with himself, Oh! will ever the Lord return again to the like of me? And, when the Lord returns, he wonders more than ever.

5. Hence we may see, why there is no *justification by the deeds of the law*, nor *mortification by the means of the law*: no justification by legal works, nor sanctification and mortification by legal means. How does this follow, say you? Indeed it is plain, there can be no justification by the *deeds* of the law; for the best believer on earth must own, that at best he hath *two nations in his womb*, and the *company of two armies*; an army of lusts, and an army of graces; the *flesh lusting against the Spirit*, as well as the *Spirit against the flesh*: and when he finds nations of lusts and corruptions in his womb, in his heart, can he expect to be justified by the deeds of the law, by a legal righteousness of his own? No; he is made content to be obliged to grace, free grace, through the righteousness of Christ, for justification. And as there is no justification by legal works, so there is no mortification by legal *means*; they never saw the power of corruption, that are not convinced of this, that nothing in the world but the power of God can destroy it: *The Lord thy God will put out these nations before thee, by little and little.* O Sirs, pity ignorant papists, that think their whipping, and scourging, and beating themselves, will do it: pity ignorant professors, that think their fasting, and praying, and legal endeavours, will do it. It is true, our Lord speaks of some devils that go not out but by *fasting and prayer*: not that these means of themselves do it; nay, let our Lord explain his own word; *The Lord thy God will put out these nations*, he will subdue your iniquities: such *things go not forth but by fasting and prayer*; that is, by Christ Jesus, sought and found in these means. Neglect not the means then; but, for the Lord's sake, remember, that if you go forth against lusts in the strength of means, or only with a verbal mention of the strength of Christ, without ever having taken on with this glorious Captain, or being joined to him in order to draw strength from him; your leviathan lusts will but laugh at the shaking of your spear. Therefore,

6. Hence we may see where the *believer's strength lies*. You heard before where the strength of the enemy lies; but now, where lies the strength of the Israel of God? Even in the GOD of Israel, the KING of Israel: *The Lord thy God will put out these nations before thee.* Psal. lxxiii. 25. *My flesh and heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.* My outward advantages, inward vigour, and all fail me; but my God will not fail me. More particularly, Israel's strength lies in God, as manifesting himself in Christ. There are two things in Christ that strength lies in, for the believer's safety and deliverance from the power of sin, and victory over the nations of lusts and devils: one is the blood of Christ; we *overcome by the blood of the Lamb*: the death of Christ was the death of sin, for he nailed sin to the cross, and destroyed the devil's power. Another is the Spirit of Christ, who being in the believer, *greater is he that is in them, than he that is in the world*; and the Spirit mortifies sin. Here lies the believer's great strength, for actual mortification of sin, and victory over it; *If ye through the Spirit mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live*, Rom. viii. 13. And the Spirit carries on this work,

(1.) By the *application of the death of Christ* to the soul; for, it is the virtue flowing forth from the death of Christ, that destroys sin; and the Spirit applies that virtue, and implants the soul into Christ, that being ingrafted in him, and unite to him, the sin-killing, soul-quickening virtue of Christ may flow in to the believer.

(2.) By the *implantation of grace*, and of grace contrary to corruption: in opposition to *unbelief*, he implants *faith*; in opposition to *enmity*, he implants *love*; in opposition to *slavish fear*, he implants *fortitude* and *spiritual courage*.

(3.) By the *excitation of the grace he hath implanted*; which, though it be active in itself, yet, by reason of our indisposition, needs to be whetted and actuated: when the Spirit lets grace alone, sin revives, and gathers strength.

(4.) By *drawing forth faith*, especially to a lively exercise; and then *this is the victory whereby*

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we overcome the world, even our faith; while the Spirit of faith draws forth the grace of faith: for faith carries up the soul to him in whom strength lies; and then says, *I can do all things through Christ strengthening me*: and faith employs the strength of Christ against the strength of the enemy, and so triumphs in its noble General, being *strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might*. Faith begets, in the soul, an antipathy against all sins and lusts, purifying the heart, and setting it directly against sin. Tell a carnal heart, sin lies at the door; why, let it come in, it is a friend of mine: but, acquaint a believer, exercising faith, that there is sin in such a thing; oh! it is an abomination. Faith discovers the danger the soul is in by the nations of lusts that encompass it, and excites all the faculties of the soul to rise up against it, saying, *Rise, Samson, for the Philistines are upon thee*; canst thou sleep in the midst of troops and armies of lusts? And so it rouzes the soul to sigh, and groan, and pant, and pray, and cry, and wrestle; and so to overcome, under the standard of the glorious Captain.

Use 3. The *third* use is for *examination*. Hence we may see matter for *trying our state by*: what is the mark of a candidate for heaven, a traveller to Canaan? Why, *the Lord his God is driving out the nations before him, by little and little*. Is the battle with the nations commenced, and fairly begun? And, is the Lord gradually carrying it on?

QUEST. *How shall I know if the war is commenced, and progressively going forward?*

ANSW. For a solution of this inquiry, you may take a mark or two out of the bosom of the text.

1. Have you got a *view of the nations*, that are in your way? I mean, a view and discovery of your corruption, your original and actual sin, and your natural bondage and slavery by reason thereof? Have you seen nations of lusts within you? and have you seen them to be such powerful nations, that nothing but the power of omnipotence can drive out? And consequently, have seen your own utter impotency to drive them out of yourself? Have you seen them to be such politic nations, and so fraudulent, that nothing but the infinite wisdom of God could counteract this policy of hell; knowing your *heart* to be *deceitful above all things*, as well as *desperately wicked*? Have you seen them to be such spiritual nations, *spiritual wickednesses in high places*, that no carnal weapon could avail in this warfare, but only such *spiritual weapons as are mighty, through God, to the pulling down of the strong holds*? Have you seen them to be such numerous nations, that your name is LEGION; a legion of lusts, a legion of devils, that nothing but a word from Jesus can put out?—Now, this mark excludes all that never *saw themselves*, and their own *natural bondage and thraldom*; they are yet serving the nations, which they ought to be driving out. They who know the plagues of their own heart, and have experienced the power of these nations in their way, look more like the travellers to Canaan. But take this mark in conjunction with what follows.

2. Have you got a discovery of a *God in Christ*, the glorious Captain of salvation, in whom alone your help and salvation lies, and who alone can put out these nations before you? Hath the *Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ* been given to you, so as to *reveal Christ in you*, and so as you have sometime or other got *Christ in you the hope of glory*, Christ in you the hope of victory? Have you seen Christ, as a victorious Conqueror, triumphing over all the nations of spiritual enemies, *Travelling in the greatness of his strength, treading the wine-press alone, when of the people there was none with him, staining all his raiment with the blood of the enemy, and trampling them in his fury*? as this is elegantly represented, Isa. lxiii. 1, 2, 3. Have you seen *help laid upon One that is mighty*, one whose name is JESUS and JEHOVAH both? JEHOVAH is his name, in the first word of our text; and *his name is called* JESUS, *because he saves his people from their sins*. As many discoveries as you have got of the glory of Christ as the Captain of salvation, so many marks of victory begun have you.—But this mark excludes all that never get their *eyes opened* to see any *form or comeliness in Christ*, or any *beauty wherefore they should desire him*: and hence the beauty and glory of a present world bulks more in their eyes.

3. Hath the discovery of the glory of the Conqueror *loosed your heart from all other lords and lovers*, and joined *your heart unto him as the Lord your God*, the Lord your captain, the Lord your righteousness, the Lord your strength, the Lord your salvation? *The Lord thy God will put out the nations before thee*. Now, the heart-drawing discovery of Christ, uniting the soul to him, is a great matter; for thus the believer is unite to Christ by faith, and the relation constitute, so as he is the Lord thy God, thy Head. Indeed a saving discovery of God in Christ, natively brings this along with it: if you see not God in Christ, thou cannot see him to be thy God, but rather thy enemy; but to see him in Christ, is to see him thy God, and thy friend: for they that see him in Christ, they see him in whom he is well-pleased; and to see God well-pleased in him, is to see God as thy God. This appropriation, then, is imported in the very nature of faith, according to the measure of it; and the ground of this believing appropriation is the word of promise, *I will be thy God*, which is the great fundamental promise; and the proper echo of faith is, AMEN; I will take it on thy word, that thou wilt be my God, Zech. xiii. 9. *I will say, It is my people; and they shall say, The Lord is my God*. There the Spirit of God declares what shall be the language of faith, when it acts like faith indeed, *The Lord is my God*. But, say you, can every believer say, *The Lord is my God*? My friends, I never thought that every believer could say so, nor that any believer in the world could always say so: but as every believer is not always believing; so I speak of what faith says when it is acting, and what the believer says when he is believing, not when he is doubting and misbelieving. Neither do I think that every act of faith is a saying expressly, *He is my God*; but every appropriating act of faith says this upon the matter, and every heart-engaging view of a God in Christ hath a *my God* wrapt up in the bosom of it, whether it dare say it expressly or not; for, in Christ, they see him to be a well-pleased God, and a friend. You know, saving faith is thy "receiving and resting on Christ for salvation, "as he is offered *to thee*, to thee in the gospel-"promise;" and this receiving is no other thing than believing, John i. 12.; and so it is a taking

taking him on his word for ſalvation *to thee*, as a Captain *to thee*. Take away this particular application, and it is no faith at all, and conſtitutes no union to him, no relation to him as *the Lord thy God*. I aſk then, if the diſcovery of the glory of Chriſt hath joined your heart to him as the glorious Captain of ſalvation, ſo as you have been taken on with him? Then thou art intitled to the complete victory; *The Lord thy God will put out theſe nations before thee.*—This mark excludes all theſe that *never cloſed with Chriſt by a peculiar believing*, but ſatisfy themſelves with a general faith, and may be called but general believers; they have no particular words on which they have been cauſed to hope, and no particular faith applying Chriſt to themſelves. Such ſeem not yet to have entered the field of battle, nor cloſed with the Captain.

4. Hath the Lord *begun to put out theſe nations before you?* Hath he begun to exert his power, by ſubduing your luſts? Did you never know the day wherein Satan fell like lightening, as it were, from heaven; when the ſtrong man and his goods, that were at eaſe, were caſt out of his habitation? How was it with you in the day of believing, in the day when the Lord your God manifeſted himſelf, and appeared as a mighty Conqueror to you? Got you not all your luſts and corruptions, as it were, drowned in the blood of the Lamb, ſo as you thought you ſhould never ſee them again? You know, believer, that was a falſe thought, but yet it was a glad thought to you, to think you would never be under the feet of your corruptions again, and you would never diſhonour the Lord as you had done, however ſome time or other you have found the Lord pulling down the ſtrong holds of unbelief, atheiſm, and enmity, and giving you the necks of your enemies. This looks like a good work begun, a battle begun, and a breach made upon the rule and dominion of ſin.—This mark excludes all theſe, in whom *ſin ſtill reigns*, and in whom the glorious Captain hath never ſo much as begun to give a blow to the enemy.

5. If you be a ſoldier on your march to the heavenly Canaan, then I aſk you, If you be of any conſiderable *ſtanding in the Lord's way?* Have you not had many a bloody battle with the nations, and many a fearful onſet by the enemy, attacking you with main force, and may be taking you captive; yea, and bringing you into *captivity to the law of ſin that is in your members?* Rom. vii. 23. Have you not found your enemies returning with ſuch power and prevalency, that you was ready to think that you had loſt all ground that ever you had got, and loſt all the victories that ever you had gained, the Canaanites prevailing againſt you? *Iniquities prevail againſt me*, ſays David. You will think this an odd mark; for, ſays the believer, it is the prevalency of ſin that makes me fear I am not a true Iſraelite bound for Canaan. But, ſtay a little till I further clear it.—This mark excludes all theſe, in whom ſin and luſts have not the power of *prevalency* only, but the power of dominion.

QUEST. *What is the difference between the power of* PREVALENCY, *and the power of* DOMINION?

ANSW. The power of *dominion* is a *regal* power; there ſin is king: but the power of *prevalency* is a *tyrannical* power; there it is only a tyrant, whoſe authority is rejected. The power of *dominion* is a *monarchical* power, where ſin rules alone; but the power of *prevalency* only is where another power is alſo; there are two armies on the field. The power of *dominion* is *uncontroulable*, the man ſins without controul; but the power of *prevalency* is a *reſiſted* power, where it meets with reſiſtance unto blood. The power of *dominion* is an *abſolute* power; but the power of *prevalency* is a *limited* one, with reſpect to ſome particulars only. The power of *dominion* is a *habitual* power; but the power of *prevalency* is *occaſional* only. And, in a word, the power of *dominion* is an *intire* power; but the power of *prevalency* is a *broken* power, the head of it is broken, and the back of it is broken, though it prevail.—Now, to find the prevalency of the enemy, is not inconſiſtent with the believer's militant ſtate, which ſuppoſes manifold inroads and incurſions of the Canaanites upon him. And, indeed, they are not capable to find the joy of the victory, who never feel the ſtrength of the battle: ſin reigns in the wicked, and hath too peaceable dominion with them; iniquity cannot be ſaid to prevail againſt them, but rather it prevails with them; it goes well enough with them, before and after their ſinning. But, Oh! ſays David and the believer, *Iniquity prevails againſt me*; it is againſt my heart, againſt my will, againſt my deſire, againſt my deſign, againſt my reſolution, againſt my hope, againſt my faith, againſt my tears, againſt my prayers.

6. If you be ſoldiers on your march to the heavenly Canaan, then I would aſk, Whether or not you find the *power* of the glorious Captain as neceſſary for your deliverance, upon every new aſſault of the enemy, as ever you found it before? For true Iſraelites, fighting their way to heaven, find more and more evidences of their own utter inſufficiency, and more and more need of grace's all-ſufficiency. Oh! the nations are as ſtrong as ever, and the need of powerful ſuccours and auxiliaries from heaven as great as ever. This is plain alſo from the text; it is the *Lord thy God* that begins the battle; and the *Lord thy God* that carries on the extirpation of the Canaanites. Do you find, then, as much need of his power to excite grace, as to work it at firſt; as much need of his fencing the rear, as of his leading the van?—This mark excludes all theſe that have a *power in their own hand*, and never came out of themſelves, both for righteouſneſs and ſtrength, in to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt: but it is encouraging to theſe who are ſaying, in the exerciſe of faith, *I will go in the ſtrength of the Lord, making mention of his righteouſneſs, and his only.* O to be clothed with his righteouſneſs, and girded with his ſtrength, is the great deſire of all true Iſraelites!

7. If you be ſoldiers on march to the heavenly Canaan, you may try it by this, you will not only be perfectly at a point in this matter, that the battle is the Lord's, and that without him you cannot give *one fair ſtroke to the enemy*; but alſo you will find to your experience, that, by little and little, the conqueſt is carried on, and the Canaanites driven out; and that help and aſſiſtance comes from heaven by degrees, as the ſovereign General is pleaſed to order: though you get not all the great things you would be at, yet by little things you are carried through. Can you not ſay, believer, that ſuch a place was a little BOCHIM, where you

you got leave to weep out your heart before the Lord, becauſe of the prevalency of ſin; and ſuch a place was a little BETHEL, a houſe of God, where you had ſuch a meaſure of divine preſence, as ſtrengthened you againſt the enemy; ſuch another place was a little PENIEL, where you ſay God face to face, as it were, and a ſight of the Captain of ſalvation gave the nations of hell a daſh? And though, in the interval, your enemies and luſts riſe up again in fury, and rage againſt you, like to devour your ſoul, to devour your graces, to devour your comforts, and to devour your peace; yet there comes another little recruit from heaven, that gives you a new occaſion to ſet up an EBENEZER, ſaying, *Hitherto the Lord hath helped;* and to ſing with the church, Pſal. cxxix. 1, 2. *Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth, may Iſrael now ſay; many a time have they afflicted me from my youth, yet have they not prevailed againſt me.* Many a time have theſe Canaanites vexed me, and foiled me, yet they have not prevailed to my utter overthrow; for ſtill, when I was brought to an extremity, the Lord was a little ſanctuary to me, and communicate his grace by little and little to me, in a ſuitableneſs to my need; allowing me here a little crumb of comfort, when I was like to faint in battle; and there a little crumb of courage, when I was like to yield; and at another time a little crumb of wonderful deliverance out of the hands of mine enemies, after I was led captive by them. Why, what is the meaning of all this? It is *the Lord thy God driving out theſe nations before thee, by little and little.*

Uſe 4. The *fourth* and laſt uſe ſhall be in a ſhort *addreſs* to two ſorts of perſons here. 1. To theſe that are *at peace* with the nations that ſtand betwixt them and the poſſeſſion of the heavenly Canaan, and ſo are at *war* with heaven. 2. To theſe that are *making war* with the nations, and before whom the Lord hath begun to drive out the nations by little and little.

1*ſt*, To you that are *at peace* with the nations of hell, at peace with the devil, at peace with your luſts; I would ſpeak a word to you, 1. By way of *conviction.* 2. By way of *counſel.*

1. For your *conviction.* Is it not evident, that the moſt part are at peace with hell, being ignorant of the ſin-mortifying principles of the goſpel, being ſlighters of the means of converſion, living in ſecurity under all the calls of heaven by the word and the rod, and living in enmity againſt the power of godlineſs, indulging themſelves in many known ſins, and knowing no reſtraint from ſinning, taken from its nature, but from its conſequents only. Are there not many here, that have nations of luſts ſwarming in their heart, yet were never convinced of, or made to know the plagues of their own heart? Some will ſay they have a good heart to God, even though their mouth be filled either with curſing, lying, ſwearing, and ſlandering; or elſe with nothing but vain, frothy, carnal, worldly diſcourſe. What! ſhall we think you have a clean heart, when you have ſuch a foul mouth? Does not Chriſt ſay, *Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth ſpeaketh?* When a man ſees abundance of ſmoke coming out at the top a chimney, he may ſay, For certain, that is a ſign of much fire in the hearth: ſo, when there is nothing but vain, worldly words in the mouth; we may ſay, There is much vanity and corruption in the heart. Carnal lips that are not ſhaped for any ſpiritual diſcourſe, except in hypocriſy and deceit, diſcover a carnal heart. Oh! how many here are willing ſlaves to the nations, the Canaanites, the luſts of the fleſh! Of all ſlaves, they are in the worſt caſe that are ſold; of theſe that are ſold, they are in the worſt caſe that are put in priſon; of theſe that are in priſon, they are in the worſt caſe that are bound and chained in priſon: yet ſuch ſlaves to ſin and luſts are all here by nature, ſhut up in cloſe priſon, bound and chained there; ſhut up under unbelief: and unbelief is ſuch a cruel jailor, that, while you are ſhut up under it, it will not ſo much as ſuffer you to lift up your head, or to look up to heaven for deliverance. Oh! how miſerable is this thraldom that you are under! For theſe nations that rule in you, and over you, and under which you are bearing arms againſt the God of heaven, will, at laſt, deſtroy you for ever, if they be not deſtroyed in time; if they be not put out of your heart, they will keep you out of heaven; yea, if they be not driven out of your heart, they will drive you to hell. If that legion of luſts, that you are in league with, be not caſt out of your heart, by the power of that glorious Captain of ſalvation, that caſt out a legion of devils out of one man; then you muſt lay your account with it, that, like the ſwine poſſeſſed of the devil, you will be driven down into the ſea of God's everlaſting wrath, and drowned in perdition. But then,

2. I would offer you a word of *counſel.* O will you break league with theſe curſed Canaanites, and come and take on with our glorious Captain of ſalvation, that can drive them out before you? O ſinner! man, woman; young and old; you that have been a ſlave to the devil all your days, a ſlave to the numerous nation of luſts, that, as ſure as God lives, will keep you out of heaven, and drive you to hell, if they be not driven out; will you come and take on with our glorious Lord Jeſus, whoſe office and work, as a Redeemer, is to force out the nations before you? Our Captain-general hath ſent us, as officers under him, to cry in the public meetings and aſſemblies of this ſort, ſaying, *Whoſoever will, let him come,* and take on to be a ſoldier under the KING of kings, and LORD of lords, againſt the king of hell and the nations of luſts, that would keep you out of heaven: and as we are warranted to declare them curſed with bitter curſes, that will not join in this war, according to what is ſaid of Meroz, Judg. v. 23. *Curſe ye Meroz, curſe ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof, becauſe they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord, againſt the mighty:* ſo we are warranted to declare to ſinners, that there are here the greateſt encouragements that ever were offered to ſoldiers, to excite you to take on with him. Why, he offers you money to bear all your charges; *I counſel you to buy of me gold, tried gold;* he offers to *take off your filthy garments, and to clothe you with change of raiment,* the king's livery; yea, he offers you a coat of meal, that will defend you againſt the ſhot of death, and the ſhot of devils; the robe of his own righteouſneſs, a garment of ſalvation: he offers you further, that, if you be wounded in the war, he will give you a balm to heal your wound, the balm of his own blood: yea, if you take on with him, he offers

offers to do all your works in you and for you; yea to fight all your battles, to drive out all the nations before you, and then to crown you as a conqueror; yea, and more than a conqueror, even though you have done nothing of yourself. He offers to give you all the armour you need for the war: do you need the *sword*, the *breast-plate*, the *helmet*, the *shield*, mentioned, Eph. vi. He himself is the great magazine of all the military provision; and therefore, if you take on with him, you shall want for nothing that is necessary for carrying on the war to a complete victory. O come and take on with him for *wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption*; take on with him for armour, and strength, and victory, and all.

But, say you, what mean you by taking on with him? I know not how to take on with him. Why, Sirs, to take on with him, is to *believe in him*. But what am I to believe, say you, that I may take on with him?

(1.) You are to believe, that he is *speaking* to you, and *inviting* you to take on with him; even you man, you woman. Let none here say that there was not a word spoken to them at Carnock: nay, I take you all to witness, that have ears to hear, that the Lord is, by the poor mortal that is here preaching, speaking to every one of you, and saying, *To you, O man, do I call, and my voice is to the sons of men*; and he is entreating you to take on with him. Believe that he is speaking to you, and that this gospel-offer is to you.

(2.) You are to believe that you *cannot believe*, This were one good step towards faith, to believe that you are an unbeliever, and shut up in unbelief as in a prison, which none can open but the Captain of salvation. And therefore,

(3.) You are to believe in him for *grace* to believe in him, or to come to him for grace to come to him, and to take on with him for faith, as well as for other things, because he alone is the *Author of faith*. He never called any to bear the expence of one jot, from the beginning to the end of the war, out of their own pocket; and much less the expence of this great thing we call *believing*, which is the effect of the *exceeding greatness of his almighty power*. And then, having believed these things,

(4.) You are to believe his word, that he will not *fail you* in a jot of what he is offering to you. Take his word for it that he will do as he hath said unto you; and trust him that speaks to you by us. To take on with him by faith, is to take his word, who is *truth itself*, for your security; and lay the stress of the whole war upon him, saying, Lord, art thou calling me, even me, that have been a slave to the devil and nations of lusts? Art thou calling me to take on with thee? Content, Lord; *Come thou and reign over us*, as the trees said, in Jotham's parable, Judges ix. 10. Come thou and reign over me, and be thou my glorious Captain, to fight for me, and to slay all the nations of lusts in my heart. And if you, indeed, take on with him in this manner, he will do as he hath said; he will put out these nations before you by *little and little*.—May the Lord back his call with power.

2*dly*, To you that are *believers*, on the field of battle, *making war* with the nations, the spiritual Canaanites; and before whom the Lord hath begun to drive them out by little and little: I should offer you, 1. A word of *comfort*. 2. Of *counsel*.

[1.] For *comfort*. O believer, though the nations be greater and mightier than you, yet the Lord hath engaged to drive them out; there is a power in Christ, the believer's Head and Husband, that will, in process of time, bring every power contrary to him in subjection; it is in Christ that believers shall be *more than conquerors*. It is very grievous to the believer to feel the assaults of sin, such as that of pride, filthiness, covetousness, unbelief, atheism, and enmity: but it is the privilege of the believer, that he hath such things that he may be humbled, not that he may be conquered and destroyed thereby. You know, a snake may be so handled, by taking out his sting and teeth, that it cannot hurt us, though it touch us; yet we abhor it for the nature of it, and are afraid to have it come near to us: even so, sin is in such a manner handled by our Lord Jesus Christ, that it cannot hurt the believer in Christ; hence the believer is many times more afraid than hurt: yet it is very becoming the true believer to hate sin from the very nature of it, and stand at a distance from it. Mean time, you have the greatest encouragement in the world to fight against the nations of enemies, the nations of lusts; for the battle is the Lord's, he stands engaged to put out the nations, Deut. vii. 17, 18. Were there an uncertainty of the victory, you might be discouraged and loath to undertake such a warfare. But now, when the Lord hath assured you of the victory, and that you have his blood, his Spirit, his faithful promise for it, there is no more ground of discouragement.

OBJECT. *Oh! what comfort can I take, when I find the nations of enemies and lusts still living and lively; yea, strong, mighty, and prevalent, and even growing stronger and stronger upon my hand, instead of being subdued and destroyed?*

ANSW. Perhaps it is so between battles, or single combats, that you have with your corruptions; but do you not find your Captain coming sometimes in to your assistance, and making up all that you lost, by his gracious, powerful, sanctifying, and comforting presence? And thus, do you not find even after sin's victory over you, which makes you judge the nations are increasing on your hand; do you not find, I say, your hatred of sin increased, your self-abhorrence increased, your dependence on the Lord for strength increased, your desire to be rid of sin increased, and your heart-longing for the final victory over the nations, and the full possession of Canaan? Why, what is this but the Lord your God putting out the nations before you by little and little? Mean time, during these battles, is it not ground of comfort,

(1.) That there is a *sentence past in your favours* against the nations, even a sentence of condemnation and destruction? and accordingly, *sin is condemned in the flesh*, Rom. viii. 3. And Satan is condemned to destruction; *The God of peace will bruise Satan under your feet*.

(2.) Is it not ground of comfort, that the sentence past against sin and Satan is *executed in part?* Your old man is crucified; the head of the serpent is bruised; *For this cause was the Son of God manifested, to destroy the works of the devil*; and, *by death he hath destroyed him that had the power of death*.

(3.) Is

(3.) Is it not ground of comfort, that the *day of full and final execution is at hand*, wherein he will take vengeance on the nations? *For the day of vengeance is in mine heart; the year of my redeemed is come*, Isa. lxiii. 4. *the day of the Lord is at hand*, wherein he will *bring forth judgment into victory, and death shall be swallowed up in victory*: Christ will *reign till all his enemies become his footstool; to him every knee shall bow.*

(4.) Is it not ground of comfort, that the *remaining power* of the nations in the interim shall never be able to *break the relation* that is betwixt your Captain-general and you, nor to cast you out of his covenant, out of his heart, nor out of his love? *My covenant will I not break*, says he; *my loving-kindness will I not take away*, Psal. lxxxix. 33, 34. He is still *the Lord thy God*; and, therefore, *he will put out the nations before thee by little and little.* I offer you,

[2.] A word of *counsel.* O believer, are you indeed engaged in battle against the nations? And has the Lord begun to drive them out before you? Then *pursue thy victory*, and *fight out the good fight of faith*, for the Lord thy God is he that does fight for thee; as the apostle says in a like case, Phil. ii. 12, 13. *Work out the work of your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure*: Even so, fight out the battle against the nations; for, *the Lord thy God will put them out, before thee, by little and little.* And, since the *battle is the Lord's*, and your Captain goes before you to *divide the spoil with the strong*, go on courageously: and, that you may do so the more successfully, I shall branch forth this word of counsel in these particulars.

1. *Put on the whole armour of God*; and go not forth against the nations in your own strength, otherwise you will find them too hard for you; but, *Go on in the strength of the Lord, making mention of his righteousness, and his only*; being *strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might*; and *strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus; having no confidence in the flesh*, but always your confidence in, and dependence upon the Lord Jesus Christ, the Captain of salvation.

2. *Search out the nations* that are most invisible and hidden; for your greatest danger is from your most secret enemies: you *wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, and spiritual wickednesses.* And there are spiritual lusts not easily discerned: if these be neglected, and more open enemies only noticed, it is as if one should gaze upon the smoke, and neglect the fire that is within; or, as if one should gaze upon the ulcer, but never consider the corrupt humour within.

3. Having found out the enemy, and discerned where the strength of the nations lies, then *set upon them*, and endeavour, through grace, to bring them into a consumption, and that both by *starving* and *storming* of them.

(1.) By *starving* them. O starve them, and keep them from their food; *Make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.* Beware of every thing that may contribute to strengthen the nations. *Say not, A confederacy* with them: do not spare them, nor let their strong holds stand: draw not up a league with them, nor border too near to them. It is said of Israel, *The people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations.* Keep not company with the wicked: be not too much conversant with the world; many bury themselves, by digging too deep there.

(2.) As by *starving*, so by *storming* the nations. You are to consume them; and you ought to storm them, by bringing them under the battering engines of the gospel, under the stroak of God's word, which is the *sword of the Spirit*; under the stroak of the blood of Christ; for, we *overcome by the blood of the Lamb*; and under the stroak of the Spirit of Christ; for, *If you, through the Spirit, mortify the deeds of the body, you shall live.*

4. Take all the *advantages you can against the nations.* Take advantage of the times and seasons, even when you are like to be overpowered with inward corruption, and under fear of falling one day by the hand of some strong lust; then get to the mighty power of Christ, and reinforce yourself and resist; and, in resisting, believe you shall overcome: remembering, for your encouragement, that the almighty Captain stands within sight, when you are fighting in the valley; and he waits but a call from you, when distrest in the battle; and he will come for your rescue. Jehoshaphat cried in the midst of the battle, and was helped: how much more may you expect his aid in your spiritual combat?

5. *Watch against the nations*, and *resist the first onset of the enemy.* Corruptions are the natives, and they are not wholly destroyed: if therefore you do not watch, nature will turn to her old bias. Native and natural inclinations are very forcible: as, bend the bough of a tree downward, if you let it go, it will start up by and by; so, if you give up your watch, the nations will return, and resume their power. Particularly watch against, and resist the first motions of sin: if you stop not the current of a wicked motion, it will soon land in a wicked action; for, *When lust hath conceived, it brings forth sin*, James i. 15. Great evils arise from small beginnings: one spoonful of water will quench that fire, which afterwards whole buckets cannot abate; therefore it is a good rule, *Principiis obsta*, "Resist the beginnings of sin."

6. *Put the nations in the hand of the Captain*, that he may destroy them; and endeavour so to do, in the daily exercise of faith and prayer. O seek to the Lord Jesus, that he would avenge you of these Philistines; as in the parable of the unjust judge, Luke xviii. 1,—8. The *parable* was put forth *for this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint.* The judge there mentioned was one that *feared not God, nor regarded man*: a widow comes to him saying, *Avenge me of mine adversary*; and through her importunity she prevailed with him: *And shall not God avenge his elect, that cry day and night to him; though he bear long, yet he will avenge them speedily.* Therefore, go to a God in Christ, and cry, Lord, avenge me of my lusts, avenge me of my pride, avenge me of my unbelief, avenge me of my carnality, avenge me of mine enemies.

7. After all, *rest not satisfied with any small victory obtained over the nations*: sit not down, as if you had no more ado; for the nations are not all dead and destroyed at once; you will have them to fight with, as long as you are on this side of heaven: enemies will up again; and, therefore, you must up again, and press forward to a complete victory. As the body of sin and death remains while you are here; so, whatever particular lust you have been troubled with, you cannot expect a full and final victory while here, even though it hath been a mortified

mortified luſt, a ſubdued luſt. No doubt, Peter got his feet upon the neck of his ſin of *denying his Maſter*, when he *went out and wept bitterly* after Chriſt looked to him; yet even that ſame corruption afterwards did ſtir in him, by a partial denying of his Maſter, though not in the ſame degree; as when Paul *withſtood him to the face*, Gal. ii. 12. A particular corruption may, through grace, be ſubdued, and it may ceaſe to ſtir ſo violently for a time; yet you cannot ſay that it is wholly killed; yea, it may afterwards riſe up as violently as ever. A luſt, that lay long dead, may revive again; and therefore you little need to be ſecure, but much need to be ſober and watchful, and ſtill going on in the warfare, ſtill depending on the Lord for new ſupplies of ſtrength againſt new aſſaults. After one victory obtained, make ready for battle immediately; when ſomething is done, look to the Lord to do more: after one ſtroak, ſeek another to be given; for it is by *little and little* the victory is obtained. Think not ſtrange, therefore, though the nations rally their forces again and again, and be not diſcouraged thereupon, but learn a daily, momentany, cloſe, and conſtant dependence upon the Captain of ſalvation, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that *through him* you may *do valiantly*. *It is he that girdeth you with ſtrength, and ſubdues the nations under you.*

8. In order to purſue the nations to death, *purſue the claim you have to the victory over them*, in the uſe of all appointed means, with an entire dependence upon the Lord; not depending upon means; nay, nor yet depending upon ſenſible manifeſtations, nor relying even upon the graces of the Spirit, but upon the God of all grace; pleading your right and claim, by virtue of the divine promiſe, ſaying, Lord, haſt thou not interpoſed thy faithfulneſs, thy word, thy oath? and is not thy promiſe ſealed; ſealed by the blood of Chriſt, ſealed in the ſacrament of the ſupper? Haſt thou not ſaid, *Solomon ſhall reign?* though *now, behold, Adonijah uſurps the throne:* Haſt thou not ſaid, Grace ſhall reign, and *ſin ſhall not have the dominion?* Behold how it uſurps. Well, put him to his word, and purſue your claim. Surely the Lord will not deny himſelf; nay, JEHOVAH-JIREH, *In the mount of the Lord it ſhall be ſeen:* though you have no ſtrength, *no might againſt this great multitude;* yet, let your *eyes be toward him*, who is *mightier than the noiſe of many waters*, and who hath wrapt in your intereſt with his own glory, his own faithfulneſs, and truth. Let your difficulties be never ſo great, your enemies never ſo many, and their power never ſo invincible; it is not you they have to do with, but Chriſt: and, can any thing be too hard for him? *Wait on thy God continually*, who hath here promiſed to accompliſh the warfare gradually: *The Lord thy God will put out theſe nations, before thee, by little and little.*

SERMON XLV,-L.

The STRENGTH of SIN, and how the *Law* is the Strength thereof, opened up and unfolded *.

1 COR. xv. 56.——*The ſtrength of ſin is the law.*

PERHAPS there was never a generation wherein the ſtrength and dominion of ſin did more diſcover itſelf, in the life and converſation of the people, than in this preſent age. Such is the mighty power thereof, that as all the children of men are ſlaves, ſo moſt of the children of God are captives to it. How are the thoughts, words, and actions of men and women, as ſo many ſlaves, captives, and drudges to ſin? But, for as ſtrong as it is, the ſtrength of it is little ſeen, and few know where the ſtrength of it lies. As the Philiſtines did not know that the ſtrength of Samſon lay in his hair, or in the locks of his head, which whenever it was ſhaved his ſtrength was gone; ſo the world little know this myſtery, that the ſtrength of ſin is the law, inſomuch, that till the ſinner be ſhaved, as it were, with the ſharp razor of the Spirit of Chriſt, ſo as to be cut off from the law, and united to Chriſt, *the end of the law*, the ſtrength of ſin remains, and the rule of it.

That I may come to the purpoſe I deſign, you may only notice, that as the apoſtle in the preceding part of the chapter, is treating the great doctrine of the reſurrection of the dead, proving it from the reſurrection of Chriſt, anſwering objections againſt this truth, and ſhewing what a remarkable change will be made upon the bodies of believers, both theſe that are dead, and theſe that ſhall be living at the ſound of the laſt trumpet: ſo, in the context here, he is diſcovering the complete conqueſt that then the ſaints will obtain over death and the grave, and that then will be accompliſhed what the prophet Hoſea ſays, chap. xiii. 14. *Death ſhall be ſwallowed up in victory; I will ranſom them from the power of the grave, I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy deſtruction.* What the prophets declare were to have their initial accompliſhment in the New-Teſtament days, the apoſtles declare are to have their full and conſummate accompliſhment at the day of judgment; yet, ſo ſweet and ſatisfying is the begun accompliſhment thereof in Chriſt Jeſus, that the apoſtle, for himſelf, and in name of all believers in Chriſt, ſings their EPINIKION, their ſong of *triumph* and

* This ſubject appears to have been handled in ſix ſermons, preached on ſacramental occaſions. The firſt two at the ſacrament of Kinglaſſy, July 21*ſt*. The next two at Orwel, Auguſt 7*th*, 8*th*, 1727. The laſt two are an enlargement on the ſame ſubject; but when or where delivered is uncertain. It hath undergone three impreſſions.

victory,

victory, whereof these words are a part, saying, *O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, the strength of sin is the law: but thanks to God, that giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.* Death had a sting, even power to hurt and kill; and the grave had a victory: but now where are they? In Christ they are spoiled and disarmed, so as they are not to be seen; where are they? And the day is coming, with respect to the saints, when not so much as the sign and vestige of death's power or the grave's victory will remain; where are they? *The sting of death is sin:* for sin gives power unto death, which would have no power to hurt, did not sin give venom to its darts: but Christ, by death, hath taken out this sting, made atonement for sin, and obtained remission: so that though death may hiss, it cannot hurt. *The strength of sin is the law;* for sin hath strength to condemn us, and strength to destroy us, from the law, and its curses, and threatenings: but Christ hath removed the curse of the law, by becoming a *curse for us.* Yea, the whole power and sanction of the first covenant, the law of works, was transferred upon Christ, and in him fulfilled and ended; so that sin is deprived of its strength and sting, by Christ's *obedience unto death, even the death of the cross:* therefore, though death may seize the believer in Christ, yet it can never sting him, nor hold him in its power: *Thanks be to God,* then, *that giveth us the victory,* says the apostle, *through Jesus Christ.* By faith the believer shares of his conquest and victory; the victory is given through Christ to them, yet they are stiled the overcomers: *To him that overcomes, will I give to eat of the tree of life.* Who are the overcomers? Even they to whom it is given of God through Jesus Christ. Christ hath obtained it, and gives it. As heaven, and eternal life, is the *gift of God through Christ;* so the the victory over sin, and death, and hell, and all enemies in the way to heaven, is the *gift of God through Jesus Christ.* Hence the apostle in the last verse, infers duty and service incumbent upon all believers; *Therefore, beloved brethren, be ye stedfast and unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord;* teaching us, that there is no gospel-service, without the faith of victory through Christ; no gospel-holiness, till a person, being in Christ, hath victory in him over sin, death, and the law, which is the *strength of sin;* then he is in case to *abound in the work of the Lord,* from a principle of gratitude; knowing that *his labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.* The believer hath in view the *recompence of reward;* and this is the reward of grace, that as in the Lord he hath victory, in the Lord he hath righteousness, in the Lord he hath strength for work and warfare; so in the Lord his work and warfare will be crowned: he shall not obtain the crown, no more than the victory, by his own work and labour, nor because he or his works are worthy, but because of Christ, in whom he is worthy, and hath by his dying obtained the victory and the crown both; only his *work of faith, and labour of love,* is an evidence of his union to Christ, in whom he is blessed with grace and glory. Therefore he knows, according to the measure of his faith, that his *labour is not in vain in the Lord.*

But now, the verse where my text lies, seems to be an explication of the first part of the apostle's song; he had said, *O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?* But if any should ask, What mean you, Paul, by the *sting of death?* Why, says he, *the sting of death is sin;* so that, take away sin, and then death hath no sting, no strength to hurt or harm us. Well, but may it be said, Where lies the strength of sin? and whence hath it such strength? The answer is, *The strength of sin is the law;* as sin is the strength of death, so the law is the strength of sin. Sin puts arms in the hand of death, and the law puts arms in the hand of sin: *The strength of sin is the law.*

Where you may notice these three things following.

1. The *grand evil* that ruins all mankind, here spoken of, namely, SIN; this is that which makes us need a Saviour, whose name is JESUS, *because he saves his people from their sin.* The apostle speaks not here of any *transient act* of sin, but even of the *root* and *fountain* of sin; the corruption and depravation of nature, together with the lusts and affections of the flesh.

2. You have here the *quality* of sin; STRENGTH is ascribed to it. There are several attributes this monster hath, particularly these two, *guilt* and *filth;* but STRENGTH is the compend of all its other qualities. It hath strength to defile, and strength to destroy; strength to kill, and strength to damn. The strength of sin makes us stand in need of a strong Saviour, and of that *help which is laid upon One that is mighty.*

3. You have here the *accidental source* or *rise* of the strength of sin, namely, the LAW; the law of works, commanding obedience, as the condition of eternal life, and discharging disobedience on pain of eternal death. The *moral law,* under the form of a covenant of works, is the law the apostle here speaks of: and this law, as it is violated and broken by our apostacy and rebellion against God; for, as this law is become so *weak through the flesh,* Rom. viii. 3. that it cannot justify nor sanctify a sinner, nor save a breaker of it; so it is become powerful only to condemn, and powerful to damn the sinner; and this it does, by giving sin a power to ruin, condemn, and destroy the sinner. As sin, in a manner, took *justifying* strength from the law, so the law gives *condemning* strength to sin, leaving the sinner under its curse: and, because sin violated the holy command of the law, the law gives sin a *commanding* power over the sinner, and makes sin to rise, and rage, and reign over the sinner, so as it commands him to serve like a drudge and a slave. This the law does, both by virtue of its curse, and by virtue of its command; the power of sin being a part of the curse of the law, and consequence of the command. Not that the holy, just, and good law of God, that commands holiness, can possibly command sin or unholiness; but by reason of our corruption, which, like water, the more it is dammed up, the more it swells. The command of holiness excites and stirs up the rule and command of sin over us; which bears no more reflection upon the holiness of the law, than the stink of a dunghill, raised and excited by the heat of the sun, reflects any indignity upon, or in the least stains the purity of the beams thereof. The more pure and refulgent the beams of the sun are, the more influence it hath for stirring up the filthy vapours of the dunghill; so, the more holy that the law is, the more does it excite

excite the filthy ſteams, and raiſe and exaſperate the impurity of corruption. But in what reſpect the *law is the ſtrength of ſin*, may be ſhewed more at large in the ſequel.

Having offered this ſhort view of the words, there are two doctrines might be treated from them.

I. *That ſin is a very ſtrong and powerful thing.*

II. *That the ſtrength of ſin is the law:* Or thus, *That the law of works is the ſtrength of ſin to a ſinner that hath violated and broken it.*

DOCT. I. *That ſin is a very ſtrong and powerful thing.*

In treating of which, I would eſſay to do the following things.

I. Speak a little of the *nature* of ſin; and ſhow what it is.
II. I would enquire into the *ſtrength* of ſin, in the *qualities* and *degrees* of its ſtrength.
III. I would ſhew how the ſtrength of ſin *diſcovers* itſelf.
IV. *Whence* the ſtrength of ſin comes, and *where* it lies.
V. Draw ſome *inferences* from this for *application.*

I intend, through divine aid, to illuſtrate both theſe propoſitions; but ſhall confine myſelf to the firſt at this time. If we get right views of the *ſtrength of ſin*, it will commend the *ſtrength of a Savioar* to us.

I. I propoſe to ſpeak a little concerning the nature of ſin. I ſhall confine myſelf to theſe two accounts of it, namely, (1.) That it is a *tranſgreſſion of the law*, 1 John iii. 4. (2.) That it is an *oppoſition to God* the Lawgiver, and *enmity againſt God*, Rom. viii. 7.

1. Conſider it as it is a *tranſgreſſion* of the law; and all mankind are tranſgreſſors from the womb, ever ſince Adam and Eve began the rebellion: we daily tranſgreſs it, in thought, word, and deed. It is ſtrange to conſider how many poor ignorant ſinners expect to be juſtified by that law which they are daily tranſgreſſing; which declares, that they know not themſelves to be ſinners and tranſgreſſors thereof. They ſay they are ſinners, but they do not believe what they ſay; or, if they believe they are ſinners, they do not believe they are ſuch ſinners, but that the law may bear with them; for they cannot ſee ſuch depravity in their actions, as that the law ſhould condemn them; and when once they imagine, that the law will not condemn them, they fancy next, that the law will juſtify them. Some, whoſe lives and actions are not evidently groſs and profane, may be filled with fooliſh ignorant thoughts of this ſort, that the law hath little to ſay againſt them; yea, that they have done all theſe things from their youth up. O dreadful arrogance and ignorance, for a brat of hell to imagine that he hath not tranſgreſſed the law by any wicked deed!

But if any be ſo groſly ignorant, as to juſtify their deeds as being conform to the law; let them ſet the law of God, and even their words in oppoſition to each other, and ſee if they have tranſgreſſed the law: for, though *in many things we offend all*; yet, *if any man offend not in word, the ſame is a perfect man*, ſays the apoſtle, James iii. 2. But where is there even ſuch perfection as this among the children of men, if you conſider how every command of the law is broken by the ordinary ſpeech of men?—Why, every word that ſavours of atheiſm, unbelief, and *contempt* of God, and carnal confidence, is a breach of the *firſt* command.—Every word that ſavours of *diſreſpect* to divine ordinances, whether preaching, praying, reading, meditating, communicating, and the like, is a breach of the *ſecond* command.—Every word that tends to the *abuſing* of God's name, by raſh ſwearing, minched oaths, carnal praying, formal devotion, and hypocritical proteſtations and profeſſion, is a breach of the *third* command.—Every *idle* and *unprofitable* word on week-days, and eſpecially on Sabbath-days, whereon we are in a peculiar manner called to abſtain from our own words, is a breach of the *fourth* command.—Every *diſreſpectful* and *diſhonourable* word of ſuperiors, inferiors, or equals, and eſpecially of parents and relations, whether natural, civil, or ſpiritual, is a breach of the *fifth* command.—Every *malicious*, *invective*, *bitter*, *offenſive*, and *killing* word, that cuts like a ſword, is a breach of the *ſixth* command.—Every *immodeſt*, *unchaſte*, *ſenſual*, and *laſcivious* word, that ſavours of a vile, polluted mind, is a breach of the *ſeventh* command.—Every *cheating* word, as in buying and ſelling, when you vilify too much what you buy, and magnify too much what you ſell, is a breach of the *eighth* command.—Every *railing* word, every *reproachful*, *backbiting*, *lying*, and *falſe* accuſation, whether to, or of your neighbours, is a breach of the *ninth* command.—And, finally, every *murmuring* and *fretful* word, that ſavours of diſcontent, grudging, and envy, is a breach of the *tenth* command.

You then that hope for juſtification by the works of the law, if you be not conſcious of your ill works, what ſay you of your words? If in word you have offended, know, that by your words you ſhall be condemned. Why, ſay you, Who are they that want their faults of that ſort? But, whatever words eſcape me, yet, I hope, I have a good heart to God. Alas, man! will you examine that heart of yours with the good law of God, and ſee if it be a good heart or not; and if it be found a tranſgreſſor of the law, then the fountain is defiled, and never call it good again. If you be chargeable with any of theſe tranſgreſſions of the law, that I have named, whether in your works or words, know, that the heart is the very fountain of theſe evil words and actions; for, *out of the heart they proceed*, Mat. xv. 19.; and if the fruit be evil, the root cannot be good: if the ſtreams be bitter, the fountain cannot be ſweet. The ſmoke of vain words and evil actions, that comes out at the chimney of your daily converſation, declares that there is a fire within doors, a furnace of corruption in the heart.

But more particularly, will you ſet your heart and the law together a little, and ſee what it is.—Compare your heart with the *firſt* command, and you will find it to be nothing but a throne of iniquity, a receptacle of *falſe* gods, where a thouſand other gods are worſhipped.—Compare it with the *ſecond* command, and then you will ſee it to be nothing but a chamber of *imagery*, filled with ſo many images, and miſrepreſentations of God.—Compare it with the *third* command, and you will find nothing elſe but a bench of *blaſphemy*, iſſuing forth

forth indignities and affronts to the name of God.—Compare it with the *fourth* command, and you will find it to be nothing but a dunghill of *profanity*, a play-houſe of idleneſs, and a ſacrilegious waſter of holy time.—Compare it with the *fifth* command, and you will ſee it to be nothing but a palace of *pride*, and a tower of ſelf-exaltation, ſetting yourſelf above all others.—Compare it with the *ſixth* command, and here it will be found to be nothing but the devil's *ſhambles*, and a ſlaughter-houſe of malice and murder; for, *he that hates his brother in his heart, is a murderer.*—Compare your heart with the *ſeventh* command, and you will find it nothing but a cage of *unclean* birds, unclean thoughts, vile affections.—Compare it with the *eighth* command, and then you will ſee it to be nothing but a tabernacle of *robbers*, though your hand ſhould be free of theft and robbery; but if you had ſtollen all that your heart went after; many a horſe and cow hath it ſtollen; yea, many a fine houſe and yard hath your heart robbed your neighbour of.—Compare it with the *ninth* command, and you will find it to be nothing but a fountain of *calumny*, either inventing ill tales of your neighbour, or exaggerating and magnifying any falſe report, or tickled, with and glad of any occaſion to caſt a blot upon his name.—Compare your heart with the *tenth* command, and you will find it alſo to be nothing but a temple of *idolatry;* for, *covetouſneſs is idolatry*, ſays the apoſtle. As many objects as the covetous heart purſues after, ſo many idols does it fall down before.——And now, tell me, after all, Is that a good heart? Nay, alas! every *imagination of it is evil*, and *evil continually*; yea, it is *deceitful above all things, and deſperately wicked.*

Thus *ſin is a tranſgreſſion of the law*, whether in heart, ſpeech, or behaviour; and thus we are all tranſgreſſors: yea, though we could free ourſelves of actual ſins, which is impoſſible, and ſay that we are clean in thought, word, and action; yet as we have *ſinned in Adam*, Rom. v. 12.; ſo our very natures are ſinful and corrupt, and deſtitute of conformity to the law; as void of righteouſneſs, as Chriſt was free of ſin; and altogether filthy, as Chriſt is altogether lovely. The law requires holineſs of nature, heart, and way, and curſes *every one that continues not in all things* required therein, Gal. iii. 10. Why then, the meaning of that word to a ſinner, *If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments*, is as much as to ſay, O ſinner, you have forfeit eternal life by your not keeping the commandment, and thou art doomed to eternal death, which, as ſure as God lives, will be your everlaſting lot, if the law get not a better keeper than you in your room and ſtead: the reaſon then, why I declare you tranſgreſſors of the law, is, that I may recommend Chriſt the more to you as the *end of the law for righteouſneſs. Sin is a tranſgreſſion of the law.*

2. Conſider it as it is an *oppoſition* to God, the Law-giver: it is called *enmity againſt God.* Some may have a notion of ſin, that it is a tranſgreſſion of God's law, and yet not a due ſenſe of ſin in the intrinſical evil of it, as it is an oppoſition to God's nature: as every actual ſin, whether of omiſſion or commiſſion, is a *walking contrary to God*, Lev. xxvi. 27.; ſo ſin, in its nature, is a contrariety to God's nature, and a *deſpiſing of him*, as well as diſpleaſing to him, 1 Sam. ii. 30.: yea, nothing is ſo oppoſite to God as ſin. God is wiſdom, ſin is folly; God is holineſs, ſin filthineſs; God is juſtice, ſin is iniquity; God is goodneſs itſelf, ſin is badneſs itſelf; God is faithfulneſs, ſin is treachery; God is light, ſin is darkneſs; God is life, ſin is death; God is beauty, ſin is deformity; God is majeſty, ſin is baſeneſs; God is love, ſin is enmity. Sin is ſo oppoſite to God, that if the leaſt drop of it ſhould get into his nature, he would ceaſe to be God. The wicked think, becauſe God is patient and long-ſuffering, therefore he approves of their ſin, and is of the ſame judgment with themſelves; *Becauſe I held my peace, thou thoughteſt that I was altogether like thyſelf; but I will reprove thee, and ſet thine iniquities in order before thee*, Pſal. l. 21. Know, when you have any ſuch thoughts of God as this, you do blaſpheme God; for, if God did approve of your ſin, he would ceaſe to be God, he would be God no longer: why ſo, think you? Even becauſe then God would not be infinitely holy: now, holineſs is his being; therefore, if he ſhould ceaſe to be infinitely holy, he would ceaſe to be God: ſo oppoſite is ſin to God, that if he did not hate ſin as much as he does, he would ceaſe to be God. If his hatred of ſin were leſs than it is, then he would not be infinitely holy; and infinite holineſs muſt needs have infinite hatred againſt ſin. This is the very thing that makes ſin to be an infinite evil, objectively conſidered: and whatever ſome may think of ſin, ſure we cannot ſpeak enough of the evil of it. You that have but light thoughts of ſin, you have light and ſlight thoughts of God; and you that have light thoughts of ſin, have light thoughts of Chriſt: it cannot be a light matter, that the eternal God gave his eternal Son to be a ſacrifice for, otherwiſe we had been eternal ſacrifices to his incenſed juſtice. The more diſhonourably that we ſpeak of ſin, the more honourably muſt we ſpeak of Chriſt, the Saviour that ſaves from it. Nothing expoſes ſin ſo much as the goſpel of Chriſt, declaring him to be the ſacrifice for ſin; which ſays, that the infinite hatred that God bears to ſin, is equal to the infinite love that he bears to his own Son, that his hatred to ſin is as deep, as his love to Chriſt is high; and that the depth of the one, and the height of the other, are both equally infinite. As Chriſt's death is the great ſacrifice for ſin, that we commemorate at this occaſion; ſo the view of the infinite value thereof, relates to the infinite evil of ſin. As there would be no need for Chriſt, as a Saviour, if there were no ſin; ſo there would be no need for ſuch a Saviour as he is, if ſin were not ſuch an evil as it is: and as the guilt of it cannot be expiated without ſuch an infinite ranſom as he gave; ſo the power of it cannot be deſtroyed but by ſuch an almighty arm as he hath, who alone is able to ſave to the uttermoſt.——But this leads me, having thus far touched the *nature*, to ſpeak next of the *ſtrength* of ſin.

II. The *ſecond* thing propoſed here is, to enquire a little into the *ſtrength* of ſin. The devil is called *the ſtrong man*, yet he is *without;* but ſin is the ſtrong man *within;* or, as the apoſtle calls it, the *old man*, Eph. iv. 22.; where he exhorts even the ſaints *to put off the old man.* Sin is no child, but a man: it is no young ſtripling, but an antient, ſtrong, old man; one that in grown in years, and carries power, command,

mand, and authority with it in the beſt of God's children: and if it many times powerfully prevails in and over them, how powerfully does it reign in the reſt of the world? But, that the ſtrength of ſin may be farther opened, I ſhall lay before you, 1. Some of the *qualities* of the ſtrength of ſin. 2. The *degrees* of its ſtrength, poſitive, comparative, and ſuperlative.

1ſt, As to the *quality* of the ſtrength of ſin: what ſort of a ſtrength it hath, may appear in theſe ten qualities and bad properties of it.

1. Sin hath a *commanding* ſtrength, requiring obedience, and obliging its ſervants, *to obey it in the luſts thereof*, Rom. vi. 12, 16. Indeed, the commands of ſin are very unlawful and unreaſonable; yet it *commands men to go, and they go; to come, and they come:* and men obey the commands of ſin, by diſobeying the commands of God; for, when they do not what God injoins them, they do what ſin requires them.

2. Sin hath a *condemning* ſtrength: as ſin is a great commander, ſo the commanding power of ſin, when yielded to, delivers us over to the condemning power of ſin. Now, what this condemning power of ſin is, the apoſtle ſhews plainly, Jam. i. 15. *Sin, when it is finiſhed, bringeth forth death.* Sin is a faithleſs and ſhameleſs tyrant and tempter; for, at firſt it promiſes life and immunity from death, ſaying, like the devil that ſinned from the beginning, *You ſhall not ſurely die:* yet, no ſooner does a man obey the command of ſin, than it condemns him to death; *The wages of ſin is death*, Rom. vi. 23. Hence,

3. Sin hath a *deceiving* ſtrength. See Heb. iii. 13. *Exhort one another while it is called to-day, leſt any of you be hardened through the deceitfulneſs of ſin:* hence the luſts of the fleſh are called *deceitful luſts*, Eph. iv. 22. Sin powerfully deceives, by blinding the mind, corrupting the judgment, hardening the heart, alluring the affections, and perſuading the ſinner that there are ſome things forbidden in the law that are good and profitable, and may be done without any ſcruple of conſcience. Sometimes it will perſuade the greedy-minded worldly man, that is thinking how to enrich himſelf, that to do it by the ſubtilty of his pate, the forgery of his tongue, the villany of his hand, and by violent means, is an eaſier and ſweeter way than to toil and labour to inrich himſelf by honeſt means. Sometimes it will perſuade the ſinner, that there is no hell, no fear of puniſhment; or, if there be, yet he may afterwards repent and prevent it; and ſo he is emboldened to ſin, and deceived.

4. Sin hath a *working* ſtrength; *When we were in the fleſh, the motions of ſin that were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death*, Rom. vii. 5. And, ver. 8. *Sin taking occaſion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiſcence.* Sin then, and natural corruption, is no idle thing; no, by no means: it hath an effecting and working power, to bring forth evil motions. Hence, Jam. i. 15. *When luſt is conceived, it bringeth forth ſin;* and the fleſh is ſaid to *luſt againſt the Spirit*, Gal. v. 17. By reaſon of corruption, there is an inclination and a proneneſs of all the faculties of the ſoul to that which is evil.

5. Sin hath a *conquering* and *captivating* ſtrength: the children of God themſelves are many times *brought into captivity* to it; *I ſee another law in my members, warring againſt the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of ſin, which is in my members*, Rom. vii. 23. And if it ſometimes carry all before it, in a manner, where there is grace, how muſt it be where there is no grace, and where the man is *under the law*, and not *under grace?* Surely it carries them whitherſoever it pleaſes, except in ſo far as the man is under the reſtraint of providence.

6. Sin hath a *defiling* and *polluting* ſtrength; *To the pure all things are pure; but to them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure, but even their mind and conſcience is defiled*, Tit. i. 15. Sin defiles the mind, defiles the conſcience, defiles the will, defiles the affections, defiles the memory, defiles the imagination, defiles the thoughts, defiles the words, defiles the actions, and defiles and ſtains all the duties the man puts his hand to: it defiles his hearing, defiles his reading, defiles his praying, defiles his meditating, defiles his communicating, defiles his conferring with others; and, in a word, defiles ſoul and body, inward and outward man; yea, defiles and infects neighbours, friends, ſtrangers, and all that come near to it.

7. Sin hath a *dementing* ſtrength, to make people mad; *They are mad upon idols*, Jer. l. 38. Sin makes men nothing but mad fools, and beſide themſelves. We reckon him a fool that would drink a cup of poiſon: that is what the ſinner does. Is he not a fool that would deſpiſe his food? So do ſinners, that deſpiſe Chriſt and the goſpel. Is he not a mad fool, that would prefer a ſhadow to a ſubſtance? So are they, that prefer earth to heaven, and the things of time to theſe of eternity. Hence alſo,

8. Sin hath a *transforming* ſtrength, inſomuch, that when it comes to a height, it turns the ſoul to a devil. This muſt be a great ſtrength, that can turn a man to a devil. What are wicked men, in whom ſin reigns, and rages, and is come to a height, but like ſo many devils? It can even turn diſciples into devils; *I have choſen you twelve, and one of you is a devil*, John vi. 70. Yea, ſuch is the ſtrength of it, that it can, in ſome reſpect, turn a ſaint to a devil, at leaſt to act the part of one: hence Chriſt ſays to Peter, a ſaint, *Get thee behind me, Satan.* The godly man, out of a miſtaken affection to his Maſter, ſpoke the language of Satan: and therefore received this ſharp reprimand from his Lord. Ye need not wonder at this, for ſin turned angels to devils; the ſin that the angels did commit, preſently turned them to devils: therefore you need not think ſtrange, if ſin hath ſuch a *tranſforming* power, as to turn men and women into devils.

9. Sin hath a *weakening* and *wounding* ſtrength; it weakens the hands even of ſaints, that *they cannot do what they would*, Rom. vii. 15. How much more is the Chriſtleſs ſinner under an utter inability and incapacity to do any good thing? Nay, we are *by nature without ſtrength;* for the ſtrength of ſin hath taken away the ſtrength of man. So weak by reaſon of remaining ſin and corruption is the ſaint, that he is not *ſufficient of himſelf to think any thing as of himſelf*, but his *ſufficiency is of God*, 2 Cor. iii. 5. What then can a Chriſtleſs ſinner do? Let Arminians, who magnify the power of nature, tell. Sin hath weakened our hands; yea, and wounded us to death. For,

10. Sin hath *killing* and *ſlaying* ſtrength; *Sin, taking occaſion by the commandment, deceived me, and by*

by it ſlew me, Rom. vii. 11. Every ſin we commit, is a wound and a ſtab to our ſouls. And, Oh! my friends, we have wounded ourſelves with ſin, and rendered ourſelves liable to eternal death. Let us not remain and die in our wounds, without ſearching and ſeeking for recovery, relief, and redreſs. As the ſmart of a wound ſends us to the ſurgeon, may the ſmart of our ſins ſend us to the phyſician of ſouls, to Jeſus Chriſt: his precious blood alone can cure that deadly wound. The Son of man is lifted up, like the brazen ſerpent among the Iſraelites, that whoſoever look to him may be healed of the deadly wound. If you ſay, what warrant have I to look to him for healing? Why, you need no better than his own call and command, *Look to me, and be ſaved.* But, will I come ſpeed, and be ſucceſsful? Yea, *Him that cometh to me, I will in no wiſe caſt out*; even ſo, him that looks to me, I will not fail to ſave.

But, ſay you, my wounds are old and feſtered, and, I fear, incurable; I have had them now theſe many years: If I had come to Chriſt in time, perhaps, he might have cured me; but now, I think, he will not.

To this we reply; It is, indeed, very dangerous to fight many years under Satan's banner, where you ſhall get ſcar upon ſcar, and wound upon wound, to the hazarding of your ſoul's everlaſting death. The danger is exceeding great, and it will be a wonder of mercy, if Chriſt undertake the cure: but, ſince wonders of mercy are many times performed by him, therefore, be your wounds old or new, it is all a matter to him, and to the Father's infinite, boundleſs, bottomleſs mercy in him; and therefore, in a way of looking to the mercy-ſeat, ſprinkled with the blood of Chriſt, there is yet *hope in Iſrael concerning you.* If you ſay, Such is the ſtrength of ſin that you have been ſpeaking of, and the ſtrength of unbelief, that I cannot come, I cannot believe, I cannot turn to God in Chriſt. Why, Sirs, for what end do we point out the ſtrength of ſin to you, but that you may ſee your utter inability to ſave yourſelves, and that you may look to him, in whom almighty ſtrength is, for working faith, and drawing you? Therefore, O cry to him, and plead with him, that the *right-hand of the Lord may do valiantly*, in delivering you: but reſt not ſatisfied in ſaying you cannot come, while the matter is, you will not come; you have no ſtrength, becauſe you have no will. If you were willing, ſtrength is at hand; the day of your willingneſs is the day of his power: *Thy people ſhall be willing in the day of thy power.* When the will is gained to Chriſt, the power of Chriſt hath been there, and will be more and more.—But, that you may ſee ſtill the more need of the ſtrength of Chriſt, take a further view of the ſtrength of ſin,

2*dly*, In the *degrees* of its ſtrength. And here you may conſider the ſtrength of ſin in a poſitive, comparative, and ſuperlative manner.

[1.] *Poſitively*, ſin hath a manifold ſtrength. If we look further into the ſcriptural account thereof, you will find, that,

1. Sin hath the ſtrength of a *law*; hence called the *law of ſin and death*, Rom. viii. 2. What this law *requires*, that men do by their *commiſſions*; and what this law *forbids*, that men forbear by their *omiſſions*. And what is required by this law? Even all acts of enmity againſt God. And, what is forbidden by it? Even all acts of duty towards God.

2. Sin has the ſtrength of a *king*. Where there is a law, there is a lawgiver, a legiſlator; and ſin is both law and lawgiver, for it reigns like a king: hence ſin is ſaid to *reign*, Rom. vi. 12. *Let not ſin reign in your mortal body.*

3. Sin hath the ſtrength of a *conqueror*. Some kings are weak and impotent, and cannot be ſtiled conquerors; but ſin is both a king and a conqueror, a victorious conqueror. All the myriads of fallen angels, that are now devils; and all the millions of fallen men that have been, and are in the world, are ſo many black trophies of the conqueſt thereof.

4. Sin hath the ſtrength of a *tower* and *ſtrong hold*: and hence the weapons of the goſpel-warfare are ſaid to be *mighty, through God, to the pulling down theſe ſtrong holds*, 2 Cor. x. 4, 5. And many a pull do they take before they be pulled wholly down, even though every pull that does any execution, muſt be a pull of omnipotency.

5. Sin hath the ſtrength of an *army*. Sin, even in believers, is compared to an army; they are ſaid to have in them *a company of two armies*, an army of luſts and an army of graces; and the former army ſometimes prevails againſt the latter. How ſtrong muſt the army of hell be in theſe that want grace, and have no army to oppoſe it?

6. Sin hath the ſtrength of a *mountain*, the advantage of the ground, even in the children of grace; their corruptions, like the Canaanites, have poſſeſſion, old poſſeſſion, and they keep the mountain: yea, ſin and corruption themſelves, are compared to high and ſtrong mountains, *mountains of Bether*, and *hills of ſeparation.* When Chriſt comes, he is ſaid to come *ſkipping on the mountains, and leaping over the hills. Who art thou, O great mountain? Before our Zerubbabel thou ſhalt become a plain.*

7. Sin hath the ſtrength of a *priſon*; it is a dark priſon, a cloſe priſon, a ſtrong priſon: and ſinners are called *priſoners*; and hence the work of a Saviour, is called the *opening of the priſon*, Iſa. lxi. 1.

8. Sin hath the ſtrength of a *chain*. Of all men, ſlaves are in the worſt circumſtances; of all ſlaves, priſoners are worſt; and of all priſoners, theſe that are in chains and fetters. Sinners are not only ſlaves, but priſoners; not only priſoners but in chains within their priſon, held in *the bond of iniquity, ſhut up in unbelief*, as in a priſon and chain: and ſo ſtrait is the chain, that their hands are in chains, they cannot work; their feet in chains, they cannot walk; their head chained down, that they cannot look up to God for mercy; their heart in chains, that they cannot ſo much as deſire the Lord Jeſus to looſe, and ſave, and deliver them. But then,

[2.] Conſider the ſtrength of ſin *comparatively*, and you will find it ſtronger than many ſtrong things.

1. Sin is ſtronger than all the *children of men*; for it hath made them all its *captives*; yea, and *willing ſubjects*. As it is ſaid of Chriſt, *Thy people ſhall be willing in the day of thy power*; ſo, ſuch is the ſtrength of ſin, that we may ſay, it hath made millions of willing ſubjects and ſlaves to it in the day of its power; and the day of its helliſh power is always till a day of divine power come to conquer it.

2. Sin is ſtronger than *affliction*, no rod will drive it away; Iſa. xi. 13. *The people turn not to him that ſmites them, neither do they ſeek the Lord:* nay, they are apt to *revolt more and more*; Iſa. lvii. 17. *For the iniquity of his covetouſneſs was I wroth, and ſmote him; yet he went on frowardly in the way of his heart.*

3. As it is ſtronger than affliction, ſo it is ſtronger than *conviction*. Many go to hell with a boſom-full of convictions: and, does not ſin hurry people to run its errands by a multitude of wicked actions, and that over the belly of a thouſand convictions, conſcience flying in their face for omitting ſuch a duty, or committing ſuch a treſpaſs; yet ſin maſters it?

4. Sin is ſtronger than *warnings*, *calls*, and all *external means*; for it makes men ſlight all theſe as trifles, and ſtand out againſt them. Sin is not daunted with the threatenings of hell and wrath; *Becauſe ſentence againſt an evil work is not ſpeedily executed, therefore the heart of the children of men is ſet in them to do evil.* Neither can it be allured with the promiſes of the goſpel; *Who hath believed our report?* Again,

5. Sin is ſtronger than *reſolutions*, *vows*, and *promiſes*. Perhaps you have reſolved an hundred times, and ſolemnly vowed againſt ſuch ſins; but all your vows and reſolutions have been but like flax or tow before the fire of a new temptation. Your legal weapons of warfare againſt ſin are too weak; your leviathan luſts, they but laugh at the ſhaking of your ſpear. Again,

6. Sin is ſtronger than the *world*. The frowns and flatteries of the world are very ſtrong, very deceitful and enſnaring; but ſin in the heart is yet more ſtrong and deceitful: *The heart is deceitful above all things, and deſperately wicked.* Sin is ſtronger than all the good examples and good education of the world, let be the evil things in it.

7. But no wonder that it be ſtronger than the world; for it is ſtronger than the *devil*, the *God of this world*. The devil may tempt, but he cannot compel, as ſin does; he may work upon the fancy, but he cannot conquer the will, as ſin does: ſin does all that work to his hand, and ſo his work is the more eaſy.

8. Sin is ſtronger than *death* and the *grave*. Death itſelf cannot kill ſin: death hath deſtroyed millions of millions of men and women, but it never deſtroyed one ſin. The power of death is very great, inſomuch that none among mere men could ever yet either withſtand the arreſt of death, nor break the priſon of death, which is the grave; yet it is eaſier to bring a dead body out of the grave, and to raiſe it to life, than to raiſe a dead ſoul out of the grave of ſin. The dead bodies will not reſiſt, as the ſoul dead in treſpaſſes will do. Yea,

9. Sin is ſtronger than *hell;* for all the flames of hell cannot burn out the droſs of ſin and corruption: all the torments of the damned will not make them ceaſe from *blaſpheming the name of God*, Rev. xvi. 9, 11.; where you may learn, that all the torments of hell will not make a man repent, but rather increaſe his impenitency, and augment his blaſphemy. What ſhall I ſay?

10. Sin is not only ſtronger than the ſufferings of hell, but ſtronger than the *ſuburbs of heaven;* I mean, it is ſtronger than real grace, which is the beginning of heaven. It is not only ſtronger than common grace, for common grace can hardly ſtand before a common temptation; but ſtronger than real habitual grace. Peter had a large ſtock of habitual grace, yet ſin was ſtronger, and brought him down to the ground by a baſe denial of his Lord: Paul had a great meaſure of true grace, and yet he was *led captive to the law of ſin that was in his members*, Rom. vii. 23. till a new recruit of auxiliary grace came from the Lord Jeſus to him. Sin is not only ſtronger than the common motions of the Spirit, which men through the power of ſin do reſiſt every day; but it is ſtronger than ſpecial influences formerly received, till new ſupplies of influences come from the glorious Head; ſtronger than former influences, till a new communication come; ſtronger than former communications, till once a new manifeſtation come; ſtronger than former manifeſtations, till new divine aids ſtill ſucceed. Thus it is ſtronger than the very ſuburbs of heaven; and you need not think ſtrange of this: for, what if I ſhall ſay, and prove, that ſin is ſtronger than perfect holineſs, and the formal immediate viſion of God in heaven, when it is poſſible for ſin to get in its hand there, as you know it did once among the glorious angels? Notwithſtanding of the ſtrong bulwark of perfect holineſs and formal viſion of God that they were bleſſed with, ſin brake in upon them, and brought down legions of them: it overcame them, ſo as now they are devils, under the rule and government of ſin. If ſin then brought devils and men from their excellency while they were in their beſt eſtate, you need not think ſtrange that we ſay ſin is ſtronger than that which may be called the ſuburbs of heaven; and therefore, little wonder that you find ſin to be ſo ſtrong, that it is much ſtronger than your prayers and tears: may be, *for this you beſought the Lord thrice*, as Paul did in a like caſe; yea, perhaps, three hundred times, and yet the bow of ſin abides in ſtrength. Alas! ſin is ſtronger than prayers and tears, ſtronger than ſighs and groans; it is ſtronger than afflictions and enlargements, ſtronger than ſermons and ſacraments. Oh! a greater ſtrength than all that, is requiſite for pulling down the ſtrength of ſin; and if you get a view of the ſtrength of ſin this day, ſo as to be led out of yourſelf, and out of your duties, and a little further than means and ordinances to the ſtrength of the Redeemer, it would be a good communion-ſeaſon.

[3.] Conſider the ſtrength of ſin *ſuperlatively*, or in the ſuperlative degree. I muſt tell you, ſin is not only a ſtrong thing, and ſtronger than many things that I have named, but alſo it is the ſtrongeſt thing in nature, the ſtrongeſt thing in hell, and the ſtrongeſt thing out of heaven. Particularly,

1. Sin is the ſtrongeſt *weight* and *burden*, the ſtrongeſt *preſſure* that ever was, the moſt burdenſom thing in the world; for it is a burden to the great God: No wonder then that the whole creation groan under the burden of it; for it is a burden to God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt: God is ſaid to be weary with it, ſpeaking after the manner of men; *Ye have wearied me with your iniquities*, Iſa. xliii. 24. It was a burden to Chriſt, that made him *ſweat great drops of blood;* it is a burden to the Holy Ghoſt, therefore called a *vexing*, *grieving*, and *doing deſpite* to him. What a burden will it be to men that die in it? And what a burden do the people of God find it? Nothing preſſes them down ſo much as this?

2. Sin

2. Sin is the ſtrongeſt *ſting*, the ſtrongeſt *torment*: it is the ſting of all ſtings, the ſting of ſorrow, the ſting of affliction, the ſting of deſertion, the ſting of death, as here in the context, *The ſting of death is ſin.* The pains of death are nothing to the ſting of death: the pain is tolerable, but the ſting is intolerable.

3. As it is the ſtrongeſt ſting, ſo it is the ſtrongeſt *poiſon*: if but a drop of that poiſon could poſſibly get into the nature of God, he would ceaſe to be, as I formerly noticed. What a mighty poiſon would it be, that if one drop of it were caſt into the ocean, it would poiſon the whole ocean? So it is here; and little wonder then, when ſome of this poiſon entered the human and angelical natures, it poiſoned them, and turned them to devils and monſters. There is no antidote againſt it, but the blood of Chriſt.

4. Sin is the ſtrongeſt *plague* and diſeaſe that ever was; you that *know the plagues of your own hearts*, will know this. Sin is the mother of all maladies and ſoul-diſeaſes, and is a compound of all. The worſt *fever* in the world is the inflamed luſts of the fleſh; the moſt dangerous *tympany* is the towering pride of the heart, and ſwelling of the vain mind; the moſt fearful *flux* is the bloody flux of ſin and corruption. O what divine power is requiſite for drying up this bloody iſſue! What *dropſy* is ſo deadly as that of *drinking in iniquity as the ox drinketh water!* What *apoplexy* and *palſy* is ſo direful as that by which people fall into miſchief, and hinders all ſpiritual breathing and motion! And what *lethargy* ſo lamentable as that of ſpiritual ſecurity and ſtupidity! The world is an hoſpital of diſeaſed ſouls. O if the Phyſician Jeſus Chriſt would come and heal!

5. Sin is the ſtrongeſt *tyrant*, and the moſt cruel. It hath a tyranny moſt lawleſs and intolerable. There is not any other oppreſſor but will give ſome reſt ſometimes, at leaſt to theſe that are under his ſlavery; as cruel Pharaoh gave the Iſraelites leave to refreſh themſelves with meat, and drink, and ſleep: but ſin gives no reſt to its miſerable captives and ſlaves; for, whether they eat, drink, or ſleep, it always exacts of them the ſervice of ſin. Auguſtine ſpeaking of the tyranny of ſin, even over the people of God, "Many times, ſays he, ſin does "that when they are ſleeping, that it cannot "do when they are waking." And if ſin be ſo tyrannical towards the children of God, how great is its tyranny towards its ſlaves! Surely there is no *peace to the wicked*, no reſt for them. Satan put it in Judas's heart to betray Jeſus; and behold, he would not let him reſt till he had performed that evil ſuggeſtion: the devil was ſo ſtrict with him, that he would not let him eat his meat, but haſtened him from the table to the treaſon. Thus Amnon, being incited by his own deviliſh luſts to defile his ſiſter Tamar, was ſo inwardly vexed, that his very fleſh wore away, and his mind had no reſt; he could not eat, or drink, or ſleep, till he had ſatisfied his luſt. What an intolerable tyrant is the man's inordinate affections, giving him no reſt day nor night! As it is ſaid of ſome, Prov. iv. 16. *They ſleep not, except they have done miſchief*; their ſleep is taken away, *unleſs they cauſe ſome to fall.*

6. Sin is the ſtrongeſt *witchcraft*; Gal. iii. 1. *O fooliſh Galatians, who hath bewitched you*, ſays the apoſtle, *that you ſhould not obey the truth, before whoſe eyes Chriſt hath been evidently ſet forth crucified among you?* People think it a terrible thing to hear that ſuch a body is bewitched or poſſeſt of the devil; but I muſt tell all you who will not receive the goſpel, you are bewitched; ſin hath bewitched you: and to be bodily poſſeſt with a legion of devils, is not ſo great a miſery, as to be under the power of one ſin. A man poſſeſt is an object of pity; thus Chriſt pitied the man whoſe name was *Legion:* but ſin makes a man the object of Chriſt's hatred. When God gave up Job's body to the devil, why did not the devil take poſſeſſion of him? Says one of the fathers, "Why, ſays he, becauſe, though "he had taken poſſeſſion of his body, and made "him fret and tear himſelf, it had not been "his ſin, but his affliction: whereas, to bring "him to ſin, and curſe God, was the great "thing he ſought after." Therefore, to be given up to ſin, is a greater evil than to be poſſeſt. Ye that are parents, and have children whom you have cauſe to fear that they are given up to the power of ſin, know, it is worſe than if they were poſſeſt with the devil; therefore, ſuch ſhould come more earneſtly to Chriſt with their children, than theſe in the goſpel that brought to Chriſt their children poſſeſt with devils: they are worſe than bewitched.

7. Sin is the ſtrongeſt *waſter*. Oh! how mightily does ſin waſte you! Sin waſtes your ſoul and body; it waſtes your time, and waſtes your talents; it waſtes your opportunities, it waſtes your ſtrength, and waſtes your ſpirit, and all to no purpoſe. Oh! how many waſted Sabbaths, ſermons, waſted communions, waſted meals, and waſted mercies, all waſted and abuſed by ſin!

8. Sin is the ſtrongeſt *death*. Sin itſelf is ſpiritual death, and ſpiritual death is the moſt ſtrong and powerful death; inaſmuch as the ſoul is ſuperior to the body, ſo much is ſpiritual death more powerful and terrible than temporal or bodily death; and inſomuch as the cauſe is more conſiderable than the effect, ſo much is ſpiritual death more powerful and dreadful than eternal death: I mean, ſin is more dreadful than hell itſelf, as it is a place of torment; for, as the ſtrongeſt cord that draws people to hell is ſin; ſo the ſtrongeſt flame to torment the ſinner there, is ſin. The wrath of God would ceaſe, if ſin did not feed and increaſe it.——Thus much of the ſtrength of ſin.

III. The *third* thing here propoſed was, To ſhow how the ſtrength of ſin *diſcovers* itſelf. Here I may ſhow you, 1. At what *ſeaſons* eſpecially does the ſtrength of ſin diſcover itſelf. 2. By what *effects*.

1ſt, At what *ſeaſons* more eſpecially does the ſtrength of ſin diſcover itſelf?

1. When men ſhould be *moſt holy*, ſin readily diſcovers itſelf to be moſt ſtrong. In the unregenerate, ſin is equally ſtrong at all times, but not equally evident. Some will ſay, Oh! my heart is never ſo ill as on the Sabbath-day: why, perhaps it is juſt the ſame thing at other times, only the ſtrength of it may be more evident then. In the regenerate, ſin is ſometimes ſtronger, ſometimes weaker; but ordinarily it diſcovers its ſtrength moſt when they would moſt gladly be quit of it; *When I would do good, evil is preſent with me*, Rom. vii. 21. It is in this caſe many times as with the children of theſe that obſerve the worſhip of God daily in their families, they find the children moſt fretful

fretful and ill-natured in time of worſhip, when they ought to be beſt. Perhaps it may be ſo, indeed, and the tempter may have a hand in it for diſturbing the worſhip of God; but, for ordinary, it is not then that they are worſt; but then they are moſt noticed.

2. Sin diſcovers its ſtrength moſt, when a *heart-change* comes to be ſought after. It is eaſy to wear Chriſt's livery for a while, by a fair profeſſion; but when he comes to ſeek the heart, there is no hearing on that ſide of the head. People may ſoon be induced to give ſome compliment to Chriſt, to give him the outward man, to give him the hand: but to give him the heart, is another matter; for, when it comes to that, the ſtrength of ſin appears. And then,

3. When a *darling luſt* is demanded, then the ſtrength of ſin appears; for the man will quit any thing for Chriſt but that. Naaman will part with any thing ſave a bow in the houſe of Rimmon: the young man in the goſpel will hold on with Chriſt, till Chriſt touch him on the ſore, and ſtrike upon his covetouſneſs; then he *goes away ſorrowful.*

4. When *long cuſtom* hath taken place, then the ſtrength of ſin appears; for, *Can the Ethiopian change his colour, or the leopard his ſpots? No more can ye that are accuſtomed to do evil, learn to do well.* It is hard, yea, extremely difficult to pull up an old tree by the roots.

5. When a time of *ſpiritual drouſineſs* takes place, then the ſtrength of ſin diſcovers itſelf. Take the heart while awake, and it can then pray, and wait, and praiſe, and worſhip: but let drouſineſs come on, it cannot watch with Chriſt one hour, for all Chriſt's intreaty; for then the eyes are heavy; then is the hour and power of darkneſs. When the believer is waking and watchful, believing and holy, then the power of God appears; it is the hour of God's power: but when ſpiritual drouſineſs comes on, then the power of ſin appears; the ſoul cannot ſtir hand nor foot.

6. When a time of *temptation* comes, then the ſtrength of ſin appears. The perſon will be very meek, very modeſt, very chaſte, very moderate, very devout, and very innocent like, when there is no temptation, no opportunity for ſin's working; and at ſuch a time ſin will be very ſilent, very quiet, very ſtill, and faſt aſleep: but let a ſtrong temptation, and a ſtrong luſt meet together, then the ſtrength of ſin ſtirs up itſelf. Sin is like a thief, who would ſeem to be a very honeſt man till a fit opportunity come, and then his hand falls to. "It is, as "one ſays, like the ſpider, that never appears "out of her hole till the flie be intangled in "her net; then ſhe appears, and deſtroys the "poor creature, and carries it along with her." When temptation is at a diſtance, perhaps, you hope you will withſtand it; you pray, and promiſe, and what not? and ſin lets you be ſaying, and never a word from it, till the new temptation comes, and then it appears with new ſtrength.

7. When a time of *trial* and *temptation* comes, ſin diſcovers its power. It may be, you can preach patience and ſubmiſſion to others in affliction; but when it comes to your own door, then you will find the heart rebelling againſt the providence, and that it is eaſier to give an advice than to take it. The power of enmity falls a working, as againſt the preceptive, ſo againſt the providential will of God.

8. When *difficult duties* are preſſed, then the ſtrength of ſin appears.—When duties croſs to *fleſh and blood*, croſs to ſelf and ſelf-righteouſneſs are preſſed, what! muſt I reprove even my ſuperiors and great ones when they err? This, ſays ſin, will expoſe you to their wrath and indignation. Muſt I profeſs Chriſt even before a wicked company? Nay, ſays ſin, this will expoſe you to ſhame and reproach. Muſt I bear with injuries and affronts? Nay, ſays ſin, fleſh and blood cannot bear with that. Muſt I deny myſelf, and all my beſt duties and righteouſneſs? Nay, ſays ſin, *this is a hard ſaying, who can bear it?* May I not hope that my duties will profit me as to my acceptance and juſtification before God? No, no; the heart caſts out with God, and ſin ſhows its ſtrength in theſe caſes.—Again, in a time when all *diligence* in duty is required, as well as deniedneſs thereunto; and when the law is urged to be regarded as a rule of obedience, as well as renounced as a rule of acceptance: What! *to be ſtedfaſt and immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord*; to make religion the conſtant trade; to be holy in duties, and holy in the intervals of duties: the ſtrength of ſin here appears in its mighty oppoſition to this kind of life. A man will be content to pray, and hear, and read, and ſing, if he may be allowed a latitude when he is done; but to be always praying, always watching, and always waiting on the Lord, the carnal heart reſiſts this like death: it may be reſtrained a while, like a ſtream that is dammed up for a time; but it breaks out with greater violence at laſt.

9. When the *commandment comes powerfully*, ſin revives, and diſcovers its power, Rom. vii. 9. The ſpirituality of the law wakens up the malignity of ſin.

10. In a time when *goſpel-light ſhines moſt clearly*, then the ſtrength of ſin appears moſt evidently. The law of works, and legal doctrine, may be preached, and yet the ſtrength of ſin never touched, never truly diſcovered; yea, the legal heart may fall in with the legal ſtrain, and comply with all the legal duties and means of life, and yet the ſtrength of ſin more and more increaſed, though hidden under a legal covert; for, *the ſtrength of ſin is the law*; and therefore ſin does not differ with the law as it is a covenant of works: But, let the goſpel-light ſhine clearly, then ſin will diſcover itſelf more evidently, and rage more deſperately, unleſs it be conquered by goſpel-grace. Why? becauſe though the law of works, or the works of the law and the power of ſin, are no oppoſites, but friends that live and die together; yet the goſpel of grace, and the power of ſin, are direct oppoſites: for nothing in the world can deſtroy the power of ſin, but the graces of the goſpel; and therefore the ſtrength of ſin reſiſts the grace of the goſpel with main force. Goſpel-grace ſeeks no leſs than the very life of ſin; therefore ſin muſt now fight for its life. Wonder not that the world oppoſes the goſpel ſo much, in conjunction with the *god of this world, who blinds the minds of them that believe not*, &c. Neither wonder if ſin appear very ſtrong, where the goſpel ſhines very clear; or if there be the greateſt oppoſition, where there is the cleareſt light. Men naturally underſtand ſomething of the law, that ſays, *Do, and live*; work, and get your wages: and this natural underſtanding is what men pride themſelves in, ſo as in the

the pride of their heart they reject the gospel, which is wholly supernatural and divine, and wherein Christ is set up as the only Potentate that can demolish the strength of sin, by executing his saving offices in us. But, behold, pride of wisdom opposes him as a Prophet, and so man's folly is increased; pride of righteousness opposes him in his priestly office, and so the guilt of sin is increased; pride of strength opposes him as to his kingly office, and so the power of sin is increased: and thus, *through an evil heart of unbelief, they depart from the living God.* The gospel sets up Christ against the strength of sin, and therefore the strength of sin appears in arms against the gospel.——Thus you see at what *seasons*, and on what *occasion*, especially, the strength of sin appears.

2*dly*, By what *effects* does the strength of sin discover itself? I am not here to run through all the sad effects of sin: otherwise I might show how it brought angels out of heaven, and Adam out of paradise; how it brought fire and brimstone upon Sodom, and a deluge of water on the old world; and what confusion, calamity, and misery it hath brought into the world; what temporal, spiritual, and eternal judgments it brings on: these are common topics, and too large a field for me now to insist upon; therefore I confine myself to that effect of sin that the text and context leads me to. Know then, that the strength of sin appears in the STING of it, and the *sting of death is sin:* there is the great discovery that the strength of sin makes of itself.

And there are two deaths I would here speak a little of, as the greatest discoveries of the strength of sin, namely, 1. The death of the *sinner.* 2. The death of the *Saviour.* Both these deaths discover the powerful sting and mighty strength of sin.

[1.] The death of the *sinner* discovers the strength of sin; for, *The wages of sin is death.* And here, *first*, Sinning *angels* were stung to death by their sin; and hence we are told, Jude ver. 6. *That the angels that kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, are reserved in everlasting chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day.* And, next, sinning *man* was stung to death; *By one man sin entred into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned*, Rom. v. 12. The death of the sinner, whereof death is the sting and strength, is threefold, namely, external, internal, and eternal: external relates to the body, internal relates to the soul, and eternal relates to the soul and body for ever.—Death *external*, or of the body and outward man, includes not only the separation of soul and body, to the privation of bodily life; but also all the pains and sickness, public calamities, personal miseries, and grievous diseases that do attend a present life, or are the forerunners and attendants of death: all which are parts of this sting and strength of sin.—Death *internal*, includes soul-defilement and pollution; soul-debasement and degradation to the rank of beasts; soul-disturbance, disorder, and confusion; soul-separation from God, and alienation from the life of God; the life of God being gone, and the candle of the Lord put out, so as nothing remains but the darkness of death and hell. Oh! how great a death is the loss of God, the loss of his favour, his image, his fellowship, and sweet communion with him! All the life of the carnal man, who is but dead while he lives, is at best (instead of *righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost*, which are part of the spiritual life) nothing but a little while's eating, and drinking, and playing, and laughing, and living in filthiness, and enjoying no better pleasure than brute beasts; but so much the worse, that, having an immortal soul, the issue is terrible, nothing remaining but torment and terror of mind and conscience whenever it begins to awaken.—Death *eternal*, includes everlasting separation from the presence of God: indeed, the former deaths were not so terrible to the sinner, if there were not two sad words and sadder things following thereupon, namely, *judgment* and *eternity*, that tread upon the heels of death; for, whenever the soul is separate from the body, it must see the things it would never believe, nor seriously think upon, that *verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth*, and that, dying in sin, and out of Christ, it must receive from that just Judge a sentence of excommunication from the glorious and joyful presence of God, and that for ever and ever; besides the suffering of everlasting torment, as the due demerit of sin.——Thus, in the death of the sinner, the strength of sin is discovered. But more especially,

[2.] The death of the *Saviour* shews forth the strength of sin above all other things; for sin was the cause of it, and the very sting by which he suffered unto death. Every life, whether it be the life of beasts, the life of men, the life of angels, or the life of God, hath an excellency according to its kind; and the more excellent the life is, the more powerful, terrible, and hurtful is the cause of the privation thereof. "The life of a flie, says Augustine, is more excellent than the sun, because the sun, though an excellent creature, hath not life; but the flie, though little, yet it hath life: it shows the excellency of God to make such a living creature." But if the life of a beast, or insect, be so excellent, how much more the life of a man! And if the life of a man, or an angel, be excellent, what infinite excellency is there in the life of God! Now, the principal excellency of the life of man lay at first in this, that he was in the *image of God;* and how terrible is that sting of sin, that could deprive man of that excellent life, so as to strike at God's image in man, both to deface and destroy it! But if sin strike at God himself, and aim at the highest life, even the life of God; and if the stroak reach so far, as to kill and take away the life of that person who was God as well as man; then we may see and conclude, that the strength of sin is inconceivably more great and terrible than it can be seen to be in any other glass. But so it is, though God cannot die, and though the divine nature of Christ could not be touched with the sting, yet he, who was God-man in one person, was pressed down to death with the strength, and wounded even to death with the sting of sin. And this one thing makes a greater discovery of the strength of sin, than all the torments of the damned to eternity can do. In the red glass of the sufferings of Christ you may see more of the power and strength of sin, than if God should let you down to hell, and make you see all the tortures and torments of the damned. In order, therefore, to your having a clearer insight into the strength of sin, O Sirs, look to a crucified Christ: look upon

upon his agony and croſs, when he was wounded for our ſin. O ſee the ſting of ſin, and the ſtrength of it, when it made the Son of God to ſay, *My ſoul is exceeding ſorrowful, even unto death*, Mat. xxvi. 38. There the ſting was ſticking in his ſoul, while he was under the apprehenſion of God's wrath, and was about to bear the wrath that ſin deſerved. Perhaps, upon the ſight of ſin, you content yourſelf with ſome little ſlight ſorrow, ſaying, *I am ſorry for it; Lord, have mercy on me;* and ſo it paſſes away: but when the weight of ſin was lying on Chriſt's back, it made his *ſoul ſorrowful, compaſſed about with ſorrow*, and *ſorrowful even unto death*, and that for our ſins.—See the ſtrength of ſin in the ſufferings of Chriſt, expreſſed alſo in that word, Mark xiv. 33. *He began to be ſore amazed, and to be very heavy:* amazed at the dreadfulneſs of that cup of wrath for ſin, which he, as Surety, behoved to drink. He knew very well, and underſtood perfectly, what that wrath of God was; and this made him ſtand amazed. Many hear of God's wrath, but are never amazed at it, never affected with it, as all Chriſtleſs ſinners ought to be: but, alas! they do not underſtand it, they do not know what it is for a creature to ſtand before the wrath of an infinite Deity; they know not the *power of his wrath*, therefore they are not amazed. Chriſt ſaw to the bottom of that cup, and to the dregs thereof; and when he was to drink it, he ſtood amazed: how great then is the ſtrength of ſin, that procured this amazement of the Son of God!—See again the ſtrength of ſin in Chriſt's ſufferings for it, while it is ſaid, He was *in an agony*, Luke xxii. 44.; that is, as it were, in a COMBAT; in combat with the infinite juſtice and wrath of God, and with the dreadful threatenings and curſe of the law, that ſin brought upon him, when he ſtood our Surety. How great is the ſtrength of ſin, that put the *Son of God*, the *Strength of Iſrael*, the *Captain of ſalvation*, into ſuch an agony!—Again, it is ſaid, Mark xiv. 35. that *he fell down to the ground;* and Mat. xxvi. 39. that *he fell on his face:* Alas! Sirs, when he, that upholds the heavens and the earth by his power, fell grovelling on the earth, when the weight and burden of ſin was upon him; how ſtrong muſt ſin be! Chriſt fell upon his face, and fell to the ground; ſurely that weight, that made Chriſt fall to the ground, would have preſſed all the angels of heaven, and men on earth to the bottomleſs gulf of deſpair. If all the ſtrength of all the men that ever were from the beginning of the world, and of all the angels in heaven were put into one, and that perſon had the weight upon him that Chriſt had, it would make him ſink to the loweſt hell, and ly there for ever. If Chriſt had not been God, as well as man, he could never have born it, but would have ſunk down eternally: but though he was God as well as man, yet ſuch was the ſtrength of ſin, that under its burden he ſunk down to the ground.—Again, the ſtrength of it appears, in that it made him to *ſweat great drops of blood*, Luke xxiii. 44. The word ſignifies GREAT CLOTS *of blood;* blood thickened into clots. Never was there ſuch a ſweat, and that upon the cold ground, in a cold winter-night, and nothing elſe upon him to make him ſweat but the burden of ſin, and the weight of wrath that it brought upon him.—But again, how does the ſtrength of ſin appear, in his crying under this weight, *Father, if it be poſſible, let this cup paſs from me?* And thus he cried three times. Why, this was the very end for which he came to the world, to drink that cup; and he knew that the ſalvation of an elect world of poor ſinners depended upon his drinking of it: and, was he now unwilling? No, by no means: but knowing the dreadfulneſs of it, when it was put to his head, he put it away, as it were, ſaying, *Father, if it be poſſible, let this cup paſs from me:* but now he ſees, if he drink it not, all the children of men muſt eternally periſh; therefore, he put it to his mouth again the ſecond time; but knowing the dreadfulneſs of it, he takes it away again, and cries, *Father, if it be poſſible, let it paſs away from me.* But, becauſe he could not ſee ſo many thouſands of poor ſinners periſh eternally, he put it to his mouth again, the third time; and yet, beholding the dreadfulneſs of it, he put it away again, ſaying, *Father, if it be poſſible, let this cup paſs.* But, after all, his infinite love overcame his dreadful amazement; and away he goes to the croſs, to drink that bitter cup of vengeance to the bottom: and while he is drinking it, he cries out with a more bitter cry than ever, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* This was ſuch a cry from the Son of God, the Son of his eternal love, that heaven was not able to hear it without bluſhing, nor the earth to bear it without trembling: therefore, as the ſun withdrew his light, and became dark and black at the ſight; ſo the *earth ſhook*, the *rocks clave*, and the *vail of the temple was rent in twain, from the top to the bottom.* Mean time, the ſting went to his heart, and ſtabbed him to death; and all this was done, that the *ſting of death*, which is *ſin*, and the *ſtrength of ſin*, which is the *law*, might be vanquiſhed by him, and that poor ſinners might be victorious through him.

However, the more we view here the ſtrength of ſin, the more ſweet will be the ſong of victory. Dwell a little further upon this then: Chriſt is the *Strength of Iſrael;* but never was the Strength of Iſrael tried ſo much as by the *ſtrength of ſin*, when he had that to deal with, and when by the ſin of man he was made a *curſe*, Gal. iii. 13. What made the death and ſufferings of Chriſt ſo dreadful to him, even before he ſuffered? Let me aſk here four queſtions.

1. Did not Chriſt perfectly know all that he was to ſuffer, long before he ſuffered? What made it then ſo dreadful when he expected it? Had he any ſin of his own, to weaken him, or take away his ſtrength? No; he had none, but by imputation. Had he any impatience? No; his patience was abſolutely perfect. What then was the matter? Weakneſs of patience makes us cry; but Chriſt cried, not from want of the ſtrength of patience, but from the feeling of the ſtrength of ſin, the whole power and force of the fiery law.

2. Was not Chriſt the Captain of all that were to ſuffer afterwards? How came the martyrs to ſuffer with joy, and yet the Captain to *fall to the ground*, and cry out of *exceeding ſorrow?* Was it not through the ſtrength of Chriſt that all that ever did ſuffer were enabled to ſuffer for his name what they did? Yea, but the matter was, he had ſome other thing to ſuffer than they had; he had even the *wrath of God*, and the *ſtrength of ſin* to grapple with, which they had nothing to do with, he having thus taken it away.

3. Did

3. Did not Chriſt know what infinite good his ſuffering would do, that he was to ſave ſo many thouſands of thouſands of ſinners, and that thus he was to reconcile God and man, to glorify his Father, and to do the greateſt work for God that ever was done, and to bring in a tribute of eternal praiſe from men and angels? And did he not know, that though his ſufferings were extreme, yet they were to laſt but a few hours, and then he was to be glorified? Why then was his ſuffering ſo dreadful to him? Why, becauſe then the *whole ſtrength of ſin* was preſſing him, the *whole ſtrength of a broken law*.

4. Had not Chriſt the ſtrength of an infinite Deity to ſupport him? the divine nature to ſupport the human? Was there not a perſonal union betwixt the divine and human nature at that time? Was he not God-man in one perſon? Yea, why then was his ſuffering ſo dreadful to him? Why, the ſtrength of ſin lighted on him with its whole weight, and the ſtrength of ſin brought on him the ſtrength of the law, the ſtrength of the broken law brought on him the ſtrength of offended juſtice, the ſtrength of infinite juſtice brought on him the ſtrength of infinite wrath and vengeance for ſin; and therefore, though his ſtrength was the ſtrength of God, he behoved to cry and roar, and die under the ſtrength of ſin.

O my dear friends, you cannot conceive how infinite wiſdom, though inventing a way from all eternity, to diſcover the ſtrength and dreadfulneſs of ſin, could do it ſo much to the life, as it is diſcovered in the death and ſufferings of the Son of God. If ever you ſee the evil and ſtrength of ſin here, you will ſee it to be ſin indeed.

IV. The *fourth* head propoſed was, to ſhow *whence* the ſtrength of ſin comes, and *where* it lies. I ſhall very ſhortly ſpeak to this, in theſe four particulars.

1. As the ſtrength of a tree lies in the *root* of it, and the ſtrength of the water lies in the *fountain*; ſo the ſtrength of ſin lies in the *root* and *fountain* of ſin, *viz.* The original violation of the covenant of works, by our firſt parents; the righteous imputation of that guilt unto us; and the total depravation of our nature, iſſuing from thence, and called, *A body of ſin and death.* Hence, no leſs power can deſtroy the ſtrength of ſin, than that power that can pull up the root, and dry up the fountain of ſin.

2. As the ſtrength of an army lies much in their *general*; ſo the ſtrength of ſin and luſts lies in their commander the devil. I ſaid before, that ſin is ſtronger than the devil; and yet the devil may be ſaid to be the ſtrength of ſin, as a general or commander is the ſtrength of an army; for, though the army may be ſtronger than the general that commands it, yet his ſkill and management may be the principal cauſe of their victorious power, while his leading and directing them gives them great advantage againſt their enemies. Thus the devil is the commander in ſin's army, and the great quarter-maſter that fills the ſinner's heart, as it is ſaid of Ananias, Acts v. 3. *Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lye to the Holy Ghoſt?* It is the devil that fills the hearts of people to lye, and drink, and ſwear, and do other acts of wickedneſs; for, *he rules in the children of diſobedience*, Eph. ii. 2.; and the *god of this world blinds the minds of them that believe not*; and ſo holds them under the ſtrength of ſin, in chains of darkneſs and ignorance. No leſs power, then, can ſubdue the ſtrength of ſin, than that power that can deſtroy the devil and his works.

3. As the ſtrength of Samſon lay in his *locks*, and the ſtrength of a ſociety lies in their *unity*, or the ſtrength of a company lies in their *conjunction*; ſo the ſtrength of ſin lies in its *union with the ſinner*, and in its conjunction with and relation to him: the ſtrength of ſinful luſts lies in their oneneſs with, and relation to ourſelves. And for a man to deſtroy his luſts, is to deny himſelf: they are ſuch a part of a man's ſelf, that they ſeem to be the beſt part, and the moſt powerful part of himſelf; his *right-hand*, his *right-eye*, his moſt uſeful and powerful *members*; *Mortify therefore your members that are upon the earth*, Col. iii. 5. The power then that can deſtroy the power and ſtrength of ſin, is ſuch as can pull down ſelf, and all the members of it, and divide one member from another. The power that is neceſſary for deſtroying ſin, is that divine power that can divide and ſeparate a man from himſelf, and even deſtroy nature itſelf by a new creation.

4. As the ſtrength of a kingdom lies in the *conſtitution* and *government* thereof; ſo the ſtrength of ſin lies in the *law of works*: *The ſtrength of ſin is the law.* Now, to ſhew how the *law* is the *ſtrength of ſin*, is the ſubject of the next doctrine, which I deſign to treat of afterwards. In a word, as the *command* of the law irritates ſin, and gives it a commanding power over the ſinner; and as the *threatening* of the law curſes ſin, and gives it a condemning power over the ſinner; ſo the power alone that can bring down the ſtrength of ſin, muſt be ſuch as can give full ſatisfaction both to the precept and penalty of the law of works. And whereas ſin draws its commanding ſtrength from the violated precept, and its condemning ſtrength from the incurred ſanction of the law, and yet the precept of the law derives its ſtrength from the holineſs of God, and the ſanction of the law derives its ſtrength from the juſtice of God; therefore, the power that can vanquiſh ſin, muſt be ſuch as can give infinite holineſs all the obedience it commands in the precept, and infinite juſtice all the ſatisfaction it demands in the threatening of the law: conſequently no man is freed from the power, ſtrength, and dominion of ſin, till he be unbottomed from the law as a covenant of works, united to Chriſt the ſecond Adam, and inveſted with his everlaſting law-biding righteouſneſs.

V. The *fifth* thing propoſed, was, to make ſome *application* of this doctrine. Is it ſo, that ſin is ſuch a ſtrong and powerful thing as I have ſhown? Then hence we may learn,

1. That it is no eaſy matter to be delivered from the *power and ſtrength of ſin*. Let Arminians magnify the power of man's nature and free-will as they pleaſe; yet let us hence ſee the need of the power of God, and magnify the power of ſovereign grace. If any man think ſo proudly of himſelf, that he can, at his own will and pleaſure, deliver himſelf from the bondage of corruption, he is both ignorant of the ſtrength of ſin, declaring himſelf to be under the power of it, and running on in the way to his own eternal ruin: yea, by ſuch a conceit

as this, ſin gathers more and more ſtrength, and holds ſinners ſo much the faſter under its power; for thus they are hardened in a continuance in that courſe which they fancy they can reform when they will: and hence, though their time of returning to God is always, even when they will; yet that time never comes. *To will* is preſent with a child of God many times, Rom. vii. 18. when he finds an oppoſing power of ſin withſtanding him: but a preſent will to come to Chriſt, and forſake all ſin, is never preſent with a natural man. A future will he may have, thinking that after ſuch or ſuch a time he will repent, and reform, and come to Chriſt; but that future will is a preſent nill and denial. The ſtrength of ſin remains in the will, and will remain there, unleſs a day of power come to make him willing.

2. If ſin hath ſuch a ſtrength, then ſee the *miſerable thraldom of Chriſtleſs ſinners;* they are ſlaves to the baſeſt maſter in the world, namely, ſin: and if they live and die in that ſlavery, they are to have the fearfulleſt wages, and that is death. As nothing is more baſe than ſin, ſo nothing is more bitter than death. You have heard of the miſery of galley-ſlaves among the Turks, who uſe to chain them to their ſeats, and ſcourge them cruelly with rods; how ſweet is it to be delivered from ſuch bondage! But, alas! what is a Turk to a devil? What is the labour of oars to the ſervice of ſin, and the torments of hell?

3. If ſin hath ſuch a ſtrength, then ſee the *neceſſity of regeneration*, and the *power of grace* to break the power of ſin. It was the ſpeech of one to a ſkilful philoſopher, that upon the calculation of his nativity, had foretold him ſome ſpecialities concerning his future ſtate: he anſwered in this manner, "Such, perhaps, I was "born at firſt; but, ſince that time, I have been "born again; and my ſecond nativity hath "croſt my firſt." Some will excuſe their ſin from their birth, and excuſe their wickedneſs by their natural inclination, ſaying, I am born choleric, I am born covetous, I am born amorous, or born thus and thus vicious: why, indeed the power of nature is a plauſible plea for theſe that acknowledge no power above nature; but for a profeſſed Chriſtian to excuſe his ſin from his nature, is an apology worſe than the fault; for, wherefore ſerves the power of godlineſs, but to ſubdue the power of ſin, and to govern nature? We are ſo far Chriſtians, indeed, as we have the power and government over ourſelves by the power of regenerating grace; and religion, without this, is nothing but form and ſpeculation.

4. If ſin be ſo ſtrong, then *converſion is a miracle*, an inward miracle. Outward miracles cannot convert a man, where there is no inward power accompanying them. Ten miraculous plagues could not convert Pharaoh; the thunder, and hail, and frogs, and flies, and lice, and locuſts were deſtroying the land of Egypt, but could not deſtroy Pharaoh's pride and obſtinacy; nor could all the miracles that Chriſt wrought, deſtroy the Phariſees pride and infidelity. And do we not daily ſee, from ſad experience, how the ſtrength of ſin makes men break through the thouſands of means, that might be thought would be effectual to converſion, ſuch as vows, promiſes, mercies, croſſes, ſickneſs, convictions, terrors, ſermons, warnings, challenges; yea, and break through them all into hell? It is ſome internal miracle only that will do the buſineſs; and, indeed, the ſtrength of God is in nothing more known, than in ſubduing the ſtrength of ſin, which requires *the exceeding greatneſs of his power*, Eph. i. 19.; even the *power of his power*. Hence believers are ſaid to be *ſtrong in the Lord, and in the power of his might;* that is, in the *power of his power*, the very quinteſſence of power. Was it a miracle for God to make a world out of nothing? It is yet a greater miracle for him to make a ſaint out of a ſinner, that was under the power and ſtrength of ſin. Indeed, miracles are not ceaſed, ſo long as there are any converts in the world.

5. If ſin be ſo ſtrong and powerful, then ſee the *happineſs of believers in Chriſt*, that are delivered from the ſting of death, and the ſtrength of ſin. The leaſt branch of that vine that is in Chriſt is too high for Satan's reach; yea, while there is ſap in the root, they ſhall not want it: they will not want the Spirit, that, *through the Spirit*, they may *mortify the deeds of the body*. There is a power in Chriſt, which will bring down every contrary power, and diſanul the law of ſin. Chriſt hath ſo handled that ſnake, by taking out the ſting and teeth of it, that, though it hiſs, it cannot hurt. Though ſin be not killed outright in the children of God while here, yet it is ſo maimed, and ſo weakened, that, like the proud king Adonibezek, when once his hands and his toes were mangled, and he faſt in chains, he could not endanger Iſrael in any thing; ſo neither can ſin or Satan with reſpect to the children of God: *The God of peace ſhall bruiſe Satan under their feet ſhortly*. Strong is the devil, and ſtronger is the captain of their ſalvation; great is the power of ſin, but greater is the power of Chriſt, whoſe *ſtrength will be perfected in their weakneſs*.

6. If ſin be ſtrong, then ſee to whom *ſalvation from ſin is to be aſcribed*, and in whom it is to be *ſought*, namely, Chriſt the valiant conqueror. It is ſo mighty and ſo glorious a work to defeat his ſtrength, that our glorious Lord thought it not unbeſeeming omnipotency to meddle with it: *O Iſrael, thou haſt deſtroyed thyſelf, but in me is thy help*. Our perdition is of ourſelves; but our ſalvation belongs to the Lord, and to the Lamb that ſits upon the throne. No part of the glory of this work muſt be aſcribed to any elſe: his *glory will he not give to another*. The believer's ſong, therefore, will be, as in the context, *Thanks be to God that giveth us the victory, through Jeſus Chriſt:* Not by our own righteouſneſs or our own ſtrength; nay, *In the Lord only have we righteouſneſs and ſtrength: Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, ſaith the Lord of hoſts*. And hence,

7. If the ſtrength of ſin be ſo great, then, how great is the *ſtrength of grace* that can conquer ſin! *By grace we are ſaved*, from the power of ſin, *through faith, and that not of ourſelves, it is the gift of God; not of works, leſt any man ſhould boaſt*. It is the ſin-pardoning grace, the ſin-ſubduing grace, the free mercy of God in Chriſt offered to ſinners in the goſpel, that is *mighty through God*, to the deſtroying of the power of ſin. All hearers of the goſpel that are not believers, are impenitent ſinners: and they that will venture to ſay, that it is an affront to God, to offer pardon to the impenitent, they know not what they ſay; for it is by offers of pardoning grace and mercy to impenitent hard-

hearted

hearted ſinners, that God breaks their heart, and deſtroys the ſtrength of their ſin and impenitency: *Let the wicked forſake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return to the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.* Why, what influences ſuch a ſinner to turn and repent? Even the offer of pardoning mercy: *For our God will abundantly pardon*, Iſa. lv. 7. He will *multiply to pardon.* O Sirs! when the impenitent ſinner gets an ear to hear ſuch an offer as this, that God will multiply pardons even upon one that hath multiplied tranſgreſſions, this goodneſs of God leads him to repentance, and melts his heart. If any thing in the world break the ſtrength of ſin, it will be the ſtrength of grace, and of God's love and mercy, through Chriſt, held out in the goſpel.

8. If the ſtrength of ſin be ſo great, then hence I infer, that there can be *no goſpel-repentance before faith:* No repentance, or *turning from ſin to God*, till a man come to Chriſt for *righteouſneſs and ſtrength*, againſt the ſtrength of ſin. It is another piece of the new and odd divinity of ſome in our day, that *goſpel-repentance, or ſome acts of it, are before ſaving faith:* but this doctrine of the ſtrength of ſin declares the contrary; for, when true goſpel-repentance takes place, then the ſtrength of ſin is broken, and the man is actually in arms againſt it. But where got he his armour, if he never came to Chriſt by faith for ſtrength? Repentance is a *turning to God;* but, who ever turned to God, without taking Chriſt by the way? For, *no man comes to the Father but by him.* Much hypocritical, and feigned, and legal repentance there may be without faith; but, true, actual, goſpel-repentance is always the fruit both of Chriſt's look to the ſoul, as he did to Peter, whereupon *he goes out and weeps bitterly;* and alſo of faith looking to Chriſt; *They ſhall look upon him whom they have pierced, and mourn.* And this, by the by, may ſerve to gloſs ſeveral abuſed texts of ſcripture, where repentance is firſt named before faith, which never import that true goſpel-repentance is before faith; but only, as we may firſt ſpeak of the end, and then of the means to accompliſh that end; ſo repentance may be the firſt named, which is the end, even turning to God; and then faith comes in, as the mean to that end. Thus, *Repent, and believe the goſpel,* there is the end; repent and turn to a right mind, by turning to God: Why, he muſt even come to Chriſt by *believing the goſpel,* otherwiſe he will never repent ſo as to turn unto God: thus we read of *repentance towards God*, and then *faith towards our Lord Jeſus Chriſt;* where, though *repentance towards God* be firſt named, yet *faith towards our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, without which there is no coming to God, is firſt acted. If I ſhould ſay, Go up to heaven, and climb the ladder; though going up to heaven is firſt named, yet the mean of this, though laſt named, muſt be firſt uſed; for, who will ever win up to heaven, unleſs they get up by the true Jacob's ladder, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt? In a word the ſtrength of Chriſt muſt be improved by faith, and ſet againſt the ſtrength of ſin; otherwiſe no part of its ſtrength is in the leaſt broken.

9. If the ſtrength of ſin be ſo great, then, hence I infer, that our Lord Jeſus Chriſt is the *great and eternal God*, becauſe he alone could deſtroy the ſtrength of ſin, and through him alone we can have complete victory over it. Oh! curſed Arianiſm! that would diminiſh our only ſtrength, by denying the ſupreme Deity of our Lord Jeſus. If he had not been true God, eſſentially one with the Father, as well as perſonally equal to him, when the ſtrength of ſin, and the whole power of it was laid upon him, it would have deſtroyed him. The power of ſin, which ſtrikes againſt an infinite Majeſty, brought the power of infinite vengeance upon him, which would have ruined him to eternity, if he had not been God; but, becauſe he was the infinite and eternal God, he was able, by his death in the fleſh, to *condemn ſin in the fleſh*, Rom. viii. 3.; and ſo to deſtroy the ſtrength of ſin. And hence,

10. If the ſtrength of ſin be ſo great, ſee the *duty of poor ſinners*, that are captives to the power of ſin, *viz.* to look to him who is the *ſtrength of Iſrael*, that they may be ſaved from the *ſtrength of ſin;* Iſa. xlv. 22. *Look to me, and be ſaved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none elſe.* None elſe can ſave from the ſtrength of ſin: ſet the ſtrength of angels againſt it, it will be too hard for them; the ſtrength of means and ordinances, the ſtrength of miniſters and ſermons, the ſtrength of duties and prayers will not do of themſelves. I have already ſhewed that ſin is ſtronger than all theſe? but here is a ſtrength that is able to ſave to the uttermoſt from it, even the ſtrength of Chriſt; therefore, *Let him take hold of my ſtrength*, Iſa. xxvi. 3. But, ſay you, why deſire you one, that is under the ſtrength of ſin, to lay hold on the ſtrength of Chriſt? The ſtrength of ſin weakens me, ſo that I have no ability to lay on his ſtrength. It is true, you have no ſtrength, nor ever will have ſtrength in yourſelf, or power in your own hand, while you are in this broken ſtate; but as you are called to *lay hold on his ſtrength*, ſo you are called to go out of yourſelf, for ſtrength to lay hold on his ſtrength: if you had ſtrength in yourſelf to lay hold on him by faith, Chriſt would never be preſented to you as the *author of faith*, as well as the *object* of it. Therefore, when you are called to believe, you are not called to bring ſtrength out of yourſelf for that end, but to ſay, with your ſoul, Oh! I have neither righteouſneſs nor ſtrength; but, *ſurely in the Lord have I righteouſneſs and ſtrength.* And though it be almighty power alone that can make you ſay that with the heart, and believingly; yet, while you cannot ſay it, though God be offering Chriſt to you for your righteouſneſs and ſtrength, your are ſaying in effect, It is a lye that God ſays; I cannot believe it; he is not offering any ſuch thing to me; I cannot take it to me; I cannot truſt his word for it: and ſo, by unbelief, you make him a liar.

Oh! Sirs, caſt yourſelf on the Lord Jeſus, for ſalvation from ſin, and from all your ſins, and from the ſtrength of all your luſts; for he is freely offering himſelf and all his grace to you ſaying, *Ho, every one that thirſteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea, come buy wine and milk, without money and without price.* Why, what means this, *Ho, every one?* Why it is even as Chriſt ſhould ſay, *Ho*, every guilty perſon, come to me for pardon; *Ho*, every filthy ſinner, come to me for cleanſing; my blood only cleanſes from all ſin; *Ho*, every naked ſinner, come to me for a robe of righteouſneſs to cover you; *Ho*, every needy ſinner, come to me for ſupply out of my infi-

nite fulneſs; *Ho*, every faithleſs unbelieving ſinner, come to me, *as the author of faith*, that I may give you faith, and help your unbelief, and then increaſe your faith; *Ho*, every impenitent ſinner, hard-hearted ſinner, come to me, as to a *Prince exalted, by the right-hand of God, to give repentance*, and to give you the *heart of fleſh* promiſed in the covenant; *Ho*, every great ſinner, come to me for the great ſalvation from your great ſins, and from God's great wrath; *Ho*, every graceleſs ſinner, come to me for grace and glory, and eternal life. Why will you *not come to me, that you might have life?* To come to Chriſt for life, ſuppoſes death; and, how can the dead come to him for life? Why, it is his call, who is the *Lord of life*, and can make the *dead to hear and live*; therefore, *Ho*, every powerleſs ſinner, in whom the ſtrength of ſin and luſts is ſtronger than hell and the devil, come to me for ſtrength, and look to me for ſtrength; *for I am God, and there is none elſe.* None elſe but the mighty God can ſave from the might of ſin, which, if he ſave you not, is mighty to defile you, and mighty to deſtroy you. But, what is the Mediator's name? His name is *Wonderful, Counſellor, the mighty God;* and never did he appear more mighty than in deſtroying mighty luſts, and ſubduing the ſtrength of ſin: all the ſtrength of men and angels could have done no more againſt ſin, or the wrath of God that it brought on, than if you ſhould ſet a piece of paper againſt a mighty flame. Such is the wrong that ſin hath done to God, that all the created power of heaven and earth coming in betwixt God and man, to ſatisfy for that wrong, had been but like a piece of dry, thin paper betwixt you and a mighty devouring flame. But, behold, Chriſt, who undertook to remove the ſtrength of ſin, and the power of wrath that it entails, is the mighty God, the infinite God, able to expiate that infinite wrong that ſin had done to God: and as he hath diſcovered his ability, by pouring out his blood to ſave meritoriouſly; ſo he is ready to diſcover his ability, by pouring out his Spirit to ſave efficaciouſly. *Ho*, every powerleſs ſinner then, here is a powerful Saviour, ready to ſave you freely, *without money and without price;* having no merit but only this, that you merit hell and damnation: having no power but this, that you are under the power and ſtrength of ſin. If you could merit any good, you would have no need of Chriſt to ſave you by price; if you had power to help yourſelf, you would have no need of Chriſt as a Saviour to ſave you by power: and, therefore, it is even becauſe you have no merit, no power, no grace, no good, that this all-ſufficient Saviour is offered to you, and boding himſelf upon you ſo freely.

If the ſtrength of ſin could be broken any other way, the ſtrength of a Saviour would not be thus freely offered by the great God unto you: God would not expoſe his great eternal Son to contempt, by offering him thus to poor ſinners, if they could be ſaved without him. But, though you have contemned him all your days, to your own ſhame, in deſpiſing your own mercy; yet now again he is offering himſelf anew to you, as fully and freely as ever: and think not the leſs of ſin, that ſalvation from it is ſo freely offered to you, and ſo freely boded upon you by this goſpel; for, I declare to you, in the Lord's name, that this free diſpenſation of the grace of God to you, is a greater buſineſs, and more momentous, than the tongues of men and angels can expreſs: for God to come and offer his Chriſt, and for Chriſt to come and offer himſelf, to ſave you from the ſtrength of ſin, is more than if he ſhould offer you ten thouſand worlds.

There is more of the glory of God in one word of the goſpel, in one line, one ſentence of the goſpel, than in all heaven and earth beſide; more of God's glory ſhines in this goſpel of grace, wherein he freely offers his pardoning and purifying grace, to take away the guilt, and filth, and power of ſin; more of his glory ſhines here, than ſhines in the making of heaven and earth: for, here the great Counſel of God, working from all eternity, is diſplayed. In the work of creation he opens his hand, as it were; but in this goſpel-diſpenſation he is opening his heart, and diſcovering his deep deſign, eſpecially of redeeming love through Chriſt, to the glory of all his perfections, in deſtroying ſin and ſaving the ſinner.

Think not the leſs of ſin then, that ſalvation from it is offered ſo freely, and at ſuch an eaſy rate: for as you cannot have it at all, unleſs you have it freely, conſidering your loſt, doleful, and deſtitute circumſtances; ſo the thing offered to you is moſt becoming to infinite Majeſty to offer, and moſt declarative of the infinite evil of ſin. For the things offered amount to no leſs than an infinite price to ſave from the guilt of ſin, and infinite power to ſave from the ſtrength of ſin: for, Chriſt, in all his fulneſs of merit and Spirit, is laid to your hand. And therefore, lay your hand to your heart, and ſee if it be panting after, and welcoming a Saviour or not, and cloſing with him for *righteouſneſs and ſtrength.* Say not, the ſtrength of ſin is great, the ſtrength of enmity, the ſtrength of unbelief, the ſtrength of other ſins ſtand in the way; for the ſtrength of ſin is the very reaſon for which Chriſt is offered to you, and the very thing which he is offering to take away by his almighty ſtrength. What, ſay you, can he not do it without me? Yea, but he will not do it without your conſent: it is his ſtated method of ſaving; he does not ſave any againſt their wills, but by making them willing, and gaining their conſent. And, what is the meaning of this free offer, but to gain your full conſent?

Well then, O ſinner, is it come to this with it, *What wilt thou that he ſhould do unto thee?* Wilt thou have him to pull down the ſtrength of ſin, and of all your luſts and idols? Is your heart ſaying, O welcome, Jeſus, to ſave me a poor ſinner, not only from the guilt of ſin, by thy pardoning grace; but from the ſtrength of ſin, by thy ſanctifying grace? Why then, there were ground to conclude the work of power is begun: *Thy people ſhall be willing in the day of thy power.* If you have no manner of will that Chriſt ſhould ſave you from the ſtrength of ſin, alas! then, who is to blame that you die in your ſin, and periſh under the power of it?

But, perhaps the caſe of ſome one perſon or other may be this, Alas! I not only feel the ſtrength of ſin that you have been ſpeaking of, but alſo a ſtrength of unwilline ſs to be ſaved from it; and if I were made willing, and ſo and ſo diſpoſed, I might be welcome: but while it is not ſo, is there any hope for me?

I anſwer, 1. This ſtrong Redeemer is offered to all the hearers of the goſpel without an *if*.

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The covenant of works is a covenant of *ifs*; *if* you do, you ſhall live; *if* you be ſo and ſo qualified, you ſhall be ſo and ſo bleſſed: but it is not ſo in the abſolute promiſe of the covenant of grace. And as the promiſe of the covenant is without an *if*; ſo the offer of the goſpel is without an *if*, to whoſoever will, whoſoever pleaſes. It is true, he only that believes ſhall be ſaved: but as they are different queſtions, Who they are that ſhall be ſaved? and, Who they are to whom ſalvation is offered? So, ſeeing ſalvation is of faith, that it may be by *grace*, the meaning of theſe words, *He that believes ſhall be ſaved*, is, He that will have ſalvation freely by grace, and without any *if*, he may have it.

2. If you *feel* the ſtrength of ſin, I hope the ſtrength of a Saviour will be the more welcome to you; and if the ſtrength of *unwillingneſs* to be ſaved be your plague, the healer is at hand, the ſtrength of a ſtrong and mighty Redeemer is at hand, in the offer and promiſe, ſaying, *He gives power to the faint, to him that hath no might he increaſeth ſtrength.* Let Chriſt therefore get the glory of conquering your will: put your unwilling will into his able hand, ſaying, Lord, make me willing; O ſubdue the rebellion and reſiſtance of my will, and ſubject my will to thy will. They that are willing to have Chriſt, bending and bowing their will, are both convinced of their natural enmity, and partly cured of it. However, whether your willingneſs to part with ſin, and join with Chriſt, be cured or not; whether you be willing or unwilling, the offer of Chriſt is come to your door, inſomuch, that you are invited freely to come to him. Chriſt's complaint is, *You will not come to me, that you might have life*; which ſays, that though they were unwilling to come, yet they were invited to come. The goſpel-invitation then is to all poor ſinners to come, be who they will, and be the ſtrength of ſin that they are under never ſo great, that the Son may make them free, and then ſhall they be free indeed.

But if this call be ſlighted, I have this to tell you, that the ſtrength of ſin never exerted itſelf ſo much in all the ſins that ever you committed to this day, as it does in rejecting a Saviour. Ye may think, if ſin ſhould excite you to murder, and adultery, and blaſphemy, and other horrid things of that ſort, then the ſtrength of ſin would be great: very true, ſo it would; but I muſt tell you, whether you think it or not, that there is a thouſand times more of the ſtrength of ſin put forth in your ſlighting of Chriſt and his offered ſalvation, than is put forth in all the horrid villanies beſides that can be committed: for, as all your ſins would loſe their ſtrength by your laying hold on Chriſt for righteouſneſs and ſtrength, ſo your refuſing Chriſt to be your ſtrength, is the ſin that is the ſtrength of all your other ſins; they have ſtrength to command you, and ſtrength to condemn you, becauſe of your unbelief, which ſtrengthens every ſin; yea, and is the very ſtrength of the ſtrength of ſin; all your departures from the living God flow from the *evil heart of unbelief*, Heb. iii. 12. The faith of the goſpel would be the death of ſin, but unbelief keeps you under the law, which is the ſtrength of ſin.

Perhaps, ſome may ſay, Though Chriſt be offered to me for *righteouſneſs and ſtrength*, and I am called to believe in him with application, as the *Lord my ſtrength*; yet how ſhall I believe thus in him for ſtrength, unleſs I *feel* his ſtrength?

Why, man, to *feel* his ſtrength, is *ſenſe* and not *faith*, and imports the preſence of the thing believed, and the enjoyment of the thing promiſed: but there is a vaſt difference betwixt believing the promiſe, and enjoying the thing promiſed: to believe the promiſe of ſtrength in the Lord Jeſus, is to take his word, even when you want the thing promiſed, or want the feeling of it; for, *faith is the evidence of things not ſeen*, nor felt; for, if they were ſeen and felt, they would not be the object of faith, but the object of ſenſe. Faith's proper object is nothing elſe but the word of the God of truth.

Why, ſay you, but can I believe that Chriſt will be my ſtrength, without getting ſtrength to believe?

I *anſwer*, Strength to believe is one thing, and to believe in Chriſt for ſtrength is another; ſtrength to believe, is God's enabling one to the act of faith; but to believe for ſtrength is faith's acting upon Chriſt the object held up in the word of promiſe. And again, though none can believe, without getting ſtrength to believe; yet it is one thing to get ſtrength to believe, and another thing to get the feeling of that ſtrength; for, though faith cannot be acted without the feeling of that power and ſtrength of God within the man: yea, ſo far is the believer many times from feeling any ſtrength within him when he believes, that he feels nothing but want and weakneſs, utter inability and impotency; which makes him go out of himſelf, and look to the ſtrength of Chriſt that lies in the goſpel-offer and promiſe. Nay, the very language of faith ſuppoſes, that the man hath no feeling of ſtrength in himſelf, but believes his ſtrength to be in the Lord. Faith is not acted in the ſenſe of ſtrength, but in the ſenſe of weakneſs, ſaying, *In the Lord only have I righteouſneſs and ſtrength.*

But, ſay you, If I felt the ſtrength of ſin *broken*, then I might believe in him as my ſtrength, and take him for ſuch; but, how can I believe in him as my ſtrength, and perſuade myſelf that he is ſo, according to the offer and promiſe of the goſpel, when I find the ſtrength of ſin ſtill remaining?

ANSW. 1. The *work of God*, in breaking the ſtrength of ſin, and the *feeling* of that work, is the fruit of faith; and the reaſon why you do not feel that work of God, is becauſe you do not believe his word: *If you would believe, you ſhould ſee the glory of God.*

2. The *word of God*, wherein he offers and promiſes to be your ſtrength, is the ground of faith, upon which alone the perſuaſion of faith is to be founded. Beware of confounding the ground and foundation of faith, with the fruits, marks, and effects of it. The ſenſible decay of the ſtrength of ſin, is a mark, a fruit, and effect of faith, and might yield a perſuaſion of ſenſe: but God's word alone is the ground and object of faith; and to build the perſuaſion of faith upon it, is the very means of producing all theſe fruits of faith that are the objects of ſpiritual ſenſe. To ſay, therefore, that you cannot believe in Chriſt as your ſtrength, till you feel the ſtrength of ſin once broken, is the ſame as if one ſhould ſay, I cannot lay the foundation, till once I ſee the houſe is built;

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I will not come to the phyſician, till once I ſee the diſeaſe healed. Nay, if you ſaw the houſe well built, what need would there be of laying the foundation? If you ſaw your plagues healed, what need would there be of coming to the phyſician? If you felt the ſtrength of ſin removed, what need would there be of employing Chriſt for ſtrength? Nay, the very feeling of the ſtrength of ſin, which you make the reaſon why you cannot believe, is the very reaſon why you ſhould believe, and lay ſtreſs upon the divine teſtimony concerning Chriſt, with particular application of him to you as your ſtrength.

My friends, Chriſt puts himſelf in a promiſe for your uſe; he puts his righteouſneſs in the promiſe, his ſtrength in the promiſe, his grace in the promiſe, and Chriſt hath put himſelf there, that faith may ſeek him there: therefore, *ſeek the Lord and his ſtrength*; otherwiſe the ſtrength of ſin will be your death. There are but two ways wherein it can be ſuppoſed the ſtrength of ſin may be broken or removed; either by the law, or by the goſpel. As to the law as a broken covenant, it may well diſcover ſin and condemn it; and you for it; but it is ſo far from giving ſtrength againſt it, that ſin gathers ſtrength from it, *The ſtrength of ſin is the law*; which is the ſubject I purpoſe to treat of in the next doctrine. Therefore, it is only in the goſpel, and the promiſe thereof, that ſtrength is to be found; and the ſtrength that is in the promiſe, is the ſtrength of Chriſt, *in whom all the promiſes are Yea and Amen*: and hence, when you quit the promiſe by unbelief, you quit the ſtrength of Chriſt; when you rely on the promiſe by faith, you rely on the ſtrength of Chriſt: curſed unbelief, then, gives ſtrength to ſin; whereas faith ſets the ſtrength of Chriſt againſt it. O may this *goſpel come to you, not in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghoſt.*

Let me cloſe this purpoſe with a word to you that are *believers*, and have fled for refuge from the ſtrength of ſin, to the ſtrength of a Saviour. If this hath been your courſe, I muſt tell you, though the free offer of the goſpel was your warrant to take that courſe, yet the great power of God was the thing that determined and enabled you thereunto: therefore, bleſs him that gave you counſel; for now the ſtrength of ſin is broken.

Alas! may one ſay, that hath fled to Chriſt for ſtrength, if the ſtrength of ſin be broken in all that have fled to Chriſt, then I think, I am a ſtranger to him; for I feel the ſtrength of ſin more than ever.

ANSW. Sin is not always ſtrongeſt, when the ſtrength of it is moſt felt. The world, that are under the power and dominion of ſin, have no ſenſe or feeling of the power of it, becauſe it is their element: even as a man that is in the water, feels not the weight of it, becauſe he is in the element of it; but, bring him out of the water, and put a tub full of water on his head, he will then find the ſtrength and weight of it, becauſe he is not within its element. The wicked world feel not the ſtrength of ſin, becauſe they are under the power of it, and within the very element of ſin's ſtrength: but, believer, thy beginning to feel the ſtrength of ſin, ſays, thou art getting out from under the power of it; yea, the prevailing power of ſin may ſometime take place, where the killing and domineering power of it is broken: *Iniquity prevails againſt me*, may the believer ſay: and, yet *ſin ſhall not have dominion over him; for, he is not under the law, but under grace.* But though the ſtrength of ſin be broken in you, believer; yet even the broken ſtrength of ſin may be ſo great, as to break your heart, and break your back, and break your peace, and break your confidence and courage: therefore, as you have begun to flee to Chriſt for refuge from the ſtrength of ſin, ſo you muſt hold on; living by faith on him as your ſtrength, and that in the courſe of all his appointed means, ſuch as reading, hearing, meditating, watching, and praying, and guarding againſt all the motions of that ſtrong enemy; and particularly againſt the firſt motions of ſin, and the firſt beginnings of it: great evils ariſe out of ſmall beginnings; one ſpoonful of water will quench that fire, which afterwards whole buckets cannot abate. Therefore reſiſt the beginnings of ſin, as you would reſiſt the devil. When it does not ſeem to be ſhewing all its ſtrength, that which ſin aims at, even in its weakeſt aſſaults at firſt, is to put forth its utmoſt ſtrength: *Watch, therefore, and pray, that ye enter not into temptation:* and let not down your watch; for if you watch one half hour, and think you may ſleep ſafely the other half, *the Philiſtines will be upon you, Samſon.* Whenever you begin to ſleep in ſecurity, ſin will waken upon you in its ſtrength and fury, though it were upon the back of a ſaving manifeſtation: yea, if you have been upon the mount with God, even upon the top of the mount; Satan, if he can, will throw you down from the pinacle of the temple: therefore, keep near to your Lord, your ſtrength. And, whatever means you uſe, beware of going back to your old huſband the law; for, as I deſign to ſhow in the following doctrine, the law, inſtead of helping you, will hurt you. If you wind up a clue of legal performances, expecting to overcome ſin that way, you will find it vain labour, and that you muſt wind it off again, and begin upon a new bottom, namely, Chriſt, the Lord your righteouſneſs and ſtrength. To work hard in the duties of religion, without faith in Chriſt, as your righteouſneſs, for acceptance; and ſtrength, for aſſiſtance, is as vain labour, as for a weaver to throw the ſhuttle from one ſide of the web to the other, without a threed in the ſhuttle. Why, let him work never ſo hard with feet and hands, it is loſt labour, he will never make out his web that way; yea, he but waſtes his ſtrength in doing nothing. Therefore, being *divorced from the law*, as a covenant of works, and condition of life, and *married unto Chriſt*, live upon your new Huſband Jeſus Chriſt, and live near him by faith, that you may *bring forth fruit unto God.* The more you live under grace, the more free will you be from the ſtrength of ſin; but the more you live under the law, the more will you be under the dominion of ſin: for, *the ſtrength of ſin is the law* *.

THAT ſin hath a great ſtrength, will be denied by none, but ſuch as are wholly under the power of it, and have utterly loſt the underſtanding of their own miſerable condition. There are two arms of ſin, by which it puts forth and exerts its power, and by which it attains to its unlawful dominion; the one is

* This is the concluſion of what was delivered at Kinglaſſy. The next two diſcourſes following were delivered at Orwel. The firſt two paragraphs are introductory.

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fraud, and the other is *force:* the *fraud* of it is so great, that it is dreadful above all things; and the *force* of it is so violent, that, like a mighty torrent, it carries down all before it, with respect to which it is promised, Psal. lxxii. 15. concerning our Lord Jesus Christ, in behalf of the poor and needy that cry to him, *He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence;* and how he redeems them from the strength of sin, when it takes and holds them with these powerful arms, is here discovered in this triumphant song, *O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?* When a powerful enemy is to be subdued, the great and leading inquiry is, where the strength of the enemy lies, that so it may be attacked in its principal strength: but, if the ignorant world, that are strangers to the grace of God revealed in the gospel, should be examined and asked, Where does the strength of sin ly? They would never answer it as our apostle does here; yea, it would be a hard question, a difficult catechism to the most part of gospel-professors, especially such as are under the powerful influence of a legal spirit. It cannot but be a mystery to their understanding, to hear, that the strength of sin is the law. If the apostle Paul had been living and preaching in our day, it is likely, upon his delivering such doctrine as this, he had been taxed as a ring-leader of Antinomians and enemies to the law: and it is plain from his epistle, he did not escape this reproach, which therefore we find him wiping off, Rom. iii. 31. *Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid; yea, we establish the law.* Why, but is it possible to *establish the law*, and yet assert, that the *strength of sin is the law?* How can this be? Yea, it may be asserted in a consistency both with the honour of the law, and with a casting the greatest contempt upon sin: and therefore it is an essay to open this mystery, that, through grace, I would endeavour at this time, namely, *that the strength of sin is the law.*

After a communion-solemnity the battle is to be expected; for even in the banquetting-house, the banner of love supposes a battle at hand; yea, a battle present, as well as a battle to come: now, the strength of the battle, to be sure, is to be against the strength of sin. Believers, that know what it is to be brought to the banquetting-house, do also know that sin is the great enemy they have to combat with: and if it be asked, on the one hand, Where the believer's strength lies? Surely it lies in the Lord Jesus, his righteousness and strength, and in the banner of love and grace that he spreads over his people, who are not under the law, but under grace. And, since the apostle sets the law and grace in opposition to one another, and since the love and grace of God in Christ, is the banner and strength of the believer, it is no wonder if it be asked, on the other hand, Where the strength of sin lies? Then the apostle answers it in this manner, saying, *The strength of sin is the law.* Hence Christ and the law are the two main strengths here opposed: *The strength of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, that giveth us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord.* Surely there is a greater mystery in sin than the world can imagine, particularly in that it could, in a manner, get the law of God upon its side, and set the law and the Law-giver at variance, insomuch, that the main battle stands betwixt them, as being the two great contending parties and opposing powers; for, as the strength of the believer is Christ's, so the strength of sin is the law. * * *

Having elsewhere finished the first doctrine, I laid down from these words; I come now to the second doctrine proposed which was,

DOCT. *That the law of works is the strength of sin to the sinner that hath violate and broken it.*

The method I propose is, after proving that the law is the strength of sin,

I. To enquire what *law* is the strength of sin.
II. What *strength* it is that sin hath from the law.
III. What *sin* the law is the strength of.
IV. *How* and in what *respect* the law is the strength of sin.
V. *Whence* it is that the law is the strength of sin.
VI. Make *application* of the whole in several *uses.*

I am first to prove that the *law* is the *strength of sin.* You may see a clustre of proofs for it, Rom. vii. 5,—9. compared with Rom. vi. 14.; where you see, that the reason of man's being under the *dominion of sin,* is his being *under the law;* which plainly proves, that the *strength of sin is the law:* But it is needless to insist in proving what is expresly asserted in the sacred text.

I. The first question I proposed was, *What* LAW *is it that here is said to be the strength of sin?* For understanding this, you would consider, that the law is taken two ways;

1. More *largely,* for the *whole revelation* of the will and mind of God in the word; *To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this, it is because they have no light in them,* Isa. viii. 20. It is not in this sense that you are to understand the law here; for thus the law is not the strength of sin, but is rather the means of light, life, and strength against sin, Psal. cxix. 1, 2, 3, &c. For, in this respect, it contains not only precepts to obey, but also promises of strength; and the whole covenant of promise, which is the mean of conveying spiritual life and strength. Now, in this sense, it is not opposed to the gospel of the grace of God, but contains the gospel in it; and therefore the law, under this consideration, is not here intended.

2. More *strictly,* the law is taken for the *old-covenant rule* of perfect obedience; and under this form, *Do, and live.* In this sense it is the strength of sin, as being opposite to the gospel, or to grace, which believers are said to be under; *Ye are not under the law, but under grace.* "All men besides are under the power, rule, "conditions, and authority of the law as a "covenant, says Dr. Owen; even all men who "are not instated in the new covenant through "faith in Christ Jesus, who sets up in them "and over them the rule of grace: for all "men must be, one way or other, under the "rule of God; and he rules only by the law, "or by grace: and none can be under both at "the same time."

But, for further clearing what this law is, that is here called the strength of sin, you may consider it,

(1.) In its *distinction:* it is to be viewed *formally,* as a covenant of works; and *materially,* as a rule of life. The law, *materially* considered, is

the *matter* of the covenant of works, the ſimple precept of obedience relating to the abſtaining from what is evil, and doing what is good; this is continually and eternally binding upon all rational creatures. The law, *formally* conſidered, is the *form* of the covenant of works, commanding all duties, with a promiſe of life upon our obedience; and forbidding all ſin, with a threatening of death in caſe of diſobedience. Thus it is a covenant of life or death, upon doing or not doing. In this reſpect, the believer is not under it; it is not binding upon him: he is, indeed, bound to do what is good, and ſhun what is evil, becauſe he is ſtill under the law, *materially* conſidered as a rule of life; but under no obligation to it *formally* as a covenant, as if he were to be juſtified upon his obedience, or condemned upon his diſobedience: No; he is not under the law as a covenant, to be either juſtified or condemned. But then,

(2.) Conſider it in its *parts*, namely, the *command*, and the *ſanction*: the command of it, as a covenant, is not ſimply Do, or yield obedience; for this was incumbent on man before ever there was a covenant of works made with him, the law as a rule of holineſs being written on the table of his heart in his firſt make and conſtitution, before ever God entered into covenant with him: but the command of the covenant of works was that ſame *Do*, in its connexion with the *ſanction* of the promiſe of life upon doing, and threatening of death upon not doing; *Do, and live*: if thou do not, thou ſhalt die.

(3.) Conſider it in its *properties*: it is *holy, juſt, and good*, ſays the apoſtle, Rom. vii. 12. Holy, in its command; juſt, in its threatening; and good, in its promiſe. The command of holineſs is a *holy* command, the threatening of death is a *juſt* threatening, the promiſe of life a *good* promiſe. The *holineſs* of the command, requiring perfect perſonal obedience, flows from the holineſs of God, and the purity of his nature; the *juſtice* of the threatening of eternal death againſt ſin, flows from the juſtice of God, and the demerit of ſin; the *goodneſs* of the promiſe of eternal life upon man's obedience, iſſued from the ſovereignty of God, that was pleaſed to make ſuch a promiſe, not from the merit of that perſonal and perfect obedience, though it had been performed: no creature-obedience, whether of man or angel, hath any merit of condignity; all the merit that could take place, even in a ſtate of innocence, was a merit of paction: for, though man had obeyed perfectly, he did no more than what he was bound to do, and ſo could never merit; and therefore the promiſe of life, annexed to obedience, was a *good* promiſe, ſhewing forth the ſovereign goodneſs of God. Now, before this law was violated and broken by ſin, it could never be the *ſtrength of ſin* to man in theſe circumſtances; nay, it was rather, in every part and property of it, a bulwark againſt ſin: the command was a bright glaſs wherein the beauty of holineſs ſhined; the threatening of eternal death was a flaming ſword to make ſin terrible; and the promiſe of eternal life, upon obedience, was a golden bait to made duty delectable. But now,

(4.) Conſider this law in the *violation* of it, and as it is a broken law, a violated covenant; and under this conſideration it is, that the law is the ſtrength of ſin, namely, to the ſinner that hath violated and broken it: and ſo it became the ſtrength of ſin to Adam upon his fall, and to all his poſterity, for failing in the obedience and righteouſneſs therein required. We have forfeited the life therein promiſed, and incurred the death therein threatened; *By one man ſin entered into the world, and death by ſin; and ſo death paſſed upon all men, for that all have ſinned*, Rom. v. 12. And thus the life of God in man being loſt, through his being alienated from it, the life and ſtrength of ſin muſt ſucceed. The *law* then, that is the *ſtrength of ſin*, is the *law of works*, violated by the ſinner. It could not be the ſtrength of ſin to the keeper; but it is ſo to the breaker of it. To the perfect keeper of it, it is life; but to the leaſt breaker of it, it is death: and if the law be death to the breaker, it muſt be, of conſequence, the ſting and ſtrength of ſin, according to our apoſtle here, *The ſting of death is ſin, and the ſtrength of ſin is the law*. Now, the *ſting* and the *ſtrength of ſin* is much the ſame, even as the ſtrength of the bee lies in the ſting of it; and therefore the ſtrength of ſin muſt be the law, which, to the leaſt breaker of it, is death. The perfect keeper of the law is ſafe, if ſuch an one could be found; for it ſays, *The man that does theſe things, ſhall live by them*, Rom. x. 5. And this ſafety and life flows from the promiſſory ſanction of it, *Do, and live*. But every breaker of the law is a dead man; the law that he breaks is his death; for it ſays, *Curſed is every one that continueth not in all things, written in the book of the law, to do them*, Gal. iii. 10.; or, the man that does not theſe things, ſhall die in and by his ſin and diſobedience: and this death iſſues from the minatory ſanction of the law; *If thou do not, thou ſhalt die*. The ſtrength of ſin then, is that violated law, that made *death the wages of ſin*, by the penal ſanction of it. But more of this afterward.

II. The *ſecond* thing promiſed here was, To ſhew what *ſtrength* it is that ſin hath from the law. In general, all the ſtrength it hath is from that *violated law of works*; it would have no ſtrength to enſlave us, no ſtrength to ruin us, if there were no law violated thereby; Rom. iv. 15. *Where no law is, there is no tranſgreſſion*, no ſin: and where no ſin is, there is no ſtrength of ſin; conſequently, where a broken law is, there is ſin and its ſtrength; and ſo the ſtrength of ſin is the broken law: thus, whatever ſtrength ſin hath, it is from the law. But more particularly, I name only a ſix-fold ſtrength that ſin hath from the violated law of works, *viz.*

1. The *commanding* ſtrength of ſin is from the law; hence ſin is ſaid to have *dominion over all* that are under the law, Rom. vi. 16. For it is there declared, that it *ſhall not have dominion over them* that are not under it: and juſt it is, that man, who would not remain under the command of God, ſhould be put under the command of ſin; yea, it follows neceſſarily, that theſe who cannot be ſubject to the law of God, muſt be ſubject to the law of ſin. Sin receives from the law a kind of title to the dominion and rule over all the breakers of it, that remain under it, and through unbelief abide out of Chriſt, the *end of the law for righteouſneſs*. How the commanding ſtrength of ſin is from the law, may appear more clearly afterwards; only, it cannot be otherwiſe, if you conſider it as

as a broken law. Where the law is not broken, the law hath the command; but where the law is broken, which is a *tranſgreſſion of the law*, there ſin hath the command. It is true, the commanding power of the law ſtill remains in point of *obligation*, inſomuch, that all that are under it are obliged to obey it upon pain of death; but the tranſgreſſor of the law is under the commanding power of ſin in point of *ſubjection*; inſomuch, if he is enſlaved to it, and willingly captivated by it: the broken law then is the ſtrength of ſin, becauſe the breaking of the command of the law neceſſarily brings a man under the command of ſin. Though he remain under the command of the law in point of original, righteous, and indiſſolvable obligation; yet he is under the command of ſin in point of ſubjection: hence the ſtrength of ſin to command, is the law as it is broken by ſin; the refuſing of ſubjection to the law of God, is a chuſing of ſubjection to the law of ſin: to break the command of God, is to give the command to ſin; and therefore the commanding ſtrength of ſin neceſſarily iſſues from the law as it is broken by ſin.

2. The *condemning* ſtrength of ſin is from the law; this is more eaſy to be underſtood, therefore I inſiſt not much upon it: ſin would have no ſtrength to condemn us, if the law did not condemn ſin, ſaying, Curſed be the breaker of it, Gal. iii. 10. Now, all men are included under ſin; therefore, all are under the curſe that remain under the law. The law hath paſt a ſentence of condemnation upon all ſinners; and this gives ſin a ſtrength to condemn. It is true, ſin hath no ſtrength to condemn a believer; *There is no condemnation to them that are in Chriſt*, becauſe the law is ſatisfied, both in the commanding and curſing part thereof, in and by their head Jeſus Chriſt; yea, they are not *under the law, but under grace*, being united to Chriſt, the *end of the law*: therefore, though the law ſtill condemn their ſin, yet it cannot condemn their perſon, nor involve a member of Chriſt under the curſe. They may be afraid of condemnation through unbelief; but they are more frighted than hurt. But as to all that are out of Chriſt, ſin hath a condemning power over them; and this it hath from the law, which not only condemns their ſin, but their perſon: the condemning ſentence lights and terminates on the ſinner, that hath no covert to ſecure him therefrom.

3. The *working* ſtrength of ſin is from the law: ſin is no idle thing in the ſinner; nay, it is a working thing; and whence its working ſtrength flows, ſee Rom. vii. 5, 8. *The motions of ſin that are by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.* Why are the motions of ſin ſaid to be from the law, and theſe motions ſaid to work in our members, but to ſhew that the working ſtrength of ſin is from the law? And how that is, the apoſtle explains, ver. 8. *For ſin, taking occaſion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiſence.* Hence,

4. The *warring* ſtrength of ſin is from the law; hence, Rom. vii. 23. it is called *the law in the members, warring againſt the law in the mind*: yea, it wars and wins both; for it conquers and captivates even the children of grace, *Leading them captive to the law of ſin and death.* This warring ſtrength of ſin iſſues out of the working ſtrength of it, for the work of it is the warfare of it; therefore, if the working ſtrength of it be from the law, ſo muſt the warring ſtrength of it be: and if it work and war in believers, how powerfully does it work and carry all before it in theſe that have no true grace, and when it meets with no oppoſition? It is true, the ſtrength of it appears moſt, where there is moſt oppoſition to it; but yet they are moſt under the ſtrength of it, to whom the ſtrength of it does leaſt appear.

5. The *wounding* ſtrength of ſin is from the law. Whence comes a *wounded ſpirit*, but from ſin? Whence come the wounded ſtrength of ſin, but from the law? *A wounded ſpirit who can bear?* Why, what makes it intolerable? Even becauſe the broken law preſents the intolerable wrath of God, the interminable wrath of God, the everlaſting wrath of God, as the native fruit of ſin: and when eternal wrath and eternal death is ſtinging and tormenting the man's conſcience, what is then a doing? Why the matter is, *The ſting of death is ſin, and the ſtrength of ſin is the law*; and that ſting is ſticking in the heart, and wounding the ſpirit. Many, indeed, are not wounded by ſin, becauſe ſin is ſleeping, and the guilty conſcience ſleeping; but, the leſs they feel of the wounding ſtrength of ſin, the more wounds are abiding them, when ſin revives and conſcience wakens.

6. The *killing* ſtrength of ſin is from the law, and the deſtroying power thereof; for *the wages of ſin is death* by the law, Rom. vi. 23.; Soul-death, as well as bodily death: and the text ſays, that as *ſin is the ſting of death*, ſo the *law is the ſtrength of ſin.* And thus the law not only hath a condemning ſtrength, that it derives unto ſin, but a damning and deſtroying ſtrength alſo; ſin could not damn the ſinner, if the law did not damn ſin, and give a damning ſtrength thereunto. All that die out of Chriſt, and under the law, will ly under the damning and deſtroying ſtrength of ſin for ever, which it derives from the law. Thus the moſt part are miſerably ſlain by ſin to eternity. There are ſome few, that are mercifully ſlain by it in time, as the apoſtle ſays, Rom. vii. 11. *For ſin, taking occaſion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it ſlew me*: it ſlew him, and put an end to his ſelf-righteous life; *I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, ſin revived, and I died*, ver. 9. This is when the Spirit of God ſhews to a man the Spirit of the law, that had ſtudied nothing before but the letter of it, and ſo kills all his hopes of life and juſtification by the deeds of the law. —— Thus you have a hint at the ſtrength that ſin derives from the law; and whatever other ſtrength it hath, is reducible to theſe particulars named.

III. The *third* thing propoſed, was, To ſhew, what *ſin* the law is the ſtrength of. In general, the law is the ſtrength of *all ſin*, whether original or actual. The apoſtle ſpeaks here of ſin in general; *The ſtrength of ſin is the law.* More particularly,

[1.] The law is the ſtrength of *original ſin*, whether imputed or inherent. *Imputed* original ſin, you know, is the guilt of Adam's firſt ſin, which is ours by imputation: *inherent* original ſin is the total want of original righteouſneſs, and the corruption of the whole nature, which we have by derivation from Adam. Now, the ſtrength of both is the law, and the ſtrength of both remains in all that are under the law, and out of Chriſt; for, while men are under

under the law, they are members of the first Adam, in whom as their *federal head*, they stand guilty of the first sin, the violation of the law, or covenant of works; and from whom, as their *natural root*, they derive the whole depravation and corruption of their nature: for, *By the offence of one, judgment came upon all men unto condemnation*; and, *By one man sin entered into the world*, Rom. v. 12, 18. The strength then of this original guilt and corruption flows from the violated law: all that are under the law, are guilty and filthy by nature, before ever they be capable of actual sin. The most innocent-like children that are born, and come of Adam, are nothing but a generation of vipers by nature; the venom of the serpent is in them.

[2.] The law is the strength of all *actual sin*: it is not only the strength of the root, but the strength of the fruit; and, indeed, being the strength of the fountain, it must be the strength of the streams. The fountain of sin is the strength of sin; and if the law be the strength of the fountain, it is the strength of the streams of sin. While a man is out of Christ, the strength of sin remains, even though it were possible that he had not been guilty of any actual sin; because the strength of original sin, both imputed and inherent, remains, while he remains under the power of a violated law. But with respect to actual sin, both inward and outward, the strength thereof is this broken law, that men remain under, while they remain in unbelief, and out of Christ. For instance,

1. The strength of *Atheism* arises from the broken law that men are under; hence, all that are without Christ, are said to be *without God*, [or, ATHEISTS,] *in the world*, Eph. ii. 12. The power of atheism is never broken, while people are under the law; because, as the broken law can give them no right notions of God, being never designed of God as the mean of the saving knowledge of God to a sinner, so it fills the sinner with wrong notions of God, who is not to be found in the law, but in the gospel. Since the violation of the law by sin, God, in a manner, is gone out of the law, and is to be found no where but in Christ and the gospel. Now, when the sinners, that are under the law, cannot apprehend God, or seek him any where but where they themselves are, namely, in the law, and under the law; and he is not there to be seen and found, no wonder that they begin to think that he is no where, and consequently to say in their heart, *There is no God*; and thus atheism is strengthened: and hence the most part of men have no clear notions of God at all, because they are under the law, where God is not present with them; or, if they who are under the law have any clear notions of God, suited to the state they are under, it is a notion of him as a *consuming fire* to the breaker of his law. But this view of God, if it be not mercifully ordered and overruled, for making a man flee to Christ for refuge, that he may not be consumed with that fire; if it be not thus mercifully overruled, I say, then it is but a root of practical atheism; for, it makes him run away from God as Adam did, and hide himself, where he atheistically dreams that God shall not see him.

2. The strength of *unbelief* arises from the broken law that men are under, and keep themselves under to their own ruin. Why do they not believe the gospel? They will not join in marriage with Christ, because they are married to the law: hence marriage to Christ, supposes a divorce from the law, Rom. vii. 4. Mens legal faith, believing God will give them life and mercy upon their own obedience, or doing so and so, is the very strength of unbelief: for gospel-faith stands upon a quite other foundation, while it is a believing life and salvation to be had by the obedience of another, even of Jesus Christ. Now, while the law of works says, Come to me for life; or, *Do and live*; and the gospel of Christ says, *You will not come to me that ye might have life*; and the sinner's ears are open only to hear what the law says; he cannot believe what the gospel says, nor can fall in with it; because the remaining power of the broken law, which he is under, hath broken his courage and confidence in coming to God upon any other footing.

3. The strength of *enmity* arises from the broken law, which is the strength of sin, and which men are naturally under. It is the strength of enmity against God and Christ both, against law and gospel both. On the one hand, while a man is under the law that is violated by him, it says, that he is not subject to the law that he is under, as it is with all that are under the law; *The carnal mind is enmity against God, and is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be*, Rom. viii. 7. He cannot be subject to the law he is under: and it is strange that men should naturally desire to be under the law as a covenant, which yet they cannot be subject to as a rule, by reason of their carnal mind and wicked nature. However, the enmity of the nature is not cured, but strengthened by the law: for, let God therein appear as a commanding God, we cannot obey him; let him appear as a threatening God, we cannot endure him; let the law thunder out vengeance, this may fill the man with slavish fear, but cannot create love; nay, it increases enmity.—On the other hand, as the carnal mind is enmity against God in the law, so the *legal* mind is enmity against Christ in the gospel, Rom. x. 3. Men being *ignorant of God's righteousness*, and *going about to establish their own righteousness, do not*, and will not, *submit unto the righteousness of God*. Hence,

4. The strength of *prejudice* against Christ arises from the broken law that men are under, and wedded naturally unto: the law of works, that they are under, can neither save them itself, nor will it suffer them to go to Christ to be saved by him. Though the law cannot save a sinner, but damns all that are under it, and remain under it; yet it points out no other way of salvation; it is the gospel does that: the law leads a sinner no where but to itself. It is true, the law is said to be a *schoolmaster to lead unto Christ*; or, as the word is, Gal. iii. 24. a SCHOOLMASTER UNTO CHRIST; or, UNTIL CHRIST COME. At the school of the law, under the convincing influence of the Spirit, men may come to see their need of a better master than the law, and so their need of Christ; but the law of itself, as it never revealed Christ, nor led to any other righteousness but that which is personal; so, as it is a covenant of works, it seeks no righteousness but the man's own personal obedience; and this being naturally impressed upon all men, they having some dim notions of life by doing, are filled with prejudice,

dice againſt life by believing in another for righteouſneſs; hence, all that are wedded to the law, are filled with prejudice againſt the goſpel, as if it were no friend to the holineſs of the law; becauſe, forſooth, it decries their rotten righteouſneſs, in order to lay another foundation on which true holineſs doth grow: but this the man under the law cannot underſtand. For,

5. The ſtrength of *pride* ariſes from the law; *Where is boaſting then? It is excluded: By what law? Of works? Nay, but by the law of faith*, Rom. iii. 27. As pride was the root of the firſt rebellion and breach of the law, while this temptation was yielded to, *You ſhall be as gods*; ſo, in the righteous judgment of God, the broken law is the root of pride. They that are under the law, are proud of that which ſhould lay their pride; proud of a trifle, proud of a nothing, proud of rags that cannot cover their nakedneſs; yea, of filthy rags that but defile him: they glory in their ſhame. Whenever a man comes in to Chriſt, he is aſhamed of that which was his glory, and counts that but loſs which he reckoned gain to him; but while he remains out of Chriſt, and under the law, he glories in that which is his ſhame. Is it not a ſhame for a man to glory in that which is but ſtinking dung? So do theſe ſecretly boaſt of, and pride themſelves in ſome poor petty duty and righteouſneſs of theirs; whereas the apoſtle calls all perſonal righteouſneſs *dung*, when compared with Chriſt's imputed righteouſneſs, Phil. iii. 8, 9. But much more, is it not a ſhame for men to glory in their ſins, as ſome do in their profane ſwearing, and drinking, and the like debauchery? Yet, even this is rooted in the violated law. For,

6. Even the ſtrength of *profaneneſs* ariſes from the broken law, that men are under and remain under by unbelief. Though profane perſons are evidently under no ſubjection to the law, yet even their profaneneſs proves that they are under bondage to it: for no man is under the bondage of ſin, and under ſubjection to it, but he that is under the bondage of the law, both in its commanding and condemning power; and though the ſenſe of their obligation to the law-command be of no force to bind them to obedience, yet the ſtrength of their ſin and diſobedience diſcovers the ſtrength of a legal temper, and the power of a covenant of works that they are under. You will think ſtrange to underſtand, that there is a ſecret boaſting of their law-righteouſneſs, even under the open contempt they are pouring upon the authority of the law; and this appears, either in their ignorant hope, on the one hand; or their fooliſh deſpair on the other.—On the one hand, their *ignorant hope*, thinking either the law will juſtify them in their preſent impiety, or upon their future amendment and penitency: hence profane men will juſtify themſelves in their curſing, and ſwearing, and drinking, though they ſwear by faith and conſcience; Why, ſay they, that is no ſwearing: and though they drink away their ſtock, or tipple away their time; yet if they have any ſenſe or reaſon left, why, ſay they, that is no drunkenneſs: and as they juſtify themſelves, ſo they hope the law will not condemn them; and ſo they expect it will juſtify them: there is part of their ignorant hope, Deut. xxix. 19.—On the other hand, *fooliſh deſpair* may be latent at the root of their profaneneſs, which alſo diſcovers how much they are wedded to the law, even when they are breaking it. Perhaps they have eſſayed ſome duties, at a certain time of their life; or, at leaſt, been conſcious of the obligation they were under to obey the law; but having little hope of ſucceſs, or coming ſpeed that way, or of gaining life by their doing, they are become deſperate: and, the more they give up themſelves to profaneneſs, the more deſperate they grow, and hopeleſs of winning life by the law, or of paying the debt they owe to it; therefore, like deſperate debtors, finding themſelves out of capacity to pay it, they take on ſtill more and more, concluding *there is no hope*, Jer. xxii. 25. and xviii. 12. Which does not at all prove that they have no manner of inclination to pay debt, but rather their ſecret willingneſs to do it if they were able, but that they have *no hope*. Such is the caſe of many profane perſons, they are deſperately taking on more and more debt to the law by their ſin, which is ſo far from proving them to be *under the law*, that as it declares them under the *curſe* of it; ſo it proves their ſecret inclination to *do* and *live*; that it is through deſperation they give up themſelves to all wickedneſs, having no hope of life that way: and the more their profaneneſs increaſes, the more their deſperation grows, whereby they take on more and more debt, being hopeleſs of ever paying it, and expecting no profit in obeying the law, Job xxi. 15. Thus there is at the bottom a ſtrength of legal pride: becauſe the man cannot win life by his doing, therefore he deſperately fights againſt that law which he hath no hope of ſatisfying, and chuſes rather to be damned in his unrighteouſneſs, than be obliged to the righteouſneſs of another.

7. The ſtrength of *hypocriſy* and *formality* ariſes from the broken and miſtaken law; hence, they that are under the law, are under this deluſion, that the law will be pleaſed with any ſervice they may give it, though it be but outſide conformity thereunto; like the Phariſees, of whoſe legal performances Chriſt ſays, *Except your righteouſneſs exceed the righteouſneſs of the ſcribes and Phariſees, you cannot be ſaved.* The legaliſt is a lover of himſelf, and his own righteouſneſs; and his ſelf-love blinds him, that he ſecretly ſuppoſes any thing that comes from him will be acceptable to the law. As the law is broken and violated, ſo it is but broken pieces of the law that he ſees, becauſe his underſtanding alſo is broken and blinded, he knows not the perfection thereof; and therefore, making to himſelf an imperfect law, he doubts not but it will be ſatisfied with his imperfect righteouſneſs: yea, he may think his righteouſneſs as perfect as the law is, ſaying, with the young man in the goſpel, *All theſe things have I done from my youth up.* Thus hypocriſy and formality iſſue from the law as it is broken and abuſed, manked and maimed by them that are under it.

8. The ſtrength of *ſecurity* ariſes from the law, as it is broken and abuſed by men: for they that are under the law, make their very obedience to it (however moral and external only it is) a handle for their ſecurity, contempt, and neglect of the law. Thus ſaid the whore in the Proverbs, chap. vii. 14. *This day have I paid my vows, and offered my peace-offering; come let us take our fill of loves.* Her duty hardened her in ſin and ſecurity: and thus many go to the

church, they go to their prayers, they go to their duty; and then they imagine, that as they have made ſufficient amends for what is paſt, ſo they have made ſufficient proviſion for preventing the bad effects of what is to come; they may now indulge themſelves in their pleaſure, ſince they ſuppoſe they have ſatisfied the Law-giver with ſome obedience. What is this but the ſtrength of *ſecurity* foſtered by the law? When men after ſuch and ſuch duties allow themſelves a latitude, they draw ſtrength to their carnal ſecurity from the law; *We ſhall have peace, though we walk after the imaginations of our hearts.* And thus it is the ſtrength of *negligence* alſo: none are readily more negligent of the duties of the law, than theſe that boaſt of the law, and of winning to heaven by their good works; whence is this, but from the law of works cutting them ſhort of ſtrength through their abuſe of it? Why, is it poſſible that men will neglect duty, and yet think to be juſtified by their duties? Yea, and why ſo? Becauſe they make their own duty a ſalve for their ſore; and as they but ſeldom find their ſores, ſo they ſeldom make application even of their own ſalve. In a word, the law of works is thus the ſtrength of all ſin.

IV. The *fourth* thing propoſed, was, To ſhow *how* and in what *reſpect* the law is the ſtrength of ſin. This is the main queſtion and the grand myſtery here to be ſolved; for, that the law is the *ſtrength of ſin*, is plain from the text, wherein the Holy Ghoſt declares it in expreſs terms; terms that we durſt never have uſed, if the Spirit of God had not uſed them before us: but how the law is the ſtrength of ſin, remains yet to be conſidered. Beſides the hints that I have given before, there are theſe *eight* following reſpects, wherein the law of works, now violated and broken, is the ſtrength of ſin, ever ſince the original breach and violation thereof.

1. The law is the ſtrength of ſin, in reſpect of the extenſive *malediction* and *curſe* of the law, whereof the power and ſtrength of ſin is a principal part, and ſo the breach of it could not but neceſſarily infer the ſtrength of ſin. Death temporal, ſpiritual, and eternal, was the penalty of the law, in caſe of the breach thereof. Now, ſpiritual death is nothing elſe but the power of ſin; and this power of ſin, or ſpiritual death, being the main breach of the law-threatening; *In the day thou eateſt thou ſhalt ſurely die*, Ezek. xviii. 4. Gal. iii. 10. Now, this is the *primary* and *radical* reſpect wherein the law is called the ſtrength of ſin; any other particular that I am to mention is rather *ſecondary* and conſequential unto this. Let this, therefore, be remembered, as the main thing, the chief reſpect wherein the law is the ſtrength of ſin, that it cannot be otherwiſe in the nature of the thing, and according to the conſtitution of the law, or covenant of works, denouncing the leading judgment of ſpiritual death upon the breaker of it. No ſooner was it broken, than mankind came under the curſe of it; and all men, by nature, being under the curſe of the law, they are by this very curſe under the power and ſtrength of ſin, becauſe the ſtrength of ſin is the main part of the curſe of the law: man's being given up to the power of ſin, is the main branch of the puniſhment of ſin, and the chief death threatened in the law. Temporal death is nothing, if you take away the ſtrength of ſin; it hath no ſting, no ſtrength to harm. Eternal death would have no being; and, as it lies in mere torment, is but the conſequential evil of ſin, and nothing to the intrinſical evil and power of it in ſpiritual death. This being the main threatening, the main curſe; to be under the curſe of the law, and under the power of ſin, is one and the ſame thing. In this reſpect then, eſpecially, the ſtrength of ſin is the law. Happy is the believer in Chriſt, that is delivered from the curſe of the law; for, *ipſo facto*, by this very mean he is delivered from the ſtrength of ſin: and ſad is your caſe, that are Chriſtleſs unbelieving ſinners, and who have never fled to Chriſt for refuge; for you, being under the curſe of the law, are neceſſarily under the power of ſin: This is the main part of your curſed ſtate, that the ſtrength of ſin is not felt, is not broken, is not weakened in you; but its commanding and condemning power both of them remain, and will remain while you are under the law, for the ſtrength of ſin is the law; and if you be not diſjoined and divorced from the law, and joined and united to Chriſt the end of the law, the ſtrength of ſin will be your death and your doom for ever. But then,

2. The law is the ſtrength of ſin, in reſpect of its *office*, to diſcover ſin, and make it known in the power and ſtrength of it; Rom. iii. 20. *By the law is the knowledge of ſin*; for, *without the law, ſin was dead*, ſays the ſame apoſtle, Rom. vii. 8. Dead, and, as it were, deſtitute of life and ſtrength, becauſe the life and power of it was hid and out of ſight: *For I was alive without the law*, ſays he, ver. 9. *Before the commandment came* with power, diſcovering the ſpirituality of the law, I was, as it were, without the law; and ſo they that are without law, are without ſin; for, *where no law is, there is no tranſgreſſion.* Without the law, then, ſin was dead; and I was alive, the life and ſtrength of ſin did not appear; and I thought, I had an innocent and holy life of it: *But when the commandment came*, ſo as by the law I got the knowledge of ſin, then the life and ſtrength of ſin appeared; ſin revived, and I died. Before the law came with convincing power, might he ſay, ſin was dead, and I was alive; but whenever the commandment came, giving me the knowledge of ſin, then ſin was alive, and I died; my carnal confidence died, my hope of life by the law died: for then I ſaw the ſtrength of ſin. Thus the law is the ſtrength of ſin, in reſpect of its diſcovering the life and ſtrength of it, which without the law is dead. Why, may one think, if ſin be dead without the law, then better want the law that gives life to it. To this we reply; The apoſtle here ſpeaks of ſin's being dead in point of the *diſcovery* thereof; and ſin's being dead in this ſenſe, and the ſtrength of it hid, is no mercy, but a miſery. It is the miſery of unconverted ſinners, that the ſtrength of it lies dead and buried, as it were, in the rotten ſepulchre of their wicked heart and corrupt nature, where, like a ſtinking carcaſe, it is putrifying the whole ſoul; while yet the ſinner, that is alſo *dead in ſins and treſpaſſes*, does not find the filthy ſmell thereof; for ſin is nothing but death and putrifaction, but the dead man does not find the filthy ſmell of death and rottenneſs about him. The life and ſtrength of ſin is juſt ſpiritual death, and ſoul-defilement; and when this death is hid and out of ſight to the ſinner,

ſinner, and unfelt by him, the ſtrength of that ſin and death is not the leſs, but the more fearful and ſtrong, that it is not ſeen and felt: therefore, as it is a mercy to get effectual conviction of ſin by the law, ſo it is a miſery to be under the power and ſtrength of ſin, and yet not to know it; for then the ſinner, that is *alive without the law*, is but living in ſin, and yet dead while he lives: the ſtrength of ſin being dead and hid to him, while without the law, which is the ſtrength of ſin, in reſpect of its office to diſcover it.

3. The law is the ſtrength of ſin, in reſpect of its *deficiency* and *weakneſs* through our fleſh to deſtroy the ſtrength of ſin; *For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the fleſh, God ſending his own Son, in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh, and for ſin condemned ſin in the fleſh*, Rom. viii. 3. The law is ſaid to be *weak through the fleſh*, or through our corrupt nature, inſomuch, that it cannot juſtify a ſinner, it cannot ſanctify, it cannot ſave: the broken law cannot give life or ſtrength to the breaker of it; there is no help to be expected there againſt the ſtrength of ſin. Its commanding, condemning, enſlaving, and ruining ſtrength being from the law, is violated by us; ſurely no help againſt the dominion and rule of ſin can come from the law: yea, the law was never ordained of God to convey grace, or ſpiritual ſtrength, to the ſoul of man: had it not been ſo, the promiſe and the goſpel had been needleſs, as the apoſtle argues, Gal. iii. 21. *If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteouſneſs ſhould have been by the law.* If it could have given life or ſtrength, then it would have produced righteouſneſs, and we ſhould have been juſtified by it. The law diſcovers ſin and condemns it, but gives no ſtrength to oppoſe it; it was never deſigned of God as his ordinance for the dethroning of ſin, nor for the deſtruction of the power of ſin. It was deſigned to declare the whole duty of man, but never had power to bar the entrance of ſin, nor to caſt out ſin, when it is once enthroned: and the broken law hath nothing to do with ſinners, but to judge, curſe, and condemn them; it neither contains any grace, nor communicates any for the deſtroying of ſin: therefore they that are under the law, are under the dominion of ſin. The law is *holy*, but it cannot make them holy that have made themſelves unholy; the law is *juſt*, but it cannot make them juſt, nor juſtify them whom it does condemn; the law is *good*, but it can do them no good that have once broken it. Sin will never be dethroned by it, and will never give place to the law, either in its title to dominion, or in its power to exert the ſame. When the law preſſes on the conſcience of theſe that are under it, perplexing or diſquieting them; or when the *commandment comes* unto them, ſo as *ſin revives*, and *they die*, as I ſaid already; that is, when the law gives power to ſin to ſlay the hope of the ſinner, and to diſtreſs him with the apprehenſion of guilt and death; when the law is thus giving power to ſin to diſquiet and condemn ſinners, then, being preſt with a ſenſe of the guilt of ſin, and deprived of all reſt and peace in their minds, they will reſolve to caſt off the yoke of ſin, and endeavour it in ſome inſtances of duty, and abſtinence from ſin. But, alas! the law cannot enable them hereunto; it cannot give them life and ſtrength to go through with what their convictions preſs them unto; and hence they faint after a while, and grow weary, and at length give quite over, if grace come not in with that aid that the law cannot give.

4. The law is the ſtrength of ſin, not only in reſpect of its deficiency, for giving ſtrength againſt ſin; but in reſpect of its *efficiency*, in giving ſtrength to ſin through the corruption of our nature. As the *law is weak through the fleſh*, and affords no ſtrength againſt ſin; ſo it is ſtrong through the fleſh, for increaſing the ſtrength of ſin. In the former it is *deficient*, in this latter it is *efficient* through the fleſh; hence it is ſaid, Rom. iv. 15. *The law worketh wrath*; that is, not only wrath in God againſt the ſinner, that breaks the law; but alſo wrath in the ſinner againſt God, and enmity againſt him; and both theſe go together. If the law work wrath in God againſt the ſinner, the revelation of this wrath works wrath and enmity in the ſinner againſt God. It is only the love and grace of God, revealed in the goſpel, that works love; *We love him, becauſe he firſt loved us*, 1 John iv. 19. Now, the law makes no revelation of the love, but only of the wrath of God; and therefore the law, as it is the revelation of wrath, worketh wrath. Try it when you will, you will find that it is only the revelation of God's love that worketh love; and that is the revelation of him in the goſpel, as a gracious God, a promiſing God, a pitying, and ſin-pardoning God, a reconciled God in Chriſt, this works love: but God, as revealed in the broken law is merely a commanding God, a threatening God, a judging and avenging God, a terrible God, a conſuming fire to ſinners; and this works wrath and enmity. Now, love being the *fulfilling of the law*, and the ſum thereof; enmity is the ſum of all ſin: therefore, while the law works wrath and enmity, it is the ſtrength of ſin. The goſpel works love, the law works enmity: and as the faith of the goſpel works by love; ſo legal faith, or rather unbelief, works by enmity: and as the law works wrath and enmity, ſo it works fear and bondage; ſlaviſh fear, and dreadful bondage, which is attended with diſorder, diſturbance, and deſpair.

5. The law is the ſtrength of ſin, in reſpect of its *oppoſition* to the goſpel, wherein grace and ſtrength alone is exhibited for the deſtruction of ſin. *The law is not of faith*, Gal. iii. 12.—The *law* and *grace* are ſet in oppoſition to one another, in many places, as Rom. xi. 6. *If by grace, then it is no more of work, otherwiſe grace is no more grace; but if it be of work, then it is no more grace, otherwiſe work is no more work.* The command of the law, as a covenant of works, *Do and live*, ſtands directly oppoſite to the call of the goſpel, which is to lay hold on eternal life upon the doing of another: the threatening of the law, and the promiſe of it alſo, ſtand directly oppoſite to the profer and promiſe of the goſpel; the threatening of the law is a threatening of death to the ſinner for his diſobedience; the promiſe of the goſpel is a promiſe of life to the ſinner through the obedience of the SURETY: the promiſe of the law was a promiſe of life to him that works for it, and works perfectly; the promiſe of the goſpel is a promiſe of life to him that *works not, but believes on him that juſtifieth the ungodly*, Rom. iv. 4, 5. The conditional promiſe of the law, whereof the condition is no leſs than perfect, perſonal

perſonal obedience, is directly oppoſite to the free and abſolute promiſe of the goſpel, and the freedom of the grace thereof, which is to be had *without money and without price*.—The *righteouſneſs of the law*, and the *righteouſneſs of the goſpel*, ſtand alſo directly oppoſite: the righteouſneſs of the *law* is only for the perfect man, that never ſinned; the righteouſneſs of the *goſpel* is for a ſinner, a ſinner overwhelmed with ſin: the righteouſneſs of the law is the righteouſneſs of man, and the righteouſneſs of the goſpel is the righteouſneſs of God; it is a righteouſneſs of another, and in another than ourſelves: it is a righteouſneſs imputed *without works*, to a ſinner *believing in Chriſt*, Rom. iii. 21, 22. The ſtrength of the law for obedience, was the natural ſtrength that God gave to Adam at firſt; it was home-bred, and yet but ſtrength only in the ſtream, which is dried up, ſo as *by nature we are without ſtrength*; and ſin hath the poſſeſſion of all the ſtrength of nature: but the ſtrength of the goſpel is a borrowed ſtrength, as well as the righteouſneſs a borrowed righteouſneſs, ſaying, *In the Lord have I righteouſneſs and ſtrength*; and ſo it is the ſtrength of the fountain, that can never be dried up. The law requires all to be done in our own ſtrength; the goſpel expects nothing to be done but in the ſtrength of another: the law gives no ground of claim for life, but by debt to the doer; the goſpel gives to claim for it, but by grace to the ſinner. Now, there can be nothing more oppoſite than law and goſpel; and therefore, in reſpect of the oppoſition of the law to the goſpel of the grace of God, it may be called the *ſtrength of ſin*, ſince it oppoſes that which alone can deſtroy that ſtrength.

6. The law is the ſtrength of ſin, in reſpect of its *agreement* with the natural impreſſion that it hath left upon the heart of the children of men; and by reaſon of which they ſtand out againſt Chriſt, in and by whom alone the ſtrength of ſin is broken: I called it an *agreement*, becauſe the law, though it will never accept of any work that a ſinner can do, yet it requires the ſinner to do whatever it required at the firſt, and that under the pain of eternal death, which he hath already incurred by ſin; and under the pain of forfeiture of eternal life, which he hath already forfeit by his failure; for the law hath not loſt its authority to command, though we have loſt ability to obey. Now, the natural impreſſions that the law hath left upon the children of men, are agreeable to the original conſtitution of the law, or covenant of works. The law was the firſt liquor poured into the veſſel of man's nature, and the veſſel ſmells of that liquor that was firſt put into it; hence it is ſo natural for all men to expect life no other way but in a way of doing for it. And theſe legal impreſſions, left on our nature by the law, are the ſtrength of ſin in manifold reſpects, eſpecially in their agreement with the law to oppoſe Chriſt in the goſpel: hence the legal mind oppoſes Chriſt as a *Prophet*, as it is ignorant of God's righteouſneſs, and averſe from being taught this leſſon, taking up God as ſtill dealing with it in the old-covenant way. The legal conſcience oppoſes Chriſt as a *Prieſt*; for, whenever it is awakened, it knows nothing of ſeeking peace by the blood of Chriſt, but natively looks to the law, and its own obedience for it, ſaying, O ſince I have diſpleaſed God by my diſobedience, how ſhall I pleaſe him but by my obedience? If I have offended him by my ſin, how ſhall I pacify him but by my duty? It is as natural for conſcience thus to act and ſpeak when it is preſſed, as it is natural for man to breathe in the air, or for a fiſh to ſwim in the water: hence the natural conſcience, inſtead of leading men to Chriſt, in whom alone God is well-pleaſed and ſatisfied, it leads them to the law, and ſo the quite oppoſite way to Chriſt. The legal will alſo oppoſes Chriſt as a *King*; for, when he is rejected as a Prieſt, he cannot be received as a King: for his ſpiritual kingdom is founded upon his Prieſthood, inſomuch, that they who receive him not for righteouſneſs, cannot receive him for ſtrength; and conſequently the ſtrength of ſin, both to condemn and command, remains. In a word, the will is unwilling to be ſaved in this way of grace, and the natural man cannot receive theſe things of the Spirit of God and the goſpel; men's legal notions and imaginations exalt themſelves againſt the knowledge of Chriſt, 2 Cor. x. 4, 5. And they are ſo high and mighty, that nothing can pull them down but the power of omnipotency; the weapons that are *mighty through God to the pulling down of ſtrong holds, caſting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itſelf againſt the knowledge of God*.—Again, theſe legal impreſſions left by the law, have a *weakening* influence upon the graces of the Spirit, where they are implanted; for the implantation of grace does not wholly root out the impreſſion of the law in time, ſuch a deep rooting it hath in our nature. Theſe weeds of legal impreſſions, that grow up in the garden of the heart, draw away the ſap and ſtrength of the fruits of the Spirit, and weaken them. They either hinder or weaken faith, *For the law it not of faith*; it oppoſes both the *doctrine* of faith, and the *grace* of faith: it hinders and weakens *repentance*; for goſpel-repentance iſſues from that faith which the law oppoſes: it hinders and weakens *love*; for the man cannot love that God, whom, by the law, he apprehends to be an enemy: and hence it hinders and oppoſes *joy* in the Lord; for the legal ſpirit is a ſpirit of heavineſs, in oppoſition to joy; and ſo it eats out the man's ſtrength, for *the joy of the Lord is our ſtrength*: and conſequently, when thus the law weakens and oppoſes the ſtrength of grace, in this reſpect it is the ſtrength of ſin; its agreement with the natural impreſſion that it hath left on the hearts of the children of men, creates a natural diſagreement betwixt us and Chriſt, betwixt us and the goſpel, and the grace of the goſpel. Pride of natural righteouſneſs ſtands up againſt, and oppoſes the goſpel-righteouſneſs.

7. The law is the ſtrength of ſin, in reſpect of the *irritating* quality of its *precept* upon corrupt nature; *Sin, taking occaſion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiſcence*, Rom. vii. 8. And here it is ſtrange to think of the different effects of the law of works, in ſtrengthening ſin on the one hand, by its agreement with proud and ſelf-righteous nature, as I have been ſhewing; and on the other hand, by its diſagreeableneſs with, and oppoſition unto carnal and corrupt nature, which is irritated by the law. Sin takes occaſion by the commandment, and ſo the law is the ſtrength of ſin; as it is in the Latin proverb, *Occaſio facit furem*, "Occaſion makes the thief." Thus Achan

cham; I saw such and such things, and seeing them I coveted them, and took them. The law does not, properly speaking, give occasion to sin; but sin takes occasion from the law to be operative and working; yea, such is the corruption of nature, that the more God's law forbids sin, the more we break out into sin; as a dam or bank made in the midst of a strong current of water, the more it is dammed up, the more it swells; and, when once it prevails, it breaks over with the greater violence: so here, the more God's law opposes sin, the more does sin rise, and swell, and rage: *Nitimur in vetitum*, &c. Why this? Even because there is such a contrariety betwixt God's holy law and our unholy nature.—Again, in regard of righteous nature, now proud and selfish, they seem to agree, and do really so in some things: for, according to the tenor of the covenant of works, man would have had a personal righteousness to have glorified in, if God had designed him life that way; and proud nature abused that original constitution, which God never designed should stand but for a little, to be like a scaffold for building up a better covenant; yet proud nature grips, as I said, to that wherein the law would have exalted it, if it had stood: but, in regard of corrupt and carnal nature, there is such an opposition to the very command of the law, that it is not subject thereto, neither can be; nay, instead of subjection to it, it is irritate and increased by it. In this sense it may be said, that when the law enters, offence doth abound: for sin, like a mad horse, rages, and is the more furious, that it is checked with the bridle.

8. To name no more, As the law is the strength of sin, in respect of the irritating quality of the command upon corrupt nature; so the law is the strength of sin, in respect of the *severity* of the *sanction* thereof; which, so far as it is regarded by us now in our obedience to the law, in these our sinful circumstances under a broken covenant of works, cannot but be the strength of sin and self, to all that are influenced in their obedience, with a respect thereunto. The sanction of the law, by which it was cast into the form of a covenant of works, was the promise of life upon our obedience, and threatening of death upon disobedience: now, to obey, or do, from a regard to that sanction, is to do duty, from the hope of eternal life by doing; and to shun evil, from the fear of eternal death and damnation: but, for a man to be thus under the coaction and compulsion of the law, is to be under the power of sin, notwithstanding his best performances; for the man that is acted and influenced by that sanction, cannot now be acted from love to God, which alone is true holiness, nor from a view to God's glory and honour, but merely to himself; which is evident from his legal hope of heaven, upon his obedience, influenced by the promissory sanction of the law; and from his legal fears of hell, upon his disobedience, influenced by the penal sanction of the law. This power of the legal sanction that he is under, keeps him under the power of sin; for, like a strong chain, it fetters him, that he cannot act freely and willingly; nay, he acts only in a mercenary and slavish way, like a slave to the law, and not like a servant to God. Believers, so far as they are delivered from the law, act freely, and with a willing mind; not by the coaction and compulsion of the law, but without respect either to the law-promise of life upon doing, or the law-threatening of death upon not doing; being, by virtue of the new nature, ready to do the will of their God and Father in Christ with pleasure: this title to life, and security from death, standing allenarly upon the obedience and satisfaction of their Head and Surety. Therefore, there is no law-promise of life, or threatening of death, that they have to regard; and consequently their obedience must be chearful, free, willing, and natural, without all legal compulsion. As the body needs no law-sanction, to compel it to eat, drink, sleep, walk, or stand, or do any of the works of nature; even so it is natural to the believer, according to the measure of his freedom from legal bondage, to act freely in the Lord's service, without the coaction of the law: being loosed from it, the strength of sin is broken, and he is at liberty to *serve the Lord without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him.* But such as are under the power of legal compulsion, and are acted and influenced by a regard to the sanction of the law-promise and threatening, and so under the power of legal hopes and fears; that is, the hope of eternal life upon their doing so and so, and the fear of eternal death upon their failure, they are, on this very account, under the power and strength of sin; where, if they remain, and live, and die, their hope will fail them, and their fears will come upon them: for, as their HOPE is a *dead hope*, that cannot *purify their heart*; so their FEAR is a *slavish fear*, that makes them *depart from God*. It is true, under the power of these legal hopes and fears, influenced by the promissory and penal sanction of the law, the poor sinner that is thus in bondage to the law, may perform a multitude of duties, and be very strict and devout, as if *who but he?* and yet, the more he does, the more he undoes himself, being *intangled in that yoke of bondage*, as the expression is, Gal. v. 1. The yoke but galls his neck, and holds him back from taking on Christ's easy yoke. Yea, in these circumstances, he can bring forth no fruit that is truly and spiritually good: for, as they only that are *divorced from the law*, and *married to Christ*, do *bring forth fruit unto God*, Rom. vii. 4.; so they that remain thus under the yoke of the law, can bring forth no fruit, but to themselves and the devil.—Thus you see *how* and in what *respect* the law is the *strength of sin*. I proceed

V. To the *fifth* thing proposed, which was, To show *whence* it is that *the law is the strength of sin*. From what spring and source does this arise? whence comes it, that sin should have a commanding and condemning power over a man, that is under the law; and that, as the law cannot deliver him, so it detains him a captive unto sin? Several reasons of this doctrine are interspersed among the particulars on the former heads: But, beside what hath been laid,

1. That the law, now violated and broken, is the strength of sin, proceeds from the *holiness* and *justice* of the Law-giver: he is of *purer eyes than that he can behold iniquity*; and, *justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne*: therefore, when his holiness and purity appearing in the precept of the law, is crossed by sin, his justice and equity declared in the threatening of

of the law, cannot but break forth againſt ſin in the righteous puniſhment thereof. Now, ſin being the greateſt evil, and the greateſt evil deſerving the greateſt puniſhment; and there being no greater puiſhment of ſin, than that of puniſhing it by ſin, and giving up the ſinner to the power and ſtrength of it; therefore, this juſt and holy God makes the ſtrength of ſin to be the ſtrength of the ſanction of the law, to the greateſt ruin of the breaker of it. There is no evil like the evil of ſin, which is the *tranſgreſſion of the law*; and no judgment like the judgment of being given up to the ſtrength of ſin: therefore, the moſt juſt and holy Law-giver makes the penalty of the broken law to be the ſtrength of ſin. So that to ſay, the *ſtrength of ſin is the law*, is ſo far from reflecting any diſhonour upon the purity of the law, that it is a declaration of the holineſs of the command, and the juſtice of the threatening both.

2. That the law is the ſtrength of ſin, proceeds from the *nature of the* LAW, in the office that God hath deſigned and aſſigned to it; and that is, not to be the *miniſtration of life*, and ſtrength againſt ſin, but to be ſubſervient to the goſpel, which is the *miniſtration of life and righteouſneſs*, 2 Cor. iii. 7,—10. The law was never appointed of God to be the *miniſtration of life*, but of death, even ſpiritual death, and thereupon of further condemnation; but yet, as it is a *miniſtration of death and condemnation*, it is appointed to be a ſervant to the goſpel; and hence law-commands, and law-threatenings both, are brought into the goſpel-diſpenſation, to be ſubſervient thereto, and to illuſtrate the glory thereof, and make way for its powerful efficacy, for the *pulling down the ſtrong holds of ſin*, to which office the goſpel only is appointed of God. And as the darkneſs of the night ſerves to ſhew forth the brightneſs of the day; ſo the ſtrength of ſin, that ariſes from the broken law, ſerves to illuſtrate and manifeſt the ſtrength of grace, that is brought in by the glorious goſpel.

3. That the law is the ſtrength of ſin, proceeds from the very *nature of* SIN, and its direct oppoſition and contrariety to the law. You know, when two are of a contrary diſpoſition, they never agree together, but will ever be brawling and quarrelling one with another; ſo, whatever agreement there be betwixt the law, as a covenant of works, and proud ſelf-righteous nature, yet ſuch a diſagreeing couple is God's holy law and our corrupt nature, that there is a direct contrariety betwixt them. The law of God bears the image of God; it is perfectly juſt, perfectly holy, and like unto God the giver of it: but the corruption of our nature bears the image of the devil, being wholly unjuſt, and altogether unholy: ſo ſays the apoſtle, *The law is holy, but I am carnal; in me, that is, in my fleſh, dwells no good thing*, Rom. vii. 14, 18. Now, as natural philoſophy teaches, that in winter-time, the coldneſs of the air and froſt, that may be about the fire, makes the heat of the fire more intenſe, ſo that it burns a great deal the faſter and fiercer; ſo God's law, coming to, and meeting with our corrupt nature, certainly it makes corruption more intenſe and more violent. Hence, when the *commandment comes, ſin revives*, and riſes up in the fury of its ſtrength; as, when a deadly foe comes upon one, the perſon gathers all his ſtrength together to oppoſe him. The ſtrength of ſin is not the leſs before the commandment come, or the law appear; but when the law appears, the ſtrength of ſin appears, and exerts itſelf: As fire and water are oppoſites, though at a diſtance; yet their oppoſition to one another is not ſo evident till they meet and come together, and then there is a mighty ſputtering and ſtriving between them: ſo the holy law and the unholy heart are oppoſite, though they do not meet; but when once they meet together, the heart riſes, and rages, and oppoſes it like the devil. This appears whenever a man is convinced by the law, and the conviction is merely legal, ſo as the man ſees nothing but the ſpirituality of the law-command, and the ſeverity of the law-curſe: I ſay, when the conviction is merely legal, the ſeverity of the curſe raiſes a trembling devil of fear in the awakened conſcience, and the ſpirituality of the command raiſes a devil of enmity in the carnal heart.——And thus, from the very nature of ſin, the law is the ſtrength of ſin.

4. That the law is the ſtrength of ſin, eſpecially to theſe that are under the goſpel-diſpenſation, ariſes from the *nature of* UNBELIEF, and the malignant influence thereof; as is evident from that word of our Lord Jeſus, John iii. 18. *He that believes is not condemned, but he that believes not, is condemned already, becauſe he believes not in the name of the only begotten Son of God.* He that believes not the goſpel, is condemned already by the law. Now, here conſider, what the law-condemnation is. I told you formerly, that the leading and ſevereſt part of the law-ſentence of condemnation is juſt the *ſtrength of ſin*; ſo as, to be under the curſe and condemnation of the law, is to be under the power of ſin, in its commanding and condemning ſtrength. But what influence hath the not-believing the goſpel upon a man's being thus condemned? Was he not in a ſtate of condemnation, though he had never heard the goſpel? Why then does Chriſt ſay, *He that believes not is condemned already?* Why, it demonſtrates, that though all the world be under the power of ſin, by the ſentence of the law; yet they that are under the goſpel, and believe not in the Lord Jeſus, their condemnation is condemnation indeed; they ſtand under the condemning ſentence of the law, and ſo under the power of ſin more than ever, becauſe the goſpel-news of freedom from that condemnation is rejected. It is not my office as a Saviour, might Chriſt ſay, to condemn them; *For God ſent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be ſaved:* but it is the office of the law, as it is the *miniſtration of death and condemnation*, to condemn them; ſo that they are condemned already by another hand; yea, condemned already by the law, *becauſe they believe not in me*, who am not come to condemn them, but to ſave them. No ſooner is this goſpel-ſalvation rejected, but the law-condemnation is ſtrengthened and fortified; for then the law, which before was dumb and ſilent, as it were, after the goſpel hath ſpoken a word of freedom and ſalvation from the ſtrength of ſin, and the man refuſes and rejects it, the law opens its mouth, in a manner, ſaying in effect, I take inſtruments upon this refuſal of yours, that under my dominion and power you ſtand by your own conſent, and that the ſtrength of ſin ſhall not be abated, but increaſed; and let this ſtand regiſtrated and recorded in the book of conſcience,

to

to bear witneſs to the equity and juſtice of my final ſentence, when the books ſhall be opened at the great day. In a word, unbelief holds and detains the man under the law, by refuſing Chriſt and the grace of the goſpel: and, as the law is the ſtrength of ſin, ſo unbelief ſtrengthens the hands of the law, to kill, and condemn, and enſlave the ſinner under the commanding and condemning power of ſin; and if the law be the ſtrength of ſin, and unbelief the ſtrength of the law, then unbelief is the ſtrength of the ſtrength of ſin, as it contributes to keep the ſinner more under the law than ever.—Thus you ſee how the law's being the *ſtrength of ſin* ariſes from *unbelief*, which rejects the ſtrength offered in the goſpel for deſtroying ſin. And ſo much for the *grounds* of the doctrine.

VI. The *ſixth* thing propoſed, was, To make *Application* of this doctrine. And this we ſhall eſſay in the following uſes, *viz.* 1. In an uſe of Caution. 2. Of Information. 3. Of Examination. 4. Of Exhortation.

1ſt, It may be improved, we ſay, for *Caution* and *Dehortation*. Is the *law the ſtrength of ſin*, in the manner I have deſcribed?

1. The *firſt caution* I offer is, O man, woman, think not the *worſe* or the *leſs of the law*, that it is the ſtrength of ſin: nay, you have reaſon to think the better of it, and to have the higher thoughts of it, as it is the *eternal rule of righteouſneſs*; for, if it were not a holy law, it would not irritate and exaſperate our unholy nature at that rate, ſo as to augment the commanding power and ſtrength of ſin: if it were not a juſt law, it would not condemn ſin at that rate, ſo as to give it a condemning ſtrength over the ſinner. That the *law is the ſtrength of ſin*, in the reſpect I have named, is ſo far from being a reflection upon, or a detracting from the holineſs and juſtice of the law, that it ſerves rather to illuſtrate the purity of the command of the law, as a rule of holineſs; and the equity of the penal ſanction thereof, as it is a covenant of works.

2. The *ſecond caution* is, As you are not to think the worſe of the law, ſo you are not to think the *better of ſin*, that the ſtrength of it is the law. As you are to think the better of the law, that it makes the troubleſom ſea of corruption to rage, and binds over the ſinner with ſtrong bonds of heavy curſes for his ſin, ſuch is the holineſs and ſtrictneſs of it; ſo you may think worſe of ſin, that turns ſuch a good thing as the law to ſuch an ill uſe, as to draw ſtrength to itſelf out of it; like a venomous beaſt, a viper, that ſucks poiſon out of the ſweeteſt flower.

3. The *third caution* I offer is, Think not to *conquer ſin* by the law, or by your perſonal obedience to it. That law, which is the *ſtrength of ſin*, can never be the *deſtruction* of it; it gives ſtrength to it, but cannot take ſtrength from it. They labour in vain, who think, by the ſtrength of their own beſt endeavours, to ſubdue ſin; for, do what they will, ſin hath ſtill dominion over them, becauſe they are *under the law*, Rom. vi. 14.: and all their endeavours are influenced by the law as a covenant of works; which makes their eſſays not only ineffectual for breaking the ſtrength of ſin, but rather effectual for augmenting the force and increaſing the ſtrength thereof.

4. The *fourth caution* we ſuggeſt is this, Think not that obedience to the law, as a rule of life, is *needleſs* or *hurtful*, becauſe the law, as a covenant of works, is the *ſtrength of ſin*: beware of thinking that God's *writing the law in the heart*, and that goſpel-holineſs and conformity to the law, as in the hand of a Mediator, is either dangerous or unneceſſary; this were an Antinomian principle indeed: but know, of a truth, that *without holineſs no man ſhall ſee God*; without holineſs, and conformity to the law, as a rule, no man hath evidence of juſtification, or of freedom from the law as a covenant; without holineſs there is no glorifying of God, nor edifying of man; without holineſs no adorning of the goſpel; without holineſs no evidence of love to God or Chriſt, who hath ſaid, *If ye love me, keep my commandments.*

Uſe 2. The *ſecond* uſe ſhall be by way of *Information*. There is a number of neceſſary leſſons may be deduced from this doctrine, *That the ſtrength of ſin is the law*; ſuch as,

1. Hence we may learn, that there can be *no juſtification before God, by the deeds of the law*; for, if the law be the *ſtrength of ſin*, then it can never take away the *guilt of ſin*; Rom. iii. 20. *By the deeds of the law there ſhall no fleſh living be juſtified in his ſight; for, by the law is the knowledge of ſin.* The force of this reaſon is very great; for, if it be the office of the law, under the influence of the Spirit of conviction, to give the knowledge of conviction of ſin, and ſo to condemn the ſinner, then ſurely it cannot juſtify him. And that it is the *moral law* the apoſtle here ſpeaks of, is plain; for, as it is that law by which men have the *knowledge of ſin*, and of which the ſame apoſtle ſaith, Rom. vii. 7. *I had not known ſin but by the law; for, I had not known luſt, except the law had ſaid, Thou ſhalt not covet*; which is the moral law: ſo it is plain, chap. iii. from ver. 9th to 20th, ſpeaks of that law by which *every mouth may be ſtopt*, and *all the world*, Gentiles as well as Jews, *may become guilty before God*; or, as it is in the margin, SUBJECT TO THE JUDGMENT OF GOD: ſo that it is a vain thing for any to alledge, that in theſe ſcriptures the apoſtle intends only the *ceremonial law*, and the deeds thereof.

2. Hence we may learn, that as there is no life or juſtification by the law of works, it being the *ſtrength of ſin*; ſo there is no *new* or *milder law* in the room thereof, by which life and juſtification is to be obtained: for no *new law* can mend the matter; becauſe men remain under the ſtrength of ſin, by virtue of the *old law*, and in that condition cannot be juſtified by any law of God, being unable to perform any. Some cloud and darken the goſpel, by making it a *new* or *milder law*, requiring *faith*, and *repentance*, and *new obedience*, inſtead of the *perfect obedience* required in the covenant of works. The goſpel, properly ſpeaking, is no law, but a promiſe: and it might be eaſily evinced, that *faith*, *repentance*, and *new obedience*, are ſo far from being eaſier or milder terms, that they are harder conditions to us, in our lapſed ſtate, than perfect obedience was to Adam in a ſtate of innocence. And ſo the apoſtle argues againſt any ſuch new law; Gal. iii. 21. *If there had been a law given, which could have given life, verily righteouſneſs ſhould have been by the law*; or, as it may be read, *verily righteouſneſs ſhould have been by* A *law*. But there is no ſuch law given to fallen man, as could give life to him; therefore,

fore, there is no righteouſneſs, or juſtification, to be had by a law, but by a promiſe; no life by any new law, but by a new promiſe of mercy and grace in Chriſt Jeſus: *By the works of the law, no fleſh living can be juſtified. Eternal life is the gift of God, through Chriſt Jeſus our Lord.*

3. Hence ſee, that there is no juſtification before God, *partly by the law*, and *partly by the goſpel*; or partly by our *own righteouſneſs*, and partly by the *righteouſneſs of Chriſt*: for, as this detracts from the glory, ſufficiency, and perfection of Chriſt's righteouſneſs; ſo it renders our juſtification lame and imperfect, and conſequently void and null: for, if the law be the ſtrength of ſin, and gives it a commanding and condemning power; then, till the law be ſatisfied, with a perſonal, perfect, and everlaſting righteouſneſs, the ſtrength of ſin remains, and ſo the man under it remains under condemnation. Why, the obedience of two put together, to make up a perfect obedience, is vain: for, in that caſe, the obedience both of the one and the other is imperfect, and ſo not conform to the law; therefore cannot be accepted for righteouſneſs: ſo that they who would be juſtified before God, muſt either bring to him a perfect and perſonal righteouſneſs of their own, and wholly renounce Chriſt; or elſe they muſt bring the perfect, perſonal righteouſneſs of Chriſt, and wholly renounce their own. It is one of the moſt ſoul-ruining deluſions among the generality of profeſſors in our day, that they are guilty of ſpiritual Bigamy; they think they muſt have *two* huſbands, Chriſt and the law both; they ſuppoſe that their own duties and righteouſneſs will not do their buſineſs alone without Chriſt's merit and righteouſneſs, which they hope will make amends, and make up what is wanting, and wherein they are deficient; and ſo his and theirs together is the ground of their hope: this is a popery, which makes Chriſt's righteouſneſs only a footſtool on which ſelf-righteouſneſs mounts the throne; yea, this is a Bigamy which Chriſt will not reliſh and put up with. If we be not *married to Chriſt alone*, as the *end of the law for righteouſneſs*, and *divorced from the law*, as a covenant, the *ſtrength of ſin remains.*

4. Hence ſee the *excellency of the goſpel*, and the *great advantage of a clear goſpel-diſpenſation.* Why, the *law is the ſtrength of ſin*, but the *goſpel is the weapon that pulls down the ſtrength* thereof: for, it is *the power of God to ſalvation* from ſin; becauſe *therein is revealed the righteouſneſs of God, from faith to faith*, Rom. i. 16, 17. Therefore, ſays the ſame apoſtle, 2 Cor. x. 4, 5. *The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God, to the pulling down the ſtrong holds, caſting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itſelf againſt the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Chriſt.* It is the goſpel that is the revelation of divine grace; juſtifying grace, to pull down the condemning ſtrength of ſin; ſanctifying grace, to pull down the commanding ſtrength of ſin. It is true, the goſpel is not powerful this way, unleſs the Spirit of God accompany it, as a Spirit of faith, cauſing us to believe the goſpel ſavingly: but, whenever God ſaves a man from the ſtrength of ſin, as it is by hearing the goſpel that faith comes; ſo it is by believing the goſpel that ſalvation from ſin comes; Rom. x. 15, 16. Mark xvi. 15, 16. *Go, preach the goſpel to every creature.* What is that goſpel? It is the good news of of grace and ſalvation to ſinners, through Chriſt, the *Lord our righteouſneſs.* Well, what will be the iſſue? *He that believes this goſpel ſhall be ſaved; he that believes not ſhall be damned.* O Sirs, ſee then the excellency of the goſpel, which, as it is the inſtrument of Gods power for working faith; ſo, being believed, is the *power of God to ſalvation from the ſtrength of ſin*, and ſo from wrath and condemnation.

5. Hence ſee, that *ſin, under the goſpel, is ſtrangely aggravated.* They that are not only under the law, as all are by nature, but alſo under the want of goſpel-light, no wonder that ſin reign there; they cannot but live in ſin, and in the perpetual violation of the law as a rule, who hear of no deliverance from the law, as a covenant: but for theſe who live under the goſpel, which is the only antidote againſt the ſtrength of ſin, their ſin is dreadfully aggravated; their living in ſin, and remaining under the ſtrength of ſin, is an evidence of their unbelief, whereby they reject the goſpel, and ſo keep themſelves under the curſe of the law, of which curſe the ſtrength of ſin is a leading part. The breach of the law, as a rule of obedience, is egregiouſly aggravated, where freedom from the law, as a covenant, is proclaimed through Chriſt. The ſum of the moral law is *love*, the ſum of diſobedience is *enmity*; but, alas! how is enmity againſt God heightened, when God manifeſts ſuch love, grace, and goodwill towards ſinners! Enmity againſt God, under the goſpel, is enmity indeed: it is rendering him enmity for love. Oh! how do the offers of mercy heighten our malignity! And, what a dreadful and dangerous thing is it to live in ſin, under the diſpenſation of grace! An evil heart of unbelief, neglecting the goſpel, and ſo the great ſalvation tendered therein, is the ſpring of apoſtaſy, and departing from the living God. You will ſay, Ah! I have a wicked heart, a wandering heart, a vain heart, a looſe heart, a black heart; yea, but the worſt thing about it is, that it is an unbelieving heart: for your unbelief keeps you under the curſe of the law, and the law-curſe keeps you under ſin's power.

6. Is the law of works the ſtrength of ſin? Then ſee the *neceſſity of union to Chriſt*, as the *end of the law for righteouſneſs*, in order to freedom from the *ſtrength of ſin.* If Chriſt be the *righteouſneſs* of any, he is their *ſtrength* alſo; and, becauſe he is their righteouſneſs, he is their ſtrength, and both in a way of union to him: *Surely ſhall one ſay, In the Lord have I righteouſneſs and ſtrength*, Iſa. xlv. 24. See alſo, 1 Cor. i. 30. *Of him are ye in Chriſt Jeſus, who of God is made unto us righteouſneſs and ſanctification.* It is the character of believers in Chriſt, that they *walk not after the fleſh, but after the Spirit*, Rom. viii. 1, 4. Now, how comes this ſanctification of heart and way, and freedom from the ſtrength of ſin to take place? Why, the root of it is, the *righteouſneſs of the law* is fulfilled in them, by virtue of their union with Chriſt. The weakeſt ſaint in Chriſt hath perfectly ſatisfied every demand of the law; he hath completely paid every penny of debt that he owed to the law. Why, being united to Chriſt, they are like man and wife; as man and wife are *one fleſh*, ſo Chriſt and believers are *one Spirit*: and as man and wife are one perſon in law; ſo, Chriſt having perfectly fulfilled the law, the believer hath perfectly fulfilled it in him. And ſo the

righte-

righteouſneſs of the law being fulfilled in the believer, the commanding and condemning ſtrength of ſin, derived from the law, is broken; and conſequently he is in caſe to walk ſpiritually, and to evidence his freedom from the law, as a covenant, and his being a perfect fulfiller of it, by his *walking not after the fleſh, but after the Spirit.*

7. Hence ſee, That *juſtification is the root of ſanctification*, and *juſtifying faith the root of a holy life*, and is neceſſary, in order of nature, before it; ſeeing, as there is no conformity to the law, as a rule of holineſs, till once the perſon get freedom from the law, as a covenant, which, to the tranſgreſſor, is the ſtrength of ſin; ſo, in juſtification, the believer being no more reputed a breaker, or tranſgreſſor, but a perfect fulfiller of the law of works, it ceaſes to be any more the ſtrength of ſin unto him: whereupon the removal of the ſtrength of ſin lays a foundation for a life of holineſs, both habitual and actual; habitual, conſiſting in the immediate principles of action, in contradiſtinction from the remote principle infuſed in regeneration; and actual ſanctification, whether privatively, in the mortifying or killing of ſin; or poſitively, in the quickening of the ſoul to a newneſs of life: and that both internal, in the exerciſe of grace; and external, in the performance of duty. And hence, as juſtifying faith is ſaid to have a purifying virtue, Acts xv. 9.; ſo the whole life of the believer is ſaid to be by faith in the juſtifying righteouſneſs of God, revealed in the goſpel, Rom. i. 17. On which account, the goſpel is ſaid to be *the power of God to ſalvation, to the Jew firſt, and alſo to the Greek; for therein is the righteouſneſs of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The juſt ſhall live by faith;* that is, faith in this righteouſneſs of God. No man, therefore, can live a holy life, or walk abroad in the duties of the law, as a rule, in a courſe of ſanctification, till once his feet be looſed from the fetters, and his ſoul liberated from the priſon of the law, as a covenant, through juſtification by faith; and then, and not till then, is he in caſe to live a holy life by faith: yea, were he never ſo juſt and righteous, in reſpect of perſonal *imparted* righteouſneſs; yet he cannot live, but by the faith of this *imputed* righteouſneſs of God: renewed acts of faith thereupon tend to quicken his ſoul from time to time. The juſt, even the juſt, ſhall live by this faith; for, without it, all his own juſtneſs, righteouſneſs, and perſonal holineſs would languiſh, and die, and give the up ghoſt. What makes the obedience of a multitude of profeſſors vain and unacceptable; yea, and all their duties ſinful and hurtful? Why, they begin to yield obedience to the precepts of the law, by doing and working out a righteouſneſs of their own, before they be delivered from the curſe of the law, by believing and laying hold on the righteouſneſs of Chriſt; and hence, the ſtrength of ſin being a grand part of the curſe of the law, and they not being delivered from that curſe, all they can do is curſed of God, becauſe the ſtrength of ſin remains. But, ſay you, may not this diſcourage profeſſors from obedience? No: it only directs them to the right and acceptable obedience, and not to dream that they ſhall ever yield any acceptable obedience to the precept of the law, as a rule, till they be delivered from the curſe of the law, as a covenant; and conſequently, that their firſt duty is to come to Chriſt, as the *end of the law for righteouſneſs;* and then, being delivered from the *ſtrength of ſin*, they ſhall be in caſe to perform duties of obedience acceptably.

8. Hence ſee, That the *fruit of Chriſt's merit*, and the *fruit of his power* go together: for, as a being under the law, and under the ſtrength of ſin, go together; ſo freedom from the law, through the law-biding righteouſneſs of Chriſt, and freedom from the ſtrength of ſin, go together: ſo that the fruit of Chriſt's merit and righteouſneſs, imputed for freeing a man from the law of works, and the fruit of his power exerted in freeing a man from the commanding, as well as the condemning power of ſin, go hand in hand together. It is worth our notice, my friends, that there is a fruit of the merit of Chriſt's death and reſurrection, and that fruit is called *redemption* and *juſtification;* and there is alſo a fruit of the power of Chriſt's death and reſurrection, and that is called *likeneſs* and *conformity*, Rom. vi. 5.: and theſe two go together. The fruit of the merit and righteouſneſs of Chriſt in his doing and dying, is never reaped by any ſoul, without the fruit of the power thereof alſo, which is the heart's being moulded to a conformity to his death and reſurrection, by dying to ſin, and ariſing again to newneſs of life. Now, there is a twofold ſtruggle and oppoſition in every heart by nature againſt both theſe two things: there is a ſtruggle againſt the merit and righteouſneſs of Chriſt, and that is by ſelf-righteouſneſs, which cannot endure to be ſhut out of doors: and there is a ſtruggle againſt the power of Chriſt's death, and that is by luſts and corruptions, which cannot endure to loſe their ſtrength, rule, and dominion. But, whenever the merit of Chriſt, and his righteouſneſs, is effectually applied, for ſhutting ſelf-righteouſneſs out of doors, there alſo the power of Chriſt is effectually exerted, for pulling ſin and corruption down from its throne and dominion, and diveſting it of its ruling power and ſtrength. Hence, true faith cloſes with Chriſt both for righteouſneſs and ſtrength. As true obedience is called univerſal obedience, having a reſpect to all God's commandments; ſo true faith is an univerſal faith, having a reſpect to all the offices of Chriſt, and to all the capacities wherein he is held forth. It receives a whole Chriſt, without exception either of his righteouſneſs or ſtrength, merit or Spirit. Some have but a partial faith, reliſhing Chriſt only for freedom from the wrath of God, and not alſo for freedom from the power of ſin: this is an evidence of a rotten heart; for true believers prize Chriſt, not only as a *Surety*, for paying their debt, but alſo as a *Root*, for feeding them with the ſap of ſpiritual life, as a root feeds the branches; and they reliſh Chriſt, not only as one that appeaſes God's wrath, but as one that purifies the ſoul from ſin. To this purpoſe, read Exod. xxiv. 6, 8. *And Moſes took half of the blood, and put it in baſons, and half of the blood he ſprinkled on the altar. And then took the blood, and ſprinkled it on the people, and ſaid, Behold, the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all theſe words.* There you ſee that the *blood of the covenant*, part of it was *ſprinkled on the altar*, and part of it *on the people:* the blood was, as it were, divided two ways, ſignifying that the blood of Chriſt

works partly upward, for pacifying the wrath and satisfying the justice of God, in paying the ransom and price for lost souls; and partly downward upon the people, for sanctifying, sprinkling, cleansing, and purifying them, that their defiled souls may be made clean.

9. Hence, if the law be the strength of sin we may see what it is that *hinders the success of the gospel for pulling down the strength of sin.* Why, the law stands in the way of every natural man his not submitting to Christ offered in the gospel. The fig-leaf covering of self-righteousness hinders men from putting on the white robe, the glorious garment of Christ's righteousness. As the spider hath a web, and the snail hath a shell, and these are their strong holds; so every man hath his strong hold that he flees unto for shelter, and something that his heart sets up as a ladder, by which he hopes to be saved and climb up to heaven: and though the law be a broken ladder, and Christ alone the true Jacob's ladder, that reacheth from earth to heaven, and which the gospel points at; yet the man will not quit the broken ladder, the law of works; and, the more they climb that ladder, the further they go away from Christ. Hence the greatest zealots for the law are the greatest enemies of Christ: witness, Paul before his conversion; he was one of the best men for his righteousness in the law; and yet one of the worst men we read of for his opposition to Christ. Think it not strange, Sirs, to see some very grave, sober, moral, and devout persons, and touching the law blameless and innocent outwardly, and yet these very persons, heart-enemies to Christ, and violent opposers of the gospel: why, even like Paul, the best legal-man may be the worst gospel-man; and hence the Gentile is brought in before the Jews, Rom. ix. 26.; yea, the *publicans* and *harlots* before the self-righteous *Pharisees*, Mat. xxi. 31. But you would consider, that it is not merely these that are by profession and outward practice zealous for the law, that are the only opposers of the gospel; but there is an underhand dealing with the law, that marrs also the success of the gospel, and that by two sorts of persons, which are not suspected to be in such friendship with the law of works, namely, 1. Profest breakers of the law. 2. Profest believers of the gospel.

(1.) There are *profest breakers of the law;* I mean, profane, wicked, and ungodly persons, who declare their sin as Sodom, and are in a manner professors of profanity, drunkenness, whoredom, swearing, Sabbath-breaking, and debauchery; being graceless, prayerless, godless persons, with a witness, that have no regard to the law as a rule of life, yet we will find they have an underhand dealing with the law, and a natural regard to it, as a condition of life, or covenant of works, and thereupon reject the gospel. Now, their regard to the law, as a covenant, appears, partly, when they are inwardly challenged by conscience; and partly, when they are outwardly challenged by men for their sin: when inwardly challenged by conscience, if at any time it be awakened, why then, they flee to the law for relief, saying with themselves, Oh! I hope, I will be a better man before I die; I will take up myself, and turn a new leaf: and so they build upon the law of works, hoping they will do something that they may obtain life by, and saying in effect, *Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all;* and thus they reject Christ, the *Surety of the better testament.* Or, if such meet with no inward checks, and have no challenges inwardly for their sin; yet their zeal for the law will sometimes appear, when outwardly challenged by men; why, the profane swearer either takes the reproof with a jest, and laughs it over; or, if he find the reprover in sad earnest with him, then he will fall a justifying himself upon a law-bottom; why, says he, what take you me to be? do you think that I am an atheist or an infidel? Nay, whatever be my faults, I was never such an ill man as you take me to be; and, therefore, I hope in God that he will have mercy on me. What is this but the profane breaker of the law, underhand, building his hope of mercy upon the law, as a covenant, to the greatest dishonour of the law, and contempt of Christ, the *end of the law for righteousness*, and hereupon living in the open neglect of the great salvation offered in the gospel?

(2.) There are *profest believers of the gospel*, that yet have underhand dealing with the law for righteousness, to the neglect of the gospel, which yet they profess to believe, insomuch, that Christ is but a stumbling-block to them: such were the Jews, Rom. ix. 31, 32. *But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness: Wherefore? because they sought it not by faith, but, as it were, by the works of the law; for they stumbled at that stumbling stone.* These words, *as it were*, are of great significancy, shewing, that they did not profess to seek righteousness by the law, or by their own works, but by Christ, the promised Messias, to whom they were directed by their sacrifices that typified him, and by the Old-testament prophecies and promises that pointed him out: but while they profest Christ the Messias, and faith in him for righteousness; yet they closely, and underhand, pursued their own righteousness, seeking life and salvation, not professedly and directly, but, *as it were*, by the works of the law, and secretly rested in the law and the works thereof, and so miscarried; and this was their stumbling stone, under a bright profession that they made to the contrary. Thus many profess the doctrine of justification by faith, and not by the works of the law; yet secretly and underhand closely pursue and go about to establish their own righteousness, if not directly, yet, *as it were*, by the works of the law; laying more stress, for example, upon what they call their sincere heart, sincere obedience, sincere endeavours, than ever they did upon the perfect obedience of Christ for justification. But whether a bottle be stopt with gold or dung, yet being full, whatever water you pour upon it, it will all run aside: even so, the water of life, freely dispensed in the gospel, runs aside like water spilt upon the ground, because mens hearts are stopt with the law, their own legal righteousness, which they esteem as gold; but Paul compares it to dung: Christ can get no admittance, because the soul is full already. But then,

10. If the strength of sin be the law, hence we may see, That the law can never *pacify* the duly awakened conscience; and that so far is any man from being able to stand before God in the best of his own righteousness, that he cannot so much as stand before his own conscience in the best righteousness of his own. Some go to the law for satisfaction to their conscience;

ſcience; they rock and lull their conſciences aſleep in the cradle of ſome outward duty; they go to church, and attend ſome ordinances; they ſay ſome formal prayers; and others go greater lengths, merely to gratify conſcience: but if conſcience were duly awakened and convinced, it would not be pacified with any thing leſs than that which pacifies infinite juſtice; nor would it be ſatisfied with any thing leſs than that which fully ſatisfies the law: ſo long as the law finds any fault with or defect in our righteouſneſs, ſo long does it curſe us, Gal. iii. 10.; and ſo long as the curſe remains, the ſtrength of ſin remains: and conſequently the law cannot give relief to the awakened conſcience by any the beſt righteouſneſs of our own, whether of inward graces, or outward duties; for the awakened conſcience will witneſs againſt us, judge and condemn us, in the beſt of theſe.

(1.) Suppoſe you have *inward graces* and *good qualifications*, the beſt of theſe will not give conſcience peace when God awakens it: I ſhall ſuppoſe you have *faith*; well, but have you not *unbelief* alſo, and more unbelief than faith? And may not conſcience condemn you for that, as Chriſt did his diſciples, *How is it that ye have no faith*, while you carry in many caſes as if you had none at all? Suppoſe you have *repentance*; yet have you not *impenitency* alſo? May not conſcience condemn you many times for a hard impenitent heart; ſo hardened from God's fear, that neither the word nor rod of God does make impreſſion on you; yea, neither mercies nor judgments do you lay to heart as you ought? Suppoſe you have *humility*; yet is there not *pride* alſo in your heart? and may not your conſcience accuſe you of much ſelf-elevation, and ſelf-confidence? Suppoſe you have *love* to God; yet, have you not much *enmity* alſo? and may not your conſcience condemn you, that you *love not God with all your heart, with all your ſoul, mind, and ſtrength*; and that your heart goes more out after the creature than the Creator, at leaſt ſome times, and in many inſtances? Suppoſe you have *ſincerity*; yet, may not conſcience witneſs againſt you, that your ſincerity is mixed with *hypocriſy*? Suppoſe you have *zeal*; yet, will not conſcience witneſs that you have too much *lukewarmneſs*? Suppoſe you have a *fixed heart* upon God, and Chriſt, and heavenly things at ſome times; yet, will not conſcience accuſe you of innumerable *wanderings of heart*? Why, then it ſeems your beſt righteouſneſs even of inward graces will not pacify conſcience. Nor,

(2.) Suppoſe you have *outward duties* to add to your inward graces; ſuppoſe you *pray* in your cloſet, in your family, and in public, which is well done; and ſuppoſe you *hear the word* carefully, and joyfully, and perform all other duties: yet, will not conſcience witneſs that *ſin mixes itſelf* with your *beſt duties*? And when you pray, yet you are not always praying in the Holy Ghoſt; when you worſhip, yet you are not ſtill worſhipping God in the Spirit; when you hear, you are not always hearing in faith; when you receive the word and ſacraments, you are not ay receiving Chriſt therein; and when you communicate, you are not ay communicating worthily: may not conſcience condemn you for theſe things, and put you to cry after all, *Lord, be merciful to me a ſinner?*

Well then, when you cannot ſtand before your own conſciences, in your beſt righteouſneſs, either of internal qualifications or external performances; how can you think to ſtand before God, who is greater than conſcience, and knows all things, and ſees more ſin and wickedneſs in you than ever you ſaw? He ſees the errors you cannot ſee, Pſalm xix. 12. *Who can underſtand his errors?* and the heart's wickedneſs you cannot diſcern, Jer. xvii. 9, 10. *The heart is deceitful above all things, and deſperately wicked, who can know it? I the Lord ſearch the heart, and try the reins, to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.* Now, O man, woman, if you cannot ſtand before the bar of your own heart and conſcience, but you muſt be condemned, though it knows not the thouſandth part of your heart-wickedneſs that God knows; how will you ſtand before the bar of God, whoſe *underſtanding is infinite*, and who is of glorious holineſs and dreadful juſtice? Oh! his fiery law will burn up all your filthy rags, if you have not another covering, when death, judgment, and eternity ſtare you in the face! Is it not your duty and intereſt then, to ſeek after a better robe, even that of Chriſt's everlaſting, law-biding righteouſneſs; that alone can pacify conſcience, becauſe it gives the law all its demands, and quenches the fire of it with blood? O ſeek then to be under this covert of the blood of the Lamb of God, that purple-covering of the new covenant chariot, that is *paved with love for the daughters of Jeruſalem.*

11. Hence ſee, why it is that ſin hath a *reigning* power over the *ungodly*, and a *prevailing* power over the *godly*; even becauſe the former are *wholly* under the law, and the latter *partly* under it. On the one hand, ſin *reigns* over *unbelievers*, becauſe they are *under the law*: men being in bondage to the law, are in bondage to their luſt. Whence is it that all manner of ſin and profaneneſs rages in our day, and ſo much practical oppoſition to the law, as a rule of holineſs? Even becauſe, people being under the law, as a covenant of works, the goſpel is ſlighted and diſparaged; grace, in effect, is cried down, and the law is cried up in oppoſition to it: therefore God leaves men to all lawleſs impiety, as a righteous puniſhment of their contemning of grace, by which alone the law can be honoured, both as a covenant and a rule, Iſa. xlii. 21. Mat. v. 17. Rom. iii. 31.— On the other hand, why does ſin *prevail* ſo much over *believers*? why are they ſo unholy and untender in their walk? Even becauſe they are *partly* under the law. It is true, they are *not under the law, but under grace*: in point of *right*, the law of works hath no authority over them; but yet, in point of *poſſeſſion*, it maintains a great ſway, while unbelief remains: and hence, though ſin hath no rightful legal dominion over them, yet it continues to have a great actual prevalence, while they do not make uſe of that grace they are under, Rom. vi. 14. When they let the grace of God out of their mind, then they are diſcouraged, and ſin gets advantage: they are apt to truſt partly to their own works, and endeavours, and frames; and therefore, like the woman with the bloody iſſue, they loſe both their time and pains, and ſpend all on phyſicians that do them no good, till they come back to Chriſt and grace again. Sometimes even believers, inſtead of uſing grace aright, are ready to miſuſe it, and make

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it a cover for sloth, under pretence that Christ must do all. They are thus in danger of practical Antinomianism, and turning the *grace of God into wantonness:* they pray not, watch not, and therefore they have nothing, because their hands refuse to labour; and they do not study, in all appointed means, to keep themselves under the droppings of grace, which would make their duties their pleasure; but, being under much legal bondage, it makes their duties their burden, and a wearisome task; which being thereupon shifted and slighted, sin gets advantage. But, Oh! if believers did but believe their privileges, and rightly use the grace they are under, it were impossible for them to be long under the feet of their enemies. If they by faith were reckoning themselves to be what they are, according to Rom. vi. 11. *Likewise reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord*; what a happy and holy life would the believer have, if by faith he were reckoning himself to be in Christ? For he should not conceive of God out of Christ, nor of himself out of Christ, nor of Christ and himself as two, but as one mystical person, by virtue of the mystical spiritual union betwixt Christ and him. If he were reckoning that he is a member of Christ, and can do all things through him; and reckoning that Christ is in him, and he is in Christ; reckoning that he is dead in Christ unto sin, and alive in Christ unto God; how would his spirit be raised, elevated, and nobilitated to the life of religion, looking to himself, not in himself, but in Christ, by virtue of marriage to him? If the believer were saying, by faith, O! I am complete in Christ; I am perfectly righteous in Christ, and accepted as righteous in the sight of God, only through the righteousness of Christ; I was once bound to the fiery law, the terrible law, and thousands in hell are paying that debt of satisfaction to it, and cannot pay it to eternity; but I have paid every farthing, and the law can ask no more; yea, in Christ, I have *magnified the law, and made it honourable:* Here is one of the greatest mysteries in the world, behold, a man who sees himself so sinful, that he thinks none in all the world so black, and ugly, and sinful as he, can, in this respect, reckon himself as righteous as Abraham or Paul; yea, perfectly righteous; and see himself in that gospel-glass, that says, *Thou art all fair, my love, there is no spot in thee.* Why, the believer being clothed with the sun of righteousness, he is righteous in the sight of God: to be righteous in man's sight is nothing to this, hypocrites may arrive at that; but to be righteous in God's sight, is to be so righteous, that infinite holiness, infinite justice can find no blot, no spot, no hole in the garment of righteousness with which the man is clothed. O believers in Christ, you that are perfect through his comeliness, you do not view sufficiently your privileges, otherwise it would elevate you above corruption, and fill you with holy triumph over all your lusts and idols, and make you think shame to sin; if you were reckoning what you are in Christ, you would reckon it below you to tread in the dirty steps of the world: but when unbelief darkens your gospel-privileges, and grace is out of view, you faint in duty, and are discouraged and disheartened in your work, so as sin recovers its spirit and strength.

12. Hence we may see, that whatever *opposition* and *resistance* to sin, *hypocrites* and *unbelievers* may make, yet still they are UNDER the *strength of sin*, because UNDER *the law*; and whatever *prevalence* sin may have over *believers*, yet they are FREED from the *strength of sin*, because they are NOT *under the law*. This twofold inference lays a foundation for resolving two difficult cases.

FIRST CASE is, *Seeing hypocrites may* RESIST *sin, what resistance of sin is consistent with the* DOMINION *thereof?* Hypocrites and reprobates do not always sin peaceably, but with some reluctancy; they forbear many sins, and get victory over them: how then may this be cleared? and how does it appear that they may make resistance against sin, and yet the strength of it never broken?

I *answer*, for clearing this, in these two assertions.

(1.) The *first assertion* is, That there is indeed a *resisting of sin*, which is *consistent* with the *power and dominion* of it; as I would clear in a few words. A person may solemnly resolve and swear against sin, and yet be under the power of it; as it was with Israel, Psal. lxxviii. 37. and Josh. xxiv. 18. People may confess their sins, and repent of them with tears; as Esau, and Judas, and Saul, Heb. xii. 17. Mat. xxvii. 3, 4, 5. 1 Sam. xxiv. 16, 17. and yet be under the power of it. People may separate some time for special fasting and humiliation, on the account of sin, and yet be under the power of it; as Ahab, 1 Kings xxi. 29. People may be zealous opposers and reformers of sin in others, and yet be under the reigning power of it; like Jehu, 2 Kings x. 1,—31. People may resist sin unto suffering and blood; as Alexander, mentioned, Acts xix. 33. and 1 Tim. i. 19. People may resist all motions, inclinations, and temptations to sin, so far as never to break forth into any gross outbreaking thereof, and be in all things blameless before the world; as Paul was before his conversion, Phil. iii. 9. And yet all this while they may be under the power and dominion of sin: Why? because their resistance of sin proceeds from wrong principles; such as fear of God's judgments, as Ahab, when Elijah threatened him; fear of man, like Herod; affectation of human applause, like the Pharisees; and because their resistance is but partial, chiefly bended against gross out-breakings, while heart-lusts are welcomed and entertained; the out-side of the cup being clean, while within it is full of corruption, Mat. xxiii. 24. — Thus, I say, there is a resisting of sin that is *consistent* with the power of it.

2. The *second assertion* is, That the *power of sin is never broken in a hypocrite;* why, because the nature of an hypocrite, the reigning sin, which is the sin of nature, and which gives life and breath to all his other sins, is never discovered, never groaned under; though some actual sins get a stroak, yet this remains in power: and hence, the opposition that a hypocrite or graceless man finds in himself sometimes to sin, is not the opposition of the Spirit to the flesh, but rather the opposition of one sin to another: As if two noblemen strive together in a kingdom, the king's power is never a whit weakened thereby, he rules absolutely notwithstanding; so two sins may cast out with one another, and yet the reigning sin, which is the sin of nature, remain

remain in power: hence a man's pride and prodigality will differ with his avarice and covetouſneſs; a man's ſelf-love may diſcord with his ſloth, and put him upon ſeveral duties. Though one ſin contend with and caſt out another ſin, it will not ſay that ſin is exauctorate: the ſin that prevails, will yet do homage to the reigning ſin; but while the reigning ſin remains untouched, ſin hath dominion and power. The taking of a few villages does not much weaken the ſtrength of a king; but when his royal city is taken, and himſelf confined, then his power is gone: even ſo here, the forbearing, reſiſting, and down-bringing of ſome ſins, does much abate the power of ſin; but if once the reigning ſin of the nature be taken, then the power of ſin is gone. Now, Chriſt gives the body of death in every ſaint a deadly wound; he does not only bruiſe Satan's heel, but his head: when a man comes to ſee his wicked nature, his oppoſition to God and Chriſt, and all his ways in every thing, and mourns for this as the greateſt evil, and comes to the Lord Jeſus, and employs him for power againſt it, and renounces its dominion; though he cannot rid himſelf altogether thereof, yet then is the power of it broken and gone. But here notice further, The permiſſion to do *ſome duties*, and to leave off *ſome ſins*, does not evince that the power or ſin is broken, becauſe this may be done with ſin's authority and conſent; yea, and with Satan's leave: for if the devil ſee that Chriſt is like to get a profane ſoul from him, and that the man is like to break off from him, he compones, he ſuffers him to leave many ſins, and to do many good duties: as a man that hath no will to quit his lands, he pays a compoſition for it; ſo ſin makes a compoſition with many, whereas it reigns over ſome very abſolutely, yet it reigns over others ſo as to permit them to pay ſome acknowledgement to God, and yet ſin ſtill reigns. Many a man's conſcience is awakened for ſin; they confeſs and mourn for it, they ſeek pardon, and yet keep their ſins ſtill, and hold them faſt: many will tipple and drink, and live in covetouſneſs, and ſloth, and unbelief; O but their deſires are good; they pray privately and in their families, and confeſs theſe ſins, and are ſorry for them! What is this? Alas! this is nothing but the compoſition made betwixt Satan and you: you ſtill hold of ſin, and it reigns ſtill; even as your lands hold of ſuch a perſon of quality, it may be of the king, or of a nobleman: well, ſome lands are under greater ſervitude to the king, or other ſuperiors, than others; yet all hold of them: ſo, perhaps, your ſlavery to ſin is not ſo great as that of others, but yet you hold of ſin; ſin is your ſuperior, and it hath the power. So ſome miniſters in the late times, after the king's * ſupremacy was eſtabliſhed, when the king found and apprehended many to be diſſatisfied with his abſolute government, he offered and they accepted of an indulgence from him, giving them leave to preach in ſuch and ſuch places and circumſtances; this acceptance, many maintained, was ſuch a ſin, as that thereby they did hold their miniſtry of the king, and homologate or approve of his ſupremacy in matters ſacred as well as civil; or that the king was ſtill ſupreme over all cauſes, as well as perſons: ſo it is here; ſin perceiving that many begin to entertain a great diſſatisfaction with ſuch an abſolute form of government, or ruling in ſuch a manner, reſolve to alter their method and way of living, and to offer indulgences: perhaps, Satan ruled before in a way of drunkenneſs, ſwearing, whoredom, and profanity; but now he will rule by pride, formality, covetouſneſs, and ſetting up of mens own righteouſneſs: here is an indulgence offered and accepted; it is no change of government in the ſubſtantials of it, it is no change of the power of ſin, only ſome are indulged to do more than others; ſin and Satan indulge ſome to do many things, while ſin is ſtill king, only it rules in a different manner.——Thus, I ſay, that the power of ſin is never broken in hypocrites, as it is in the believer who is under grace.

The SECOND CASE was, *In what reſpects are believers freed from the* STRENGTH *of ſin, while yet they are ſenſible of the* PREVALENCY *thereof?* For ſin remains in them, and acts, and works, and ſtrives in them, and they are led captive thereby, Rom. vii. 23. Therefore, though they be *not under the law, but under grace*, it would ſeem that they are not freed from the power, dominion, and ſtrength of ſin; for the ſtrength of ſin is what they daily feel and complain of: how then, and in what reſpects, are they freed from it?

ANSW. Theſe are theſe following reſpects, wherein the believer is freed from the ſtrength of ſin.

(1.) In ſo far as they are *under grace*, it is ſure they are not *under ſin's power*. Indeed, if believers would take hold of the ſhield of faith, they would find little of the power of ſin; but they many times caſt this ſhield away by diſcouragements, and run in to the law through unbelief, and ſo they ſink: hence, caſting themſelves out, as ſaints may do for a ſtart, from under the influence of grace, they may, like Peter, begin to ſink, becauſe they begin to fear and doubt; ſo that it is true thus far, namely, ſo far as they are under grace, and through grace keep themſelves under the influence of grace, they are not under the power and dominion of ſin.

(2.) Believers are freed from the power of ſin, in ſo far as they are *intitled to the promiſe*, which ſays, Their *ſin ſhall be ſubdued*, and that *ſin ſhall not have dominion*. It is to be noticed, that it is not ſaid in the context, ſin hath *no* dominion or power over them, but it is ſaid, *It ſhall* NOT *have dominion*: now, in regard the time is coming, when all ſin ſhall be taken away, in all theſe that are under grace; its power and dominion is to be cut off, though for a while it rages. There is a counſel and determination againſt Babylon; God hath decreed and ordered, that ſin's dominion ſhall expire, Rom. xvi. 20. *The God of peace will bruiſe Satan under your feet ſhortly*; and he will *turn judgment unto victory*; but how long the believer may fight and groan under the prevalence of it, cannot eaſily be determined.

(3.) Believers that are under grace, are freed from the power of ſin, in regard it hath no *righteous* and *lawful power* and *dominion* over them; the firſt huſband is dead, and they are *married to Chriſt*, the ſecond Huſband, Rom. vii. 4.; and therefore they are not *debtors to the fleſh* to live after it, Rom. viii. 12. Though the fleſh may compel and crave them to obey, yet it has no juſt power ſo to do. Sin's juſt authority is exauctorate; and Chriſt, by ſatisfying the law, which is the ſtrength of ſin, hath *condemned ſin*,

* *Viz.* CHARLES II. The *Supremacy* was eſtabliſhed by the Parliament, 1661. And the *Indulgence* granted by the Privy-Council, 1669.

Rom. viii. 3. So that it being now condemned and exauctorate, though it keep poſſeſſion, yet there is a ſentence and decreet of ejection obtained againſt ſin. The believer hath law upon his ſide, whereas ſin hath no law, no right concerning him. Sin hath a ſort of right to reign in wicked men, and theſe that are under the law; for it hath a right of conqueſt over them, and they are ſervants, becauſe, by their actual obedience, they have homologate the right of conqueſt that ſin had: but in believers, who are under grace, and delivered from ſin by the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who ſatisfied the law, which is the ſtrength of ſin, and now renouncing the ſervice of ſin, and taking on with Chriſt as their Lord, who redeemed them by his blood from ſin, and overcame and condemned ſin, ſin hath no pretext of title any more. It is true, it actually exerciſes authority; yet that is but an uſurped authority; ſin rules by no lawful title. You will ſay, If ſin rule, what is the matter whether it hath a title or not? I anſwer, Yea, it is a great matter; for the juſt Lord of heaven and earth, upon the believer's complaining of unjuſt oppreſſion, will right him, and deliver him from ſuch an oppreſſion and oppreſſor in due time: and he hath encouragement, in oppoſing ſin, that he ſhall prevail, ſeeing his cauſe is juſt, and that he hath juſt matter of pleading with the righteous God, that ſin ſhall not have power over him. The believer may go to God, as Bethſheba did to David, when Adonijah did uſurp the kingdom, ſaying, *My lord, O king, did thou not ſwear, ſaying, Aſſuredly Solomon ſhall reign? and yet, behold, Adonijah reigneth.* So may the believer go to God, and ſay, Lord, haſt thou not ſaid that ſin ſhall not reign but that grace ſhall reign? And yet, behold, ſin and corruption uſurp the power: and, to be ſure, he will take order with this matter.

(4.) Believers, that are under grace, are freed from the power of ſin, in regard ſin hath no power to *condemn* or *damn* ſuch as are under grace; its authority is ſo far broken in them, that though they ſin, and though ſin may force them to ſome acts of obedience to it, yet it cannot condemn them to hell, as it may do theſe that are ſtrangers to Chriſt, and not under grace, in whom ſin is ſaid to reign unto death, Rom. v. 21. and chap. vi. 23. Now, whatever way it may reign and rule, yet it reigns not unto death in them that are under grace, and in Chriſt; for, *there is no condemnation to them that are in Chriſt;* and *againſt ſuch there is no law*, Gal. v. 23. As when the Romans conquered the Jews, though they left ſome authority, yet they took from them the power of life and death, as they acknowledge, John xviii. 32. *It is not lawful for us to put any man to death:* ſo, when Chriſt hath conquered ſin, though he did in his wiſdom not altogether deſtroy the power of ſin, yet he took away the power of life and death from it, ſo as ſin cannot now condemn any believer; and this is a comfortable privilege.

(5.) Believers under grace are freed from ſin, in regard they have *renounced the dominion* thereof, and their allegiance thereto; hence that word, 2 Cor. iv. 2. *We have renounced the hidden things of diſhoneſty.* Why, by cloſing and engaging with Chriſt to be his, and coming to him for protection from, and power againſt ſin, they have declared that they renounce ſin, and all allegiance thereto. Chriſt hath engaged all his ſervants in heart and practice againſt ſin directly and indirectly; there is war declared again ſin in all the ſaints. You know, it was a great impairing of Rehoboam's power, 1 Kings xii. 16. when the ten tribes revolted, and ſaid to him, *What portion have we in the ſon of Jeſſe? See to thine own houſe, David; to your tents, O Iſrael;* and ſo ſhook off his authority: whatever therefore ſin does in believers, whatever obedience it extorts from them, or entices them to yield to it, yet there is war irreconcilable denounced againſt ſin. This is a great matter, when a people ſhake off the authority of a prince, and declare themſelves free from his authority; however he be ſeeking to reduce them to obedience again, yet he hath, for the preſent, no dominion over them: ſo it is here; though ſin may endeavour to bring the believer into ſubjection, yet it hath not abſolute ſway over him.

(6.) In regard ſin hath not *that power* over ſuch as are under grace, as it had formerly before they were under it; for, notwithſtanding that ſin prevails, yet it prevails not as it did before, when the *ſtrong man kept all his goods in peace*, 2 Pet. iv. 4. They *run not to the ſame exceſs of riot;* there is ſome more in them that oppoſes ſin; and ſin does not rule ſo abſolutely and peaceably in them as it does in theſe that are under the law. Formerly the ſtrong man kept all in peace, while the man *committed ſin with greedineſs;* but now there are always proteſtations and upriſings againſt it, ſin hath not abſolute, peaceable, and voluntary dominion.

(7.) Believers under grace are freed from ſin, in regard ſin, in its *principal deſign*, is broken; its chief ſtrength is taken away: as when two great parties are competing and ſtriving with one another, there is a fort or principal city of the kingdom; and whoſoever of them can make themſelves maſter of that, they are fair to carry the whole kingdom; therefore both ſtrive to gain it, and he that firſt gains it has much weakened his enemy's power: ſo it is here, the great deſign of ſin and Satan is to keep the ſoul from cloſing with Chriſt; he hides their need of Chriſt from them ſo long as he can; and when they come to ſee their need of Chriſt, he ſeeks to comfort and ſalve them by the law, or by their legal endeavours: when this miſcarries with him, then, by a multitude of objections he ſcars them from Chriſt; all his forces and might are bent upon this, as his chief and only deſign, to keep the ſoul and Chriſt from joining together; for then he knows he hath loſt them for ever. Now, when the Lord Jeſus, in a day of power, hath ſo far overcome Satan, that he hath broken his chief deſign, and, maugre all the oppoſition of the devil and corruption, hath made the ſoul to come to him and believe on him, and ſo hath put the ſoul into a ſtate of reconciliation, life, and grace, then he hath very much delivered them from the power of ſin, eſpecially the mother-ſin of unbelief, John xvi. 9.

(8.) In regard that ſin hath got a *deadly wound* by the power of converting grace, of which it never heals again till it totally die. There is ſuch a plot laid in the day of believing and converſion, as ſin will certainly be blown up with; having got a death's wound, it will die ere long. Indeed, it may be like a man in a malignant fever, that hath ſtrength of humours,

mours, and in whom the ſtrength of nature is overcome; he ſeems to be very ſtrong, ſo as three men perhaps cannot get him kept in the bed: yea, all this is but only the raging of his humour, and nature's laſt attempt; for within a few hours the man dies. So, after ſin hath got a death's wound, it may rage for a little, but dies at laſt, like an ox felled on the forehead with an ax; how does he leap and ſtamp, and put forth power with violence for a while? but at laſt falls down and dies. Thus the firſt draught of the water of life that the ſoul by faith drinks, proves poiſon to ſin; and, the more of this water that the ſoul drinks, the more is the power of ſin abated; there is a trap laid for ſin. You have a word, Obad. ver. 7. *They have laid a wound under thee;* there is a train laid for ſin, that cannot fail to be its death. Why, what for a train? why, the believer, by faith, ſets all at work againſt ſin; not only prayers and tears, and all means and duties, under the conduct of new-covenant grace; but the ſpecial train is the word and promiſe of Chriſt; the grace and fulneſs of Chriſt; the blood, righteouſneſs, and merit of Chriſt; the power, grace, and Spirit of Chriſt, are all employed to knock down ſin, and all clapt upon ſin's head; ſo that its power muſt ceaſe, and it cannot but die. *

MY friends, we need to ſeek ſalvation from ſin, elſewhere than in by the law and the works thereof; for the law of God cannot ſave or juſtify the leaſt tranſgreſſor of it, otherwiſe it muſt condemn itſelf, which is impoſſible: *Curſed is every one,* ſays the law, *that continues not in all things written in the book of the law to do them;* and we are obliged to ſay AMEN to that curſe, as every way juſt and righteous: *Curſed is he that confirms not all the words of this law, to do them; and all the people ſhall ſay,* AMEN, Deut. xxvii. 26. It is the very nature of the law to condemn the leaſt tranſgreſſor of it, whatever after-works of obedience he may perform; for, *Whoever ſhall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all,* James ii. 10. Therefore the higheſt act of obedience, even of the ſaints in heaven, cannot expiate the leaſt breach of God's law, neither can any duty performed take away the fault of a ſin committed. Sin therefore retains its ſtrength to enſlave, and ſtrength to deſtroy the ſinner, by virtue of the broken law that he is under, ſo long as he hath not wherewith to repair the honour of the law: the honour of the precept of the law muſt be repaired by a perfect obedience, and the honour of the threatening by a complete ſatisfaction, otherwiſe the ſtrength of ſin remains; but, whenever a man is clothed with the obedience and ſatisfaction of Chriſt, then being reputed no tranſgreſſor, but a perfect keeper and fulfiller of the law, it is no more the ſtrength of ſin in him; for, according to our doctrine from this text, *the law of works is the ſtrength of ſin,* only to the ſinner, by whom it is broken, not to the believer, by whom it is fulfilled in his glorious Head. ***

HAVING already, elſewhere, diſcuſſed the doctrinal part, finiſhed the firſt uſe of caution, and deduced twelve inferences for information; there are ſtill many moe leſſons may be learned from this doctrine, beſides what I have already deduced; ſuch as,

1. Hence we may ſee the *dangerous* and *damnable influence* of *legal doctrine,* that tends to keep ſinners under the law; for thus they are under the power of ſin. The legal ſtrain, under covert of zeal for the law, hath a native tendency to marr true holineſs, and all acceptable obedience to the law, inſomuch, that the greateſt legaliſt is the greateſt Antinomian, or enemy to the law: the goſpel is ſlighted and diſparaged by many, as if it left men to a lawleſs liberty, and the law is cried up in oppoſition to it; and therefore God leaves men to all lawleſs impieties, as a righteous puniſhment of their contemning of grace, by which alone the ſtrength of ſin can be broken, Rom. vi. 14. Why does the devil, in all generations, oppoſe himſelf ſo much to the goſpel, and to the doctrine of grace, and raiſes up all the calumnies in the world againſt it? Even becauſe it is the doctrine of grace that deſtroys his kingdom; for the devil knows, that while men are under the law, they are under his power, and under the power of ſin; therefore he hath no great ill-will at legal doctrine: but if one preach up grace, and nothing but free grace, then he will raiſe a *hue* after him, as an *enemy to the law and holineſs* †. Why, what ails the devil at the goſpel? Even becauſe nothing ſpoils his market among ſouls ſo much, as the goſpel, when it comes with power; for it is the goſpel, and not the law, that is the immediate inſtrument of converſion, Gal. iii. 2. and of true holineſs, Tit. ii. 11, 12. And what is it that makes the goſpel the *power of God to ſalvation,* and the powerful inſtrument of converting ſinners to God? Even becauſe therein is *revealed the righteouſneſs of God, from faith to faith,* Rom. i. 15, 17. and therein the *righteouſneſs of God, without the law, is manifeſted,* Rom. iii. 21. What was the reaſon, that, in the beginning of our glorious Reformation ſuch great multitudes were quickened to ſpiritual life, and made fruitful in the ways of God? Why, God raiſed up ſome inſtruments to publiſh and illuſtrate the doctrine of grace, and their preaching wrought wonders, the power of God attending the publication of it; they harped moſt upon this ſtring, to clear the doctrine of juſtification by grace, without the works of the law, and in oppoſition to the damnable doctrine of the church of Rome, which ſets up mens works as the matter of their juſtification: but as all the Reformers harped ſweetly upon the ſtring of grace, ſo this article, ſays Luther, reigns in my heart, "That "we are juſtified freely by grace, through the "redemption that is in Chriſt." But now-a-days, we are become ſo far aſhamed of the goſpel of Chriſt, that as all imaginable methods have been taken to diſparage the preaching of it; ſo ſome, that have but a faint inclination to preach it, are diſcouraged from meddling too much with this theme; and others betake themſelves to a legal ſtrain; or, if they preach grace, it is in ſuch a hampered way, and with ſo many cautions and circumlocutions, as if there were a great danger in preaching free grace, but no danger in preaching the law. Is there need of caution in preaching of CHRIST, and no caution to be uſed in

* Here ends what was delivered at Orwel. —— Where the two following diſcourſes were delivered is uncertain. The firſt paragraph is introductory.

† The ground of ſuch an accuſation may be ſeen accounted for, p. 70, 149, 150, 178, 190.

preach-

preaching Moſes? I am not againſt ſuitable caution on all hands; but it is to be feared, there will be little revival of a Reformation, till the doctrine of grace vent more freely under the conduct of the Spirit, giving ſuch an appropriating faith and perſuaſion of the free favour, love, and grace of God in Chriſt, as took place in our Reformers days. Whence is it that all manner of ſin and profaneneſs rages in our day? Why, goſpel-light is either darkened or ſlighted, and men remain under the law, which is the ſtrength of ſin.

2. See hence the *dreadful corruption* and *depravation* of our *nature*, and the *deplorable condition* of ſinners in their *natural ſtate*, in that the law, which forbids ſin, ſhould be in men the ſtrength of ſin, and ſhould irritate corruption, and ſtir up to more ſin. The law, inſtead of healing that diſeaſe, does increaſe it; as it is ſaid, Hoſ. vii. 1. *When I would have healed Iſrael, then the iniquity of Ephraim was diſcovered, and the wickedneſs of Samaria.* See Rom. viii. 9, 10, 11. It fares with men under the dominion of the law, as with wolves and dogs, that grow more fierce by their being tyed up and confined: and as with a brook, which if not interrupted, runs calmer; but if it be dammed up, then *Spumens et fervens, et ab obice ſævior ibit*; "It "ſwells beyond its bounds, and rages and "runs down afterwards the more violently." When the ſun of the law ſhines upon mens dunghill-hearts, they bring forth the more noiſom ſmell; hence, tell the unregenerate man of his ſins, he is the more inclined thereto; tell him of his duties, he is the more averſe therefrom: why, whence does this proceed? It even comes to paſs by theſe two means, 1. God is provoked by ſin, to work theſe ſtrange effects upon men, as an *angry Judge*; he makes the law, which ſhould be their ſouls meat and drink, to be poiſon to them. 2. Becauſe the law is *contrary* to ſin, therefore ſin is contrary to it; they violently oppoſe each other. If there were no ſin, the law would be pleaſant to them, they would wear it as jewels about their neck, and write it upon the tables of their heart; but now, oh! how oppoſite is the carnal heart to all ſpiritual work! Some ſpeak of their good hearts, and good nature; but, *can any good thing come out of Nazareth?* any good thing out of a ſinful nature? Naturally we delight in good, juſt as fiſh delight to be out of the water; take a fiſh out of its watery element, and ſo long as it lives it is not quiet, it does nothing but leaps and tumbles up and down; ſo ſet carnal men upon ſpiritual work, they are out of their element, they cannot live, cannot reſt there, Hoſ. vi. 5. Praying and preaching does, as it were, hew and ſlay, vex and torment them; they are never eaſy till they be in their own element again. That horſe muſt be a froward beaſt, that, the more he is ſpurred forward, the more he runs backward; and a ſtubborn child, that, the more his father injoins him to do a thing, the more he ſets himſelf againſt it: this is the ſtate of every one by nature; men huff and ſnuff at reproof, and cannot endure contradiction. And as our nature is a corrupt and contradicting nature, in oppoſition to the law; ſo it is a heterogeneous and ſelf-contradictory nature: men are, while under the curſe of the law, both under the power of ſin, and under the power of ſelf-righteouſneſs; having a curſed oppoſition to the law as a rule of holineſs, and yet a woful inclination to be juſtified by the law as a covenant of works, Rom. x. 3.; and, as the expreſſion is, Gal. vi. 21. they *deſire to be under the law*, to be ſaved by it; and yet they cannot endure to be under it, to be ruled by it. They take *occaſion to ſin* from the law, Rom. vii. 8.; as ſome evidently do, when they ſcorn their teachers, and turn their preaching into ſcoffing: and yet they take occaſion to *boaſt* from the law, Rom. iii. 27. as if they were too wiſe to be inſtructed, and too good and righteous to deſpair of life by the law. Thus the law they are under is their ruin, and they know it not. While the commandment never came with power to their effectual conviction, ſin and ſelf remain in their power; and yet of this they are ignorant, that *the ſtrength of ſin is the law*. They perceive not the ſtrength of ſin that they are under, nor the ſtrength of natural corruption, nor the dreadful curſe they are under, becauſe they know not the law they are under, nor perceive it in its ſpirituality and ſeverity, in its mandatory and minatory power, which gives ſin both its commanding and condemning ſtrength.

3. Hence we may ſee the *duty of all unbelievers* under the power of ſin, namely, *to come to Chriſt*, and to come under his grace, who is the *end of the law for righteouſneſs to every one that believeth*, as they would not remain under the yoke of the law, and ſo under the ſtrength of ſin. Oh! what a fearful thing is it to be under the law! *For as many as are of the works of the law, are under the curſe*. Your works can never ſatisfy the law; to attempt this, were to build a caſtle in the air? and, as a ſnow-ball, the more it is rolled, the bigger it grows; ſo, the more you go on to get a righteouſneſs in yourſelf to fulfil the law, the further off are you from it, and the more involved under the curſe, as being a *debtor to do the whole law*, Gal. v. 3. And, Oh! how dreadful will your ſtate be in a dying hour, and on the brink of eternity, if you have no righteouſneſs that can pleaſe the holineſs, or pacify the juſtice of God! you will have nothing to expect, but to bear the weight of your own ſins for ever, while God will open the treaſures of his fury, and ſhut the bowels of his mercy for ever upon you; and when you have ſuffered millions of years in hell, yet not one mite of a million of your law-debt will be paid! O then, deſpair, abſolutely deſpair of getting any good by the law, whether by your own doing or ſuffering; and ſee the neceſſity of flying to Chriſt, and his doing and ſuffering, knowing that there is no other way of getting both the law and the Lawgiver ſatisfied. O happy theſe, who are perſuaded, through grace, to take this way, namely, of coming to Chriſt alone, for deliverance from the law, and ſo from the ſtrength of ſin!

4. Hence we may ſee what is the *duty of believers in Chriſt*, who are delivered from the law. Surely they ought to give evidence that they are delivered from the ſtrength of ſin, by aſpiring after the ſtrength of grace: for, as it is ſaid of believers, Rom. vi. 14. *Sin ſhall not have dominion over you; for you are not under the law, but under grace*; which ſays, that by their being delivered from the law, they are delivered from the reigning ſtrength of ſin; ſo it is the duty of believers to give evidence that they are *not under the law*, nor conſequently under the *ſtrength of ſin*,

ſin, by aiming at the *ſtrength of grace*, or the higheſt and nobleſt degrees thereof, in oppoſition to the *ſtrength of ſin*.

If you aſk, *When is it that the ſtrength of grace does appear in a believer?*

I ſhall offer ſome inſtances of the *ſtrength of grace*: I ſpeak not now of grace in the *fountain*, as it is in God, but of grace in the *ſtreams*, as it ought to ſhine in the believer.

(1.) The *firſt* inſtance of the ſtrength of grace is, when the believer can be *high* and yet *low*; high in his attainments, and yet low in his thoughts and apprehenſions of himſelf. Thus Paul was high in gifts, high in graces, high in comforts, high in ſervices, high in ſucceſs, high in manifeſtations, high in many excellent reſpects, and yet low and humble in ſpirit: for, if we take his own verdict of himſelf, he looks on himſelf as the leaſt of all ſaints, the chief of all ſinners, not worthy to be called an apoſtle; as I might inſtance in ſeveral of his epiſtles; yea, he calls himſelf *nothing*, 2 Cor. xii. 11. And, O how becoming is it for believers to be low and humble amidſt theſe high and eminent graces and attainments! For he that was the higheſt became the loweſt; *Learn of me*, ſays Chriſt, *for I am meek and lowly in heart*: and yet ſo high, that, in the preceding verſe, he had ſhewed how all things were delivered to him by his Father, Mat. xi. 27, 28, 29. Oh! may not duſt and aſhes bluſh and be aſhamed to be proud, when GOD humbled himſelf! Oh! for a vile worm to ſwell, when MAJESTY humbled itſelf!

(2.) The *ſecond* inſtance of the ſtrength of grace, is, when the believer is *low*, and yet *high*; lying low in the duſt before God continually, and yet high and heavenly-minded, according to Col. iii. 1, 2.; when the lower he ſinks in ſelf-abaſement, the higher he mounts up as on eagles wings in ſpiritual-mindedneſs and holy loftineſs of heart, looking down with a generous diſdain upon worldly things, that carnal minds are ſo much taken up with.

(3.) The *third* inſtance of the ſtrength of grace, is, when a believer is *full*, and yet *empty*; full of worldly enjoyments, and yet empty of love to the world; enjoying all manner of temporal good things, and yet able to ſay, as Pſal. lxxiii. 25. *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none on earth that I deſire beſide thee*: And with Paul, *I am crucified to the world, and the world to me*. It is an inſtance of great grace, when a man can ſwim in the ſtreams of creature-enjoyments, and yet ſo as not to forſake the fountain of living waters.

(4.) The *fourth* inſtance of the ſtrength of grace, is, when the believer is *empty*, and yet *full*; empty of all outward worldly enjoyments, and yet full, as having all, by having Chriſt. This is exemplified in Habakkuk, chap. iii. 17, 18. *Though the fig-tree ſhould not bloſſom, nor fruit be found in the vine*, &c. *yet will I rejoice in the Lord, and be joyful in the God of my ſalvation*. Thus, when a man having nothing, yet poſſeſſes all things, by ſeeing all in Chriſt, even amidſt outward wants, loſſes, croſſes, and afflictions, then the ſtrength of grace appears.

(5.) The *fifth* inſtance of the ſtrength of grace, is, when the believer is at *eaſe*, and yet *afflicted*; at eaſe in reſpect of outward and inward proſperity, and yet afflicted for the afflictions of God's church and people, laying the church's calamities duly to heart. You have a notable example of this in David, 2 Sam. vii. 1. There you ſee that he *ſat in his houſe, and the Lord had given him reſt round about from all his enemies*, and thus he was at eaſe, but he ſays to Nathan, *Behold, now I dwell in a houſe of cedar, but the ark of God dwells within curtains*, ver. 2. Though he was at reſt and eaſe, ſo that his own perſonal intereſt proſpered; yet he was afflicted, becauſe it fared not ſo well with the houſe and intereſt of God. It is choice grace, to be deeply afflicted with the affliction of the church, even when no perſonal affliction takes place.

(6.) The *ſixth* inſtance of the ſtrength of grace, is, when a believer is *afflicted*, and yet at *eaſe*. I mean, when he is compaſt about with perſonal affliction, and yet eaſy and quiet, in a holy, humble ſubmiſſion to the will of God, and chearfully acquieſces therein: *I was dumb, and opened not my mouth, becauſe thou didſt it*, ſays the pſalmiſt. Thus Aaron held his peace, even when God's diſpenſations toward his children were terrible.

(7.) The *ſeventh* inſtance of the ſtrength of grace, is, when the believer preſſes after the greateſt meaſure of perſonal holineſs and *imparted* righteouſneſs, and yet lives wholly and depends intirely upon an *imputed* righteouſneſs: See a notable example of this, in Paul, Phil. iii. 12, 13, 14. where he is preſſing after the greateſt degree of holineſs; and yet, ver. 7, 8, 9. he lives and depends only and wholly upon the imputed righteouſneſs of Chriſt for juſtification and acceptance with God.

(8.) The *eighth* inſtance of the ſtrength of grace, is, when a believer can apprehend *love* in God's heart, even when he ſees nothing but *frowns* in his face; and when, with Abraham, *againſt hope he believes in hope*; and ſays, with Job, *Though he ſlay me, yet will I truſt in him*. To love a ſmiting God, and truſt in a ſlaying God, or notwithſtanding all his ſlaying diſpenſations, argues great grace; and even when *walking in darkneſs*, and *having no light*, then to *truſt in the name of the Lord*; and when he is calling him a *dog*, then to draw arguments for his faith out of ſuch a word, and to plead kindneſs on him amidſt all the frowns of his face, and blows of his hand: this is conquering grace.

(9.) The *ninth* inſtance of the ſtrength of grace, is, when believers ſee a beauty in the *ſervice* of religion, as well as in the *ſweets* of it; a beauty in ſpiritual employments, as well as ſpiritual enjoyments; when it is their meat and drink to do their Lord's will, and work his work, as well as enjoy his preſence; and when it is their very life to ſerve the Lord. O but they are come a great length, that can ſay, *To us to live is Chriſt!*

(10.) The *tenth* inſtance of the ſtrength of grace, is, when a man can rejoice in the *gifts*, *graces*, and *uſefulneſs* of others, even when they *outſhine his own*, and eclipſe him; and when a man can rejoice to ſee the work of God carried on by others, though himſelf be laid aſide, and ſhare not in the honour of it. Such eminent grace was in Moſes, when he ſaid, *Envieſt thou for my ſake? would to God all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them*, Num. xi. 29. And ſuch eminent grace was in Paul, when he rejoiced that Chriſt was preached, though with a deſign to cloud and eclipſe him, Phil. i. 18. Some have noticed two things as carrying noble grace in them: the one is, to be willing to be uſed in God's work, without

without being taken notice of, or having the honour of it; and the other is, for a man to rejoice to see the work of God carried on by others, though he himself be laid aside.

(11.) The *eleventh* instance of the strength of grace, is, when a man can set the *glory of Christ above his own interest*, his own happiness, his own life and concerns. Moses and Paul were also eminent in this; Moses content to be *blotted out of God's book*, and Paul content to be *accursed for Israel's sake:* what was this, but, as some observe with respect to Moses, a preferring the glory of God before their own salvation, whose glory they looked upon as conjoined with Israel's preservation, in respect of the promises made to the fathers, and in respect of the blasphemy which the Egyptians and adversaries were ready to belch out against God, should he destroy them utterly. And again, we find Paul not only willing to be *bound*, but even to *die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus;* Christ's honour being dearer to him than his life. O Sirs, it is rare grace for a man to be content that his name be eclipsed, and his honour laid in the dust, if the name and honour of Christ may be advanced thereby; and content to be a footstool on which Christ may ascend his throne.

(12.) The *twelfth* instance of the strength of grace, is, when a man can account no outward *adversity* too hard to suffer for the *name of Christ on earth*, and no outward *prosperity* too dear to part with for the *enjoyment of Christ in heaven:* when, on the one hand, he accounts no outward adversity too hard to suffer for the name of Christ on earth, and can glory in the cross of Christ; it is said of the disciples, Acts v. 41. They *rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Christ;* or, as the words may be read, that they were HONOURED TO BE DISHONOURED for Christ. And when, on the other hand, they account no outward prosperity too sweet, or too dear, to part with for the enjoyment of Christ in heaven. If a man be in affliction, adversity, distress, sickness, pain, and then be willing to be gone, there is not much here, this may be where there is no grace at all; but when a man enjoys abundance of worldly comforts and contentments, and yet longs for heaven and perfect holiness and happiness; when, though he may say, *It is good to be here*, yet he is saying, O it is better to be there, *to be with Christ is best of all;* and therefore is breathing with the spouse, Song viii. 14. *Make haste, my Beloved, and be thou like to a roe, or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices:* make haste to bring me to the place where I shall be *for ever with the Lord*, and *shall be like him;* for *I shall see him as he is:* no paradise here being like the paradise above. This were an instance of the strength of grace; and, O but a new discovery of the glory of Christ would make a man long to be above, and look with contempt upon all sublunary enjoyments! For, as a man that looks any time on the natural sun, when after that he looks down, the earth is but a lump of darkness to him; so, if we look to the glory of Christ, the Sun of righteousness, and the glory of heaven, how will it darken all worldly glory, and make us long to be above. —— Now, I say, it is the duty of believers, that are delivered from under the law, and consequently from the strength of sin, to discover, in opposition thereto, the strength of grace, in these or the like instances that I have named.

"To seek life by the law, or justification by "the deeds of it, says one, is to seek life in "death, justification in condemnation, and "heaven in hell." There are two things necessary to salvation, namely, *justification*, and *sanctification;* but the law can give none of them. Pardon sin it cannot; for, it is the office of the law to condemn sinners, and to curse the transgressors of it: renew unto holiness it cannot; for, though it be *holy*, yet it cannot make any holy, in regard, that whom it leaves under the curse, it leaves under the power of sin, which is the leading part of the curse; on which account it is declared in our text, that *the strength of sin is the law.* If the law could make a sinner either happy or holy, it could neither be just nor holy itself; but so just and holy is the law, that it punishes the least transgression with the greatest judgment: now, the strength of sin being the greatest judgment, and the greatest curse; to inflict this judgment on a sinner, and yet to make him holy, is a contradiction; therefore, though it require holiness, yet it cannot work holiness in a sinner: and hence, it does not detract from, but rather declare and illustrate both the justice and holiness of the law, to say, that *the strength of sin is the law,* And, from this subject,

5. We may further infer the *woful nature* and *infinite evil of sin*, as it stands in opposion to the infinite holiness of God manifested in his holy law: for, in this doctrine, we may see sin to be both a breach of the command, and a branch of the curse of God's law; for, as I shewed in the doctrinal part, the law threatened death to the transgressor, and spiritual death, which is the power and strength of sin, is the greatest death therein threatened. The meaning of this, in short, is, that the grand part of the threatening of the law was to this effect, *In the day thou sinnest thou shalt die;* which, when understood of spiritual death, the meaning is, If thou sin, and break my law, then thou shalt be left to the power of sin; I will punish thy sin with sin; there is no evil so great as sin, and there is no punishment so great as sin; if therefore, says the law, the commission of sin be thy choice, the strength of sin shall be thy doom: here is the greatest curse of God's law against sin; sin is a departing from God. Now, says God in the law, If you depart from me, then I will let you depart from me to sin, where the strength of sin shall be your greatest punishment in time; and at last I will bid you depart from me to hell, where the perfection of sin shall be your greatest punishment to eternity. The strength of sin then is to be considered, not only as it is a breach of the law, but as it is a branch of the curse thereof. This sentence of the law is past, and it is so far execute, as that a man is under the power and strength of sin, which, in this respect, is a penal evil, as well as a moral. The *first sin* that ever was committed by our first parents, was a *moral evil;* that is, a violation of the moral law, a breach of the command: but all the following sin, both in them and their sinful posterity, is not only a moral evil; that is, a breach of the command; but also a penal evil; that is, a branch of the curse, or a just judgment inflicted, according to the sentence of the holy law, against the sinner for his breach thereof. As sin is a moral

evil,

evil, though it take occaſion from the law, yet the holy law can have no cauſality, no hand in it; for, on the contrary, as it commands holineſs, ſo it diſcharges ſin, and threatens it with the fire and ſword of God's everlaſting vengeance: but as ſin is a penal evil, or a righteous puniſhment of ſin, the law is properly the ſtrength of it; for, to ſay in this ſenſe, that the ſtrength of ſin is the law, is to ſay, that the ſtrength of ſin is a juſt judgment of God inflicted upon the ſinner, according to the threatening of his juſt and holy law. Ye ought, then, ſtill to diſtinguiſh here betwixt ſin, as it is a moral evil, and as it is a penal evil; for, not to diſtinguiſh well here, were to make this text always unintelligible to you: why? Becauſe to ſay that the *law is the ſtrength of ſin*, or the *cauſe* of it, as it is a *moral evil*, were to *blaſpheme the holy law of God;* but to ſay, that the *law is the ſtrength of ſin*, as it is a *penal evil*, and an execution of the ſentence of the law, is to *commend the law*, in its holineſs and juſtice both. Let this therefore be kept ſtill in mind, that the law is properly the ſtrength of ſin, not as ſin is a breach of its command, but as it is a branch of its curſe; and let this fill your heart with a deep ſenſe of the woful nature and prodigious evil of ſin, in that it is both a breach of God's command, and a branch of God's curſe. As it is a breach of the command, it is our giving up ourſelves to work wickedneſs; as it is a branch of the curſe, it is God's giving us up to ourſelves, and to the rule and ſtrength of ſin. Behold ſin here as the moſt fearful invention that ever was: for, as ſin is the greateſt evil that hell could invent, ſo God's puniſhing ſin with ſin, is the greateſt evil that heaven could invent. Sin, as it is a moral evil, and a breach of the law-command, is the moſt ugly brat of hell, a brat of our own, begotten in us by the devil; and in this reſpect it is an affronting of the holineſs of God, appearing in the precept of the law: and ſin, as it is a penal evil, or the ſtrength of ſin, as it is the puniſhment of ſin, and a branch of the law-curſe, is the moſt dreadful fruit and offspring of Heaven's vengeance againſt ſin; and in this reſpect it is a flaſh of the fire of God's infinite juſtice, ariſing out of the threatening of the broken law.——See here, then, the infinite evil of ſin, in that the *ſtrength of ſin is the law.*

6. Hence we may infer the *ſtanding force* and *binding power and authority of the law* over all that are under it, as a covenant of works: though it be broken, yet it is binding; though it be violated by us, yet it is obligatory upon us by nature, which is evident from its continuing to be the ſtrength of ſin to all unbelievers, who, if they were not both under the power of the command, and of the curſe of the law, would not be under the commanding and condemning power of ſin: the power of the law-command they are under, is the ſtrength of ſin occaſionally; and the power of the law-curſe is the ſtrength of ſin effectively.

(1.) The power of the *command* they are under, is the ſtrength of ſin *occaſionally*; Rom. vii. 8. *Sin, taking occaſion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiſcence.* Here the command is the occaſion that ſin takes, not that it gives occaſion; nay, the law, in its own nature, is ſo far from being the *cauſe* of ſin, that it does not ſo much as give *occaſion* of ſinning: but man's corrupt nature does take occaſion from it to break forth into more ſin, when it is ſtirred up, and irritate by the command and prohibition of the law; even as the ſparks ariſe out of a furnace when it is ſtirred up, ſo do the ſparkles of ſin ariſe out of the furnace of corrupt nature, when ſtirred up by the knowledge of the law that condemns it; and, inſtead of being amended thereby, doth bring forth ſin and ſinful deſires more abundantly. The law being the ſtrength of ſin this way, ſhews how much the power and force of the law takes place even over unbelievers, though in a way that is very terrible; and how much they are under obligation to the command, which yet they are ſo unwilling to yield ſubjection unto; yea, and are direct enemies to, Rom. viii. 7. Surely all things work together for evil to them that hate God, ſince the law itſelf, which ſhould ſerve to call men to God, makes them the more to flee from him, and run headlong unto ſin and death, through the untowardneſs of our nature, that is altogether eſtranged from God. This, by the way, takes the whole fault of our ſins from the law, and lays it where it ought to be, even upon our perverſe crooked natures: for the law is no more to be blamed by becoming the occaſion of ſo many great evils, than a phyſician is to be blamed, if, upon his forbidding cold drink unto a ſick man, the patient ſhould more frequently and vehemently thirſt after it. There are *three* ſorts of people that ſhould lay this matter to heart: All the *children of diſobedience*, that are in a natural ſtate, ſhould hereby be ſtirred up to ſeek after a new birth, and a new nature, ſince this is the wretched condition of corrupt nature: All the *children of grace*, whoſe natures are changed, ſhould hereupon be humbled, both in regard that they were once under the power of this poiſoned corruption, and have ſtill the remains of it ſticking in them, and prompting them to offend: and again, all the *hearers of the word* in general, ought hereupon to hear with fear, and to pray that they be not made the worſe by the word, through the fault of their own wicked nature; and particularly, that the goſpel itſelf be not the *ſavour of death* to them, and the *ſtrength of ſin;* which goſpel is the only thing in the world that preſcribes an antidote againſt the ſtrength of ſin. It is ſad enough, when men draw ſtrength to ſin from the law; but, what a dreadful thing it is, to draw ſtrength to ſin from the goſpel! This is the ſin of ſins, that turns the *grace of God into wantonneſs*, and when Chriſt himſelf is a *ſtumbling-block*, and a *rock of offence.* But,

(2.) The power of the *curſe* of the law, that ſinners are under, is the ſtrength of ſin *effectively;* Rom. iv. 15. *The law worketh wrath; for where no law is, there is no tranſgreſſion:* as if the apoſtle ſhould ſay, Mens corrupt nature cannot obſerve God's law; therefore, where there is a law, there is and muſt be tranſgreſſion; where there is tranſgreſſion, there is and muſt be wrath: for the law muſt curſe the breaker of it; and of this curſe, as I ſaid, the ſtrength of ſin is a principal part.—Both theſe particulars then do prove the ſtanding force and authority of the broken law over all that are under it, and out of Chriſt; though they have loſt ability to obey, yet it retains its authority to command; and though the law is weak to juſtify, yet it is powerful to condemn. Its weakneſs to juſtify, is not the fault of the law; it

it is in us, Rom. viii. 3. *It is weak through the flesh*, our corrupt nature: it cannot justify us, because we cannot fulfil the righteousness of it, and it cannot give *life*, Gal. iii. 21. As the sun cannot give light to him that hath no eye; so the law cannot give life to him that hath no perfect righteousness: but its power to condemn is from its own nature, as it is a just law, cursing every transgressor, Gal. iii. 10.; and from the justice of the Law-giver, which appears in the sanction of the law, even as his holiness in the precept thereof. Every sinner out of Christ, then, remains under the commanding and condemning power of the law, as a covenant of works, as is evident from his being under the commanding and condemning power of sin; the strength of sin to command him, being *occasionally* from the commanding power of the law that he is under; and the strength of sin to condemn, being *properly* from the condemning power of the law that he is under: yea, the condemning power of the law influences the commanding as well as the condemning power of sin over him, while the sinner is by the sentence of the law righteously condemned to that slavery and bondage under sin, for his breach of the law; in which sense *effectively*, yet in a most holy and just manner, the law is the strength of sin. This standing force and binding authority of the law, as a covenant, both in its commanding and condemning power over unbelievers, is what makes them stand in absolute need of Christ, both in his active and passive obedience, as revealed in the gospel. The *law-command* they are under, when it is seen to be impreſtable, makes them need to flee to Christ's obedience; the *law-curse* that they are under. when it is seen to be intolerable, makes them need to flee to Christ's satisfaction: and hence it is said, Gal. iii. 24. *The law is our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ*; which it could not be, if sinners under the gospel were not under the commanding and condemning power of it: for, how does it bring us to Christ, but as it urges us to obedience, which is now impossible, and condemns us for our disobedience? Not that the law brings any to Christ directly; for it neither reveals Christ, nor can give strength to believe in him: but only accidentally, in that it accuses and condemns us, and so brings us to Christ, as a disease brings one to a physician.

7. Hence we may see the *danger* of being *ignorant of God's righteousness*, to the *establishing of a righteousness of our own*; seeing thus we keep ourselves under the law, and so under the power of sin: the danger of this is declared, Rom. x. 3. *They being ignorant of God's righteousness, and* so *going about to establish their own righteousness*, or to make their own rotten footless righteousness to stand, *have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God*: and thus they keep themselves under the law, which is the strength of sin. Whatever view we take of God's righteousness here, ignorance of it hath this sad effect. There are three ways in which God's righteousness is taken in scripture; either, 1. The righteousness that is in him, his essential holiness and righteousness: Or, 2. The righteousness that he requires of us by the law: Or, 3. The righteousness that he provides for us in the gospel. Now, ignorance of God's righteousness, in any of these respects, is a dangerous root of a legal spirit, and of establishing our own righteousness, and so of remaining under the law, that is the strength of sin.

(1.) If we consider it as the righteousness that is in God, his *essential righteousness* and infinite holiness of nature, as he is of *purer eyes than that he can behold iniquity*, and who *will in nowise clear the guilty*; surely they that know this righteousness of God, will never trust to a righteousness of their own. How can a sinner stand before this holy God, or be justified in his sight? Sinners may be justified in the sight of men by their works, but cannot be justified in the sight of God; nay, ignorance of God's righteousness fosters the opinion of self-righteousness and justification by works, which opinion is even the root of licentiousness of life. And whence is it that self-justiciaries, that hold justification by their own works, are ordinarily most licentious in their life and conversation? Why, the reason is, because the very same notions of God that make them fancy he is not so ill-pleased with their works, but that he can justify them by their works, do also make them fancy, that he is not so ill-pleased with their sins as that he will be too severe against them; and so here is a root of licentiousness on which sin grows, the strength whereof is the law.

(2.) If we consider God's righteousness, as the righteousness God requires of us in the *law*; ignorance of this makes them adventure on a righteousness of their own, and go about to establish it, and so remain under the law as the strength of sin. Men are ready to dream, that the law respects only some outward duties, which, when they comply with, they dream also that they are acquit by the law, and so they give loose reins to all other disobedience: but they do not know or consider, that the law requires perfection; and that internal, in heart and nature; external, in life and conversation; and eternal, in respect of perpetuity and duration; yea, sinless obedience; insomuch that it cannot justify any that is, or ever was a sinner. If this were considered, then their hopes by the law would give up the ghost.

(3.) If we consider God's righteousness, as the righteousness which God hath provided for us in the *gospel*; that is, *Christ the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth*, Rom. x. 3, 4. which is the principal meaning of the word here; it is the want of the knowledge of this righteousness, that makes men go about to establish a righteousness of their own, and trust to it; and so, remaining under the law, are under the power and strength of sin, because they remain under the curse of the law so long as they want this law-magnifying righteousness, this law-fulfilling righteousness: for the law cannot but curse every breaker of it; and so, the strength of sin being a part of the curse, they remain under the strength of sin so long as they remain under the curse of the law, through the want of this righteousness, which would make them to be accounted perfect keepers of the law, and so would really free them from the strength of sin.——See then, what a dangerous thing it is to be ignorant of God's righteousness.

8. Hence see, what need there was that our *help* should be laid upon such a *mighty one* as our Lord Jesus is, he being the *end of the law for righteousness*, who alone can deliver us from the strength of sin. There is no power can conquer sin, but that power that can satisfy the law, both

both in its command and demand. It is utterly impossible for any man to deliver himself from the strength of sin; nay, we can no more do it, than we can shake off the curse of the law that we are under: the strength of sin hath the strength of the curse on its side; the strength of the curse of the law hath the strength of infinite justice on its side: and so, the power that can only remove or break the strength of sin, is that infinite power that can fully satisfy infinite justice; this, therefore, is the work of him who is the *wisdom of God, and the power of God.* We need not only a helper, but a strong One; therefore God hath *laid help upon One that is mighty*, Psal. lxxxix. 19. We need not only a Saviour, but a great One, and so Christ is called, Isa. xix. 29. *He shall send them a Saviour, and a great One, and he shall deliver them.* He must be a great Saviour, that is the author of so great a salvation; none else but the eternal Son of God, who is essentially One with the Father and Holy Ghost. Wo to the Arian blasphemy, that would rob us of the only ground of our hope; yea, rob the Son of God of his supreme Deity. This is our mighty Samson, that carries away the gates of Gaza, the gates of hell, that they might not prevail against us; and he only was able to carry away the strength of sin, by giving full satisfaction to the law and Law-giver, and so to stop the progress of God's infinite wrath against sinners with his everlasting righteousness; which law-magnifying righteousness being once imputed and applied, the legal and condmning strength of sin is broken, and thereupon the actual and commanding strength of it gradually broken, according to the measure of faith's daily improvement of this righteousness of Christ, till it be wholly destroyed in the very in-being thereof at death. For, as he is *able*, so he will *save to the uttermost all that come to God by him.*

9. Hence see, what *obligations believers are under to Christ*, their great Captain of salvation, and glorious Conqueror, that delivers them from the law. How sweet is this swan-song in the view of death, *O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be to God that giveth us the victory, through Jesus Christ our Lord.* What makes sin, as it is the sting of death, and death, as it bears that sting, to be so terrible? Why, it is the law, as it is the strength of sin; but now, the great Law-giver becoming, in the person of his Son, the law-satisfier, in the room of the sinner the law-breaker, and thereupon the judge becoming the justifier, according to Rom. iii. 26. the law hath no more power to curse the believer; and so sin hath lost its strength, and death lost its sting, and the grave its victory. The believer being perfectly delivered from the curse of the law, he is perfectly delivered from the strength of sin, as it is a branch of the curse.

QUEST. *What is the strength of sin that still remains with the believer while here, if it be not a part of the curse?*

ANSW. (1.) Sin in all unbelievers is, as I said, both a breach of the law, and a branch of the curse: but, with respect to believers, though their sin be a breach of the law, yet they are under no part of the curse of the law; for, though sin be a cursed thing, and the law curses sin where-ever it is, and curses the sin of believers, as well as the sin of others; yet, as the law cannot curse the person of the believer, so the sin that is suffered to remain in him, is designed for some other purpose than to be a curse to him; for it is one of the great privileges of the believer, that he is delivered from the wrath of God, and the curse of the moral law. Therefore,

(2.) Though sin in itself, and in its own nature, is a curse and a misery where-ever it is; yet, with respect to the believer, whenever he is delivered from the curse of the law; the remaining strength of sin in him is made *subservient* to some other end than ever it had before, through the infinite wisdom of that God who can turn a curse to a blessing, and a misery to a mercy. Though he still looks upon sin as his greatest misery, and on himself as miserable and wretched because of sin, saying, with the apostle, Rom. vii. 24. *O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of sin and death?* yet it is his mercy that he sees sin to be his misery now, inasmuch as it shall not make him miserable hereafter. Sin is still the greatest burden to the believer; but it is his mercy that sin is his burden now, that it may not weigh him down to hell, as it will do the rest of the world, who feel not the burden of sin in time. Sin is still, to the believer, the greatest disease; but it is his mercy that sin is his disease: for, whereas others that go on in sin impudently, and without spiritual remorse, sin is not their disease, with which they are affected or afflicted, and they are in danger of dying of that disease, like a man that is distempered with a fever, and yet hath no sense of it; but believers in Christ, having sin for their disease, under which they sigh, and sob, and moan, and groan, the disease is not *unto death*, eternal death, but unto the *glory of God*, and to their good. It is to the glory of God, as he is JEHOVAA-ROPHI, the *Lord their helper* and *physician*; and it is ordered to their good, the curse is turned so far to a blessing, that the remaining strength of sin in the believer is made subservient to these following good ends.

1. It serves for his *instruction*, that he may see more and more of the corruption of his nature and the daily need that he hath of Christ, both for righteousness and strength, that Christ may be more and more precious to him, as the *brazen serpent* to the stung Israelites. Sin in itself tends to destruction, but, through grace, it turns to the believer's instruction; for hereby he learns more and more that his own righteousness is but filthy rags, that Christ's righteousness is the only fair and glorious robe: he learns more and more, that as his damnation would have been just, if he had been sent to hell; so his salvation will be free, if he be brought to heaven: he learns more and more many sad experiences in the daily working of sin in him, and many sweet experiences in the daily improvement of Christ.

2. The remaining strength of sin in the believer serves for his *correction*, as Peter's fall was for the correction of his pride and self-conceit, when he said, *Though all men forsake thee, yet will not I.* Indeed, it is one of the sorest effects of God's fatherly anger towards his children, when he leaves them to one sin, thereby to correct them for another: under such a dreadful correction as this, the believer may have dreadful apprehensions of God through unbelief, as if he were designed to ruin and destroy him, saying,

ſaying, as the church, Iſa. lxiii. 16. *Wherefore haſt thou made us to err from thy ways? and hardened our hearts from thy fear?* It is what the Lord's people may have frequent occaſions to obſerve, that the Lord ſharply reproves and corrects them for their ſloth and unwatchfulneſs, by leaving them to other ſins; as it was with David in the matter of Bathſheba: therefore, *Watch and pray*, ſays Chriſt, *that ye enter not into temptation.*

(3.) The remaining ſtrength of ſin in the believer ſerves for his *humiliation*; 2 Chron. xxxii. 26. *Hezekiah was humbled for the pride of his heart.* Believers are in danger of being lifted up, even after great manifeſtations; as Paul, 2 Cor. xii. 7.; therefore, a *thorn in the fleſh*, and a *meſſenger of Satan*, may be ordered *to buffet them, leſt they ſhould be exalted above meaſure.*

(4.) The remaining ſtrength of ſin in the believer ſerves for his *excitation* and *upſtirring*; it is ſo ordered, that ſin ſhould abide in believers, that it may be the continual ground, reaſon, and occaſion of the exerciſing of all graces, and putting a luſtre on their obedience: ſome excellent graces, ſuch as repentance and mortification, could have no exerciſe, if the ſtrength of ſin were altogether removed; and while we are in this world, there is a beauty in theſe graces, that is an overbalance for the evils of the remainders of ſin. And it renders ſpiritual obedience the more valuable, the more that remaining ſin renders it difficult and impracticable to nature.

[1.] The remaining ſtrength of ſin excites the believer to *love* and *long* for more of the enjoyment of Chriſt here, and for the full enjoyment of him hereafter, ſaying, O to be there, where there ſhall be no more ſin! O when ſhall the day break, and the ſhadows of ſin and ſorrow flee away! *Haſte, my beloved, and be thou like a roe, or a young hart, upon the mountains of Bether.*

[2.] The remaining ſtrength of ſin excites him to *weary* of this life: Oh! *I am weary of my life, becauſe of the daughters of Heth*, ſaid Rebekah; ſo, I am weary of my life, becauſe of the remains of ſin, ſays the believer; what is life to me, when I am in a continual conflict with ſuch boſom-enemies?

[3.] It excites him to *pray without ceaſing*, ſaying, with David, Pſal. xix. 12. *Who can underſtand his errors? cleanſe thou me from ſecret faults; keep back thy ſervant alſo from preſumptuous ſins, and let them not have dominion over me.* Where it is ſuppoſed, that ſecret ſins that are overlooked, and, perhaps, not known to be ſins, may make way for theſe that are preſumptuous. Thus there is a ſecret pride, that may ſeem to be nothing but a frame of mind ſuitable to our wealth, dignity, parts, or abilities; ſenſuality may ſeem to be nothing but a lawful participation of the good things of this life; paſſion may ſeem to be proper zeal; and covetouſneſs may ſeem to be but a neceſſary care of ourſelves and our families: but, when the ſeeds of theſe are covered with ſuch pretences, they will at length ſpring up, and bear bitter fruits in the lives of men. The beginning of all apoſtaſy lies in ſuch covered pretences: we need therefore to pray, with the pſalmiſt, to be *cleanſed from ſecret faults*, that we may be *kept back from preſumptuous ſin*: the remaining ſtrength of ſin excited him thus to pray.

[4.] It excites alſo to *deprecate*, with the pſalmiſt, Pſal. cxliii. 2. *Enter not into judgment with thy ſervant, for in thy ſight no fleſh can be juſtified:* The words here, *Enter not into judgment with thy ſervant*, may be read in the original, GO NOT TO LAW WITH THY SERVANT. Though David was a *ſervant of God*, a *man according to God's own heart*, yet he deprecates the law-trial: the beſt ſervants that ever God had, of mere men, cannot be juſtified by the law; they ſee ſin remaining in them, and therefore are excited to pray, *Lord, go not to law with me*; go not to the law-threatening with me, to purſue me for my debt; go not to the law-tribunal with me, but rather go to the goſpel-tribunal with me; go to Chriſt with me.

[5.] The remaining ſtrength of ſin excites them to make much of *Chriſt*, when they get a grip of him, and to ſay, with Jacob, Gen. xxxii. 26. *I will not let thee go, except thou bleſs me.* Oh! my woful ſin, and fearful departings had made a ſad ſeparation betwixt thee and me, inſomuch that I never thought thou wouldeſt have deigned to give me another viſit: but now, that I have got thee in my arms again, through grace I will keep the grip; I cannot think of our parting again, nor of my going back to that ſad and ſinful caſe again; nay, *I will not let thee go till thou bleſs me.*

[6.] The remaining ſtrength of ſin excites them to much *heart-exerciſe*, ſuch as ſelf-ſearching, and pleading that the Lord would ſearch, and try, and diſcover them to themſelves, ſaying, *That which I know not, teach thou me:* To ſelf-abaſement and abhorrence; *Now I abhor myſelf, and repent in duſt and aſhes:* To ſelf-annihilation; Oh! I am nothing, leſs than nothing, worſe than nothing: To ſelf-condemnation; now the man judges himſelf, and paſſes ſentence againſt himſelf in the court of conſcience, that he may not be judged but abſoilzed in the court of heaven: To ſelf-obſervation and watchfulneſs; according to that of the apoſtle, *Look to yourſelves*; and that of the pſalmiſt, *I ſaid, I will take heed to my ways, that I ſin not with my tongue*; he is therefore excited the more narrowly to notice and obſerve the traitor that is in his boſom, and to keep a watch: And to ſelf-reformation, ſaying, with David, *I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy teſtimonies.* And, in theſe reſpects, God makes the believer's malady to be his medicine; and, on theſe accounts, the ſtrength of ſin is not wholly aboliſhed in believers in time; and infinite wiſdom ſees, that a ſtate of ſpiritual warfare is beſt for them.

Let none, from what hath been ſaid, take encouragement to ſin, nor abuſe this grace of God unto wantonneſs; for they that do ſo, will diſcover themſelves to be ſtrangers to Chriſt, and ſo under the ſtrength of ſin, as it is a branch of the curſe of the law. Shun, like hell, and abhor that peace of mind that is conſiſtent with the love of, and living in any known ſin; for, though believers may be often ſurprized into known ſins, yet while they refuſe all inward peace but that which comes in by moſt fervent deſires of deliverance from ſin, and continual application to Chriſt for the ruin of ſin, they diſcover that they are ſafe from the dominion thereof: yet theſe people that maintain a preſumptuous peace, while they live in any known ſin, are near the borders of the territories of helliſh ſecurity, where ſin reigns unto death.

10. To add no more from this doctrine, we may

may infer the *dangerous influence* of any *new doctrine* of a *legal ſtrain*, that ſtands in oppoſition to this truth, *That the law of works is the ſtrength of ſin, to all ſinners that have broken and violate it.* Whence it being manifeſt, that all unbelievers are under the commanding and condemning power of the law, as a covenant of works, which appears by their being under the commanding and condemning ſtrength of ſin; and that it is the privileges only of believers that they are not under the law, as a covenant, either to be juſtified or condemned thereby; there is a twofold dangerous doctrine that ſtands in oppoſition to this truth.

[1.] That doctrine, which aſſerts, *That unbelievers, under the goſpel, are not under the* COMMANDING *power of the law, as a covenant of works:* Which ſome attempt to prove by this argument; Unbelievers, under the goſpel, cannot be under *two oppoſite obligations*, namely, to ſeek life by their *own* obedience; and, at the ſame time, to ſeek life by the obedience of *another*: now, they are, by the goſpel, obliged to ſeek life by the obedience of *another*, viz. of Chriſt; therefore, they are not obliged to ſeek life by their *own* obedience: and conſequently, ſay they, unbelievers are not under the *commanding* power of the law, as a covenant of works.

ANSW. This argument, or rather quirk, and ſophiſm, may be eaſily expoſed, if we conſider,

1. That it goes upon a wrong *hypotheſis*, ſuppoſing, as if the *form* of the command of the covenant of works did ly in this, that Adam was to *ſeek life by his obedience*, or that man was to *ſeek juſtification by his own works*; which is a ſuppoſition that is not matter of fact: for, Adam might have been juſtified by his works, or by his own perfect obedience, without ſeeking or aiming at any thing, but the pleaſing or glorifying of God, which is the *ſupreme end* of man's obedience; whereas, man's ſeeking, or aiming at life and juſtification by his obedience, is but a *ſubordinate end* thereof; yea ſuch, as that the command of that covenant might have been fulfilled without it: for, if Adam had yielded that perfect obedience, without ſeeking any thing elſe, or aiming at any other end, but the *ſupreme* one, *viz.* the glory of God, he would have got life by his obedience, even though he had generouſly neglected the ſupreme end altogether, namely, the ſeeking his own life by it, which was no part of the command itſelf. For, as our common Standards expreſs it, "When God created man, he entered into a "covenant of life with him, upon condition "of perfect obedience:" not upon condition of man's *ſeeking life by his obedience*; nay, this would have made the covenant of works run in a very ſelfiſh ſtrain, namely, inſtead of *Do, and live*; it would run, *Seek life by your doing, and you ſhall live:* and, inſtead of the threatening, *If you do not, you ſhall die*; it would run, *If you ſeek not life by your doing, you ſhall die:* which is a plain perverting the tenor of that covenant.

In oppoſition to that hypotheſis, we may reaſonably ſuppoſe, that if that covenant had ſtood, as Adam would not have claimed life ſo much upon his *perfect obedience*, as upon the *free promiſe* of God, connecting life with that obedience; ſo, in obeying, he would not ſo much, if at all, have ſought his own life and happineſs, as the glory of God, who graciouſly condeſcended to annex the promiſe of life with that obedience, which he was naturally obliged unto, prior to that annexation. Surely, what man was obliged to by nature was not made void, but rather furthered, by the covenant of works: but man was naturally obliged to obey his Creator perfectly, and that for this great end, *viz.* the glorifying of him; therefore, whatever hope of life, or fear of death, might be the conſequent of annexing the promiſe of life, and the threatening of death to the precept, yet it was the precept itſelf, to which life and death were thus annexed: that was the command of that covenant, and not man's ſeeking to have life, or to ſhun death by his obedience. The promiſe and threatening were motives to urge man's obedience; ſeeking to have life, or ſhun death, was but a ſubordinate end, that man might have lawfully had in his obedience. But now, to ſuppoſe, that man's being obliged to ſeek life by his obedience, was the command of the covenant of works, is to confound the *command* with the *ſanction*, and man's *obedience* to the command, with the *ſubordinate end* that he might have had in his obedience. If man had merely ſought himſelf, and his own life, by his obedience, without ſeeking God's glory; ſurely he had ſinned, and ſo broken that covenant: but if he had fought only God's glory, and yielded perfect obedience, merely with that view, and abſtracting from that ſubordinate end, the ſeeking of himſelf and his own life; I ſay, ſuppoſe he had done ſo, he would have got life by his obedience: therefore, ſeeing life might have been obtained by obedience, by virtue of the promiſe of life annexed to it, and obtained without man's ſeeking or aiming at himſelf, and his own life, by his obedience, then man's ſeeking life and juſtification thereby could never be the *preciſe form* of the command of that covenant. Why, the command could have been obeyed, and the promiſe of life, annexed thereto, could have been accompliſhed, without that ſeeking; ſeeing the promiſe was made to man's *obedience*, and not to his *ſeeking life* by his obedience. You ſee then, the error of the ſophiſm lies in miſtating and miſrepreſenting the *form* of the *command* of the covenant of works. Hence it is evident, that unbelievers, under the goſpel, may be obliged to ſeek life by the obedience of another, even of Chriſt, and yet remain under the commanding power of the covenant of works; ſince the command thereof did not ly preciſely in this, *viz.* that man was to ſeek life by his own obedience: no, this was but a *ſecondary end*, or a conſequent lawfully deducible from the promiſe annexed to the command, but no conſtitutive part of the command itſelf.

2. The fallacy of that ſophiſm appears alſo in this, that it ſuppoſes, as if *ſinners*, or unbelievers, not under the goſpel, were *obliged*, by the covenant of works, to *ſeek life and juſtification by their own works and obedience:* but though they, as well as other ſinners, do naturally, if they ſeek life at all, ſeek it by the law, or by their own works; yet the covenant of works never ſaid to a ſinner, *Seek life by your own works.* Though we ſhould grant, that *ſeeking life* by our *perfect obedience* were the proper command of the covenant of works, to man in his innocent ſtate, while he was capable to yield it; yet it never commanded a ſinner to ſeek life that way, nor did it ever promiſe life to a ſinner, a breaker of that covenant, upon his ſeeking life by his

his obedience; nay, it is impoſſible that ever the law ſhould do ſo, otherwiſe it would condemn itſelf, ſhould it offer to juſtify any tranſgreſſor of it, by whatever after-obedience of his; for, it is the very nature of the law to condemn the leaſt tranſgreſſor, whatever his after-works may be: no act of obedience, no not the higheſt, even of ſaints in heaven, can expiate for the leaſt breach of God's law; nor can any mortification take away the fault of ſin committed, Deut. xxvii. 26. Gal. iii. 10. Rom. iii. 20, 23. Jam. ii. 10. The law requires no leſs than a *ſinleſs obedience*; yea, the *perfect obedience* of a *ſinleſs man*; but never did, nor does require of any ſinner, that he ſhould ſeek life by his obedience. No man, that is a ſinner, is capable of any obedience but what is imperfect; now, imperfect obedience is a breach of the covenant of works, which requires abſolute perfection, Gal. iii. 10. Therefore, if it ſhould require any ſinner to ſeek life by his own obedience, then it would require him to ſeek life in a ſinful way, namely, by the continued breach of the law, which his beſt obedience would be, ſo long as it is, and cannot be but imperfect. Now, to ſuppoſe that the law requires this of any ſinner, whether under the goſpel or not, is to ſpeak wickedly of the holy and perfect law of God. The law of the covenant of works requires no leſs than ever it did; yea, it requires more of the ſinner, than it did of the ſinleſs man: it required only *active* obedience of innocent Adam, but now of the ſinner it requires *active* and *paſſive* obedience too; though the ſinner be inſolvent, and utterly unable to pay his debt, yet the law requires full payment of his double debt, both of obedience to the command, and ſatisfaction for his ſin in breaking of it.

Herein the caſe of unbelievers appears to be moſt miſerable, that they are under the *commanding*, as well as the *condemning* power of the covenant of works; that is, they are under an obligation to perfect obedience, and that upon pain of eternal death, under the ſentence whereof they already ly; and under the continued forfeiture of eternal life, and all title thereto, by reaſon of their want of that obedience, and violation of that covenant. That all unbelievers are under the *command* of the covenant of works, is plain,

(1.) Becauſe they are under the *curſe* of it. If they were not under the commanding power, they could not be under the condemning power of it; if they were not under obligation to the command of it, how could they juſtly be condemned by it, for want of obedience thereto, or tranſgreſſion thereof? Where no command, no tranſgreſſion; where no tranſgreſſion, no penalty: but under the penalty or ſentence thereof they are, Gal. iii. 10.: therefore they remain under the command of it, ſo long as they remain out of Chriſt.

(2.) That they are under the command of the covenant of works, is plain, becauſe they are under the *law* wherein *eternal life* is connected with *perfect doing*. That they are under the law, is evident, ſo long as they are not *under grace*, Rom. vi. 14. But it is now their miſery, that this law they are under, is a law wherein the connexion ſtands betwixt perfect obedience and eternal life: though there is no connexion by the law, betwixt their obedience now, and the promiſe of eternal life; yet there is a ſtanding connexion betwixt eternal life, and that perfect, perſonal obedience required by that law they are under, Rom. x. 5. The law ſtill continues to ſay, *The man that does theſe things, ſhall live by them;* and Mat. xix. 16. *If thou would enter into life keep the commandments:* which plainly ſays, that though they cannot yield obedience, ſuch as the law requires; yet the connexion betwixt life and obedience ſtands by that law they are under: it juſtifies all that can and do obey it, as it doth the elect angels; and it would juſtify men alſo, if they were in caſe, had they power, and did yield obedience to it, in the manner it requires.

(3.) That unbelievers are under the command of the covenant of works, is plain, becauſe it is "only the *privilege of believers*, that "they are not under the moral law, as a cove-"nant of works, to be thereby either juſtified "or condemned," as in our Confeſſion of Faith; which plainly ſays, not only the moral law was turned into the form of a covenant of works, by its being made a covenant of life and juſtification upon doing, and of death and condemnation upon not doing; but alſo, as it is the privilege only of believers in Chriſt, that they are neither under the command of the covenant of works, to be juſtified by their obedience, nor under the curſe thereof, ſo be condemned for their diſobedience thereto: which evidently ſhows, that it is the miſery of unbelievers, that they are not only under the *condemning* power of that covenant, wherein diſobedience and eternal death are connected; but alſo the *commanding* power of that law, wherein perfect obedience and eternal life are connected. This connexion betwixt life and perſonal obedience does not ſtand with reſpect to the believer, becauſe he is *not under the law*, Rom. vi. 14. Hence though the believers in Chriſt had a perſonal righteouſneſs of their own in perfection, as they will have in heaven; yet there is no connexion betwixt it and their juſtification, or eternal life, which is now to them *the gift of God through Jeſus Chriſt;* they being brought under another covenant, which makes their title to life to ſtand upon another foundation, namely, Chriſt's perfect obedience, active and paſſive, in their room and ſtead. But as for unbelievers, that are under the law, the ſtanding connexion betwixt life and obedience by that law, renders them as miſerable, in regard that it confirms their forfeiture of eternal life; as the ſtanding connexion betwixt death and diſobedience, by that ſame law, renders them miſerable, in regard that it continues them under the ſentence of eternal death.

(4.) That unbelievers are under the command of the covenant of works, is plain, becauſe they are, by the goſpel-diſpenſation, obliged to *ſeek life by the obedience of another;* which is ſo far from proving them not to be under the command of the covenant of works, that it plainly proves them to be under it. Our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, as *Surety*, came to fulfil the righteouſneſs of the law, only as it is a covenant of works: and this he did, both by his *active* obedience, fulfilling the *precept* of the law; and by his *paſſive* obedience, ſatisfying the *threatening*, and enduring the *penalty*, of the law. Now, if unbelievers were only under the condemning power of the law, then they would need only to ſeek freedom from death, through Chriſt's ſuffering, or paſſive obedience, in their room;

room; but if they were not under obligation to the command of the covenant of works, then there is no need they would have of Chriſt's active obedience, or doing in their room. They were never obliged, as I cleared before, to ſeek life by their obedience; but if they were not obliged, by the command of the covenant of works, to yield that perfect obedience, to which life was promiſed therein, then they would have no need to ſeek life by the obedience of another. What need they to ſeek that in the perſon of another; which they are not obliged to have in their own perſon? Who will ſee a need for ſeeking that which he is not obliged to have or yield? The unbeliever's obligation, therefore, to ſeek life by the obedience of another, namely, of Chriſt, is a plain argument to prove that he is under obligation to the command of the covenant of works.

See then the danger of that doctrine which aſſerts, that *unbelievers are not under the command of the covenant of works:* it croſſes one of the great ends of the Goſpel, which is to hold out Chriſt in his complete righteouſneſs, both of doing and ſuffering, that ſinners may come and take the whole benefit thereof, in order to their being intitled to eternal life, and ſecured from eternal death, according to the method of the covenant of grace; for, while they remain out of Chriſt, they are wholly and altogether under a covenant of works, both in its commanding and condemning power.

[2.] Another doctrine that ſtands in oppoſition to this truth that we are treating of, is, that which aſſerts, *That believers by their* NEW SINS *come under a liableneſs, or obligation, to the penal ſanction of the law, and threatening of eternal death.* I have elſewhere endeavoured to refute this error*; therefore, at preſent, I ſhall not enlarge upon it, but only repel it with the weapons that the text here affords me, namely, *The ſtrength of ſin is the law; but thanks be to God,* ſays the apoſtle in the name of all believers, *that giveth us the victory through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* Where it is plain, that all believers in Chriſt are delivered, by virtue of their union to him as the *Lord their righteouſneſs*, from the *law* and the *curſe* thereof; and conſequently from the *ſtrength of ſin*, as it is a part of the curſe of the law. See alſo Gal. iii. 13. Rom. viii. 1, 34. vi. 14. and vii. 6. But now, if believers are, after their union to Chriſt, brought, by their *new ſins*, under a *liableneſs* to the *penal ſanction* of the law; that is, to *eternal death*, and *vindictive wrath*; then they are brought under the *curſe of the law* again: and if ſo, then they are brought under the *ſtrength of ſin*, which is the leading branch of that curſe. If they that aſſert this doctrine, attempt to prove it from this, that *every ſin deſerves God's wrath and curſe;* and argue from the believer's ſins deſerving it, that therefore believers are liable to it, which is a very wide argument; then, by the ſame argument, I can prove, that becauſe there is no moment of a believer's life wherein he is perfectly free of ſin, ſo long as want of perfect conformity to the law, either in nature, heart, or way, is ſin; therefore there is not a moment of the believer's life, wherein he is not both under the *curſe of the law* and the *ſtrength of ſin;* and conſequently, no ſinful believers in this world, as all believers are, could ever, upon good ground, ſing this ſong of victory in the context. But this is ſuch dreadful doctrine, that I hope I need not enlarge in the refutation thereof.

Believers are neither juſtified upon their *perſonal* good, nor unjuſtified upon their *perſonal* evil; but their actual perſonal title to life, and their freedom from all legal obligation, and liableneſs to death, which are the two branches of juſtification, ſtand upon the *active* and *paſſive obedience of Chriſt*, imputed to, and received by them, whereby they are diſcharged from all law-debt. And though God continue to pardon the ſins of them that are juſtified, and they daily need his pardon, as he is a Father, whoſe Fatherly anger their ſins expoſe them to; yet they have no more to do with him as a wrathful Judge, except in their own unbelieving apprehenſions and legal fears, which are their ſin. Indeed the more aggravated their ſins are, the more are they liable to the bitter effects of God's Fatherly wrath and chaſtiſement; but to make either any good they do a prop to their juſtification, or any evil they do a flaw in their juſtification, this is Popery. The righteouſneſs of Chriſt, with which the believer is ever clothed, ſecures him ſo, that the ſentence of life is never revoked, neither is the ſentence of death ever incurred anew; for, *He that believes hath everlaſting life;* and, *There is no condemnation to them that are in Chriſt.*

Though the law cannot but curſe ſin, wherever it is, and even the believer's ſins; yet the curſe can never reach his perſon; Chriſt hath no curſed or condemned member. Simeon and Levi had been guilty of hainous crimes, in killing the Iſhmaelites; yet, as ſome think, they being good men in the main, Jacob does not curſe their perſons but their ſins; Gen. xlix. 7. *Curſed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel;* ſo cruel, that it might have brought a curſe upon them deſervedly. But Jacob, guided by the Holy Ghoſt, lays the curſe on their extravagant *paſſion*, not on their *perſons:* and every believer will join iſſue with that curſe of the law againſt his ſin, ſaying, Curſed and deſtroyed be my ſin, my unbelief, my enmity. — Believers are not under the law, as a covenant of works, either to be juſtified or condemned thereby: if they were brought, by their *new ſins*, under the curſe of the law, then they would be brought alſo under the power of ſin, and the reigning ſtrength of corruption; and ſo they are neither juſtified nor ſanctified; neither delivered out of the ſtate of ſin nor of miſery.

See the danger then of this erroneous doctrine, of *believers being made liable to the curſe of the law:* it is contrary to that goſpel-principle, which aſſerts, "That believers are delivered "from the wrath of God, and the curſe of the "moral law;" and it is contrary to that goſpel-practice of the believer's, which is influenced by the faith of his freedom from the curſe, and the faith of God's everlaſting love in Chriſt Jeſus. That doctrine of believers liableneſs to wrath, upon every ſin, tends to create ſlaviſh fear and dread in God's children; and ſo to diſcourage from duty, and marr true goſpel-holineſs, which is a ſerving of God, not out of ſlaviſh fear, but a child-like love, and of a willing mind: for the fear of hell, and of falling into eternal wrath, and the fear of loſing their ſonſhip, and being diſinherit, which ſome, that pretend much to orthodoxy, tell us, believers ought to be influenced by; theſe fears, I ſay,

* See, in particular for this, the Author's diſcourſe, on Gal. iv. 28. intitled, the PREGNANT PROMISE, p. 432.

I say, can never be filial or child-like, because they go upon the supposition of an allowed act of unbelief, namely, their apprehending God not to be their everlasting Father in Christ, according to the tenor of the new covenant; which if they believed him to be, they could not fear these evils, but would rejoice in the faith of the contrary; and this faith would work by love, and love would constrain them to holiness. So that the doctrine I here oppose, is not a *doctrine according to godliness*, but rather a *doctrine of licentiousness*, tending to keep believers themselves under the law, which is the *strength of sin*.

This text then shows us the dangerous tendency of both these new doctrines, the one making the believer not to be under the *command* of the covenant of works, and the other bringing the believer under the *curse* of it: but, as they that are not under the command of the law of works, cannot be under the curse of it; for, where no law, no transgression: and as they that are under the curse of the law, cannot but be under the command of it; for, where no transgression no penalty, and where there is a penalty there is transgression; so this strange doctrine in effect, and by plain consequences, makes unbelievers happy, and believers miserable: by freeing the believer from the command, it frees him from the curse; and by bringing the believer under the curse, it brings him under the command: and, by this means, unbelievers would not be under the law, but free both from the commanding and condemning power thereof; and believers would be under the law, and in bondage, both to the command and the curse.—I dare not think, that all who maintain the foresaid doctrine, are chargeable with asserting these dreadful consequences that flow from it; but surely it is dangerous to maintain such positions, from which such consequences are naturally deducible.——So far have I enlarged upon an use of *information*, because of the manifold lessons that arise from this text and doctrine.

Use 3. The *third* use shall be by way of *examination* and *trial*, namely, to see what state we are in, whether or not we be delivered from the *law of works*, as it is the *strength of sin*. In order to our having a clear view of this, there is a *fourfold* inquiry we may make.

Inquiry First, In order to try this matter, *viz.* Whether delivered from the *law of works*, as it is the *strength of sin*; let us enquire whether the *strength* of sin be truly broken; for sin has dominion, and a ruling power, over all that are *under the law*, Rom. vi. 14.

Why, say you, *who are these, in whom the* RULE *and* STRENGTH *of sin remains unbroken?*

ANSW. 1. All you that do not find a *daily exercise with sin:* they in whom the strength of sin is dashed, will be at work to get themselves purged from it; they are still either lamenting their sin, or plotting against it, praying against it, watching against it, making use of the blood of Christ against it, and sometimes mourning and crying against it, and against themselves for it: whereas they in whom it reigns, live peaceably and undisturbedly with it.

2. All you who have been your *whole lifetime strangers to Christ*, and to fellowship and communion with him, you are not yet delivered from sin; there is a throne of iniquity set up in your hearts, which shall not have fellowship with God, and indeed cannot.

3. All you that know nothing of that dispensation of grace, to wit, God's *hearing of your prayers*, and giving you his countenance therein; sin reigns in your hearts, and you *regard iniquity in your hearts*, therefore the *Lord hears you not*, but is saying, *Go to the gods whom you have served:*

4. All you that never found any *pain in parting with sin*, nor any thing of the *cross of Christ*, or of *suffering in the flesh*, 1 Pet. iv. 1. It is such as have *suffered in the flesh*, that have *ceased from sin*. Some were never disturbed in their *making provision for the flesh*; never knew the painful exercise of repentance and self-denial; never burdened with the vileness of sin; nor exercised in the work of judging themselves. When a gangrene is to be cured, because it is in the flesh, the flesh must be cut; so, because sin is seated in the flesh, the flesh must suffer by self-denial. There is a woful tenderness that we have of ourselves, that keeps us from mortifying our corruption. Have you never discovered or seen the evil and bitterness of sin, but lived always in peace? Why, then it seems the *strong man keeps the house:* if the passing of the gravel-stone never pained you, ye are not yet quit of it; if your heart was never pained with sin, it says your heart was never yet circumcised: the strength of sin remains where there has been no gospel-mortification. Which leads to a

Second Inquiry, For helping you to try if you be delivered from the *law of works*, as it is the *strength of sin*, namely, inquire if you be acquaint with *gospel-mortification*. It is almost incredible to think how great a length people may go in legal mortification of sin, while yet they are utter strangers to the gospel. It is strange to think, what some heathens have done this way, and what many Popish monks have done; yea, what great reformations have taken place among some, so as by their life you would think they were real converts, because of their exactness and tenderness, while yet they are enemies to grace, and strangers to the gospel, and consequently to true mortification, which cannot be by the law, it being the strength of sin.

QUEST. *How shall I know, whether it be by the* GOSPEL *that I* MORTIFY *sin, or by the* LAW?

ANSW. 1. Gospel and legal mortification differ in their *principles* from which they proceed. Gospel-mortification is from gospel-principles, *viz.* the Spirit of God, Rom. viii. 13. *If ye through the Spirit mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live:* Faith in Christ, Acts xv. 9. *Purifying their hearts by faith:*—The love of Christ constraining, 2 Cor. v. 14. *The love of Christ constraineth us.*——But legal mortification is from legal principles; such as, from the applause and praise of men, as in the Pharisees; from pride of self-righteousness, as in Paul before his conversion; from the fear of hell; from a natural conscience; from the example of others; from some common motions of the Spirit; and many times from the power of sin itself, while one sin is set up to wrestle with another, as when sensuality and self-righteousness wrestle with one another: the man, perhaps, will not drink and swear; why? because he is setting up and establishing a righteousness of his own, whereby to obtain the favour of God: here is but one sin wrestling with another.

2. Gospel and legal mortification differ in their

their *weapons* with which they fight againſt ſin: the goſpel-believer fights with grace's weapons, namely, the blood of Chriſt, the word of God, the promiſes of the covenant, and the virtue of Chriſt's death and croſs, Gal. vi. 14. *God forbid that I ſhould glory, ſave in the croſs of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by whom* [or, as it may be read, WHEREBY, *viz.* by the *croſs of Chriſt*,] *the world is crucified to me, and I to the world.* But now, the man under the law fights againſt ſin by the promiſes and threatenings of the law; by its promiſes, ſaying, I will obtain life, and win to heaven, I hope, if I do ſo and ſo; by its threatenings, ſaying, I will go to hell and be damned, if I do not ſo and ſo. Sometimes he fights with the weapons of his own *vows* and reſolutions, which are his ſtrong tower, to which he runs and thinks himſelf ſafe.

3. They differ in the *object* of their mortification: they both, indeed, ſeek to mortify ſin; but the legaliſt's quarrel is more eſpecially with the ſins of his converſation: but the true believer ſhould deſire to fight as the Syrians got orders; that is, *neither againſt great nor ſmall, ſo much as againſt the king himſelf*, even againſt *original* corruption: a body of ſin and death troubles him more than any other ſin in the world; *O wretched man that I am! who ſhall deliver me from this body of death?* Rom. vii. 24. His great exerciſe is, to have the ſeed of the woman to bruiſe this head of the ſerpent.

4. They differ in the *reaſons* of the conteſt: the believer, whom grace *teaches to deny all ungodlineſs*, he fights againſt ſin, becauſe it diſhonours God, oppoſes Chriſt, grieves the Spirit, and ſeparates between his Lord and him; but the legaliſt fights againſt ſin, becauſe it breaks his peace, and troubles his conſcience, and hurts him, by bringing wrath and judgment on him. As children that will not play in the duſt or ſtour; why? not becauſe it ſullies their clothes, but flees into their eyes, and hurts them: ſo the legaliſt will not meddle with ſin; why? not becauſe it ſullies the perfections of God, and defiles their ſouls, but only becauſe it hurts them. I deny not, but there is too much of this legal temper even amongſt the godly.

5. They differ in their *motives* and *ends*: the believer will not ſerve ſin, becauſe he is *alive to God*, and *dead to ſin*, Rom. vi. 6. The legaliſt forſakes ſin, not becauſe he is alive, but that he may live: the believer mortifies ſin, becauſe God loves him; but the legaliſt, that God may love him: the believer mortifies, becauſe God is pacified towards him; the legaliſt mortifies, that he may pacify God by his mortification. He may go a great length, but it is ſtill that he may have whereof to glory, making his own doing all the foundation of his hope and comfort.

6. They differ in the *nature* of their mortification: the legaliſt does not oppoſe ſin violently, ſeeking the utter deſtruction of it; if he can get ſin put down, he does not ſeek it to be thruſt out: but the believer having a nature and principle contrary to ſin, he ſeeks not only to have it weakened, but extirpate: the quarrel is irreconcilable; no terms of accommodation or agreement; no league with ſin is allowed, as it is with hypocrites.

7. They differ in the *extent* of the warfare, not only *objectively*, the believer hating *every falſe way*; but alſo *ſubjectively*, all the faculties of the believer's ſoul, the whole regenerate part being againſt ſin. It is not ſo with the hypocrite or legaliſt: for as he ſpares ſome ſin or other, ſo his oppoſition to ſin is only ſeated in his conſcience; his light and conſcience oppoſe ſuch a thing; while his heart approves of it.—There is an extent alſo as to *time*; the legaliſt's oppoſition to ſin is of a ſhort duration, but in the believer it is to the end; grace and corruption ſtill oppoſing one another.

8. They differ in the *ſucceſs*: there is no believer, but as he fights againſt ſin, ſo firſt or laſt he prevails, though not always to his diſcerning; and though he loſe many *battles*, yet he gains the war: but the legaliſt, for all the work he makes, yet he never truly comes ſpeed: though he cut off ſome actual ſin, yet the corrupt nature is never changed; he never gets a new heart; the iron-ſinew in his neck, which oppoſes God, is never broken; and when he gets one ſin mortified, ſometimes another and more dangerous ſin lifts up the head: hence all the ſins and pollutions that ever the Phariſees forſook, and all the good duties that ever they performed, made them but more proud, and ſtrengthened their unbelieving prejudices againſt Chriſt, which was the greater and more dangerous ſin.——Thus you may ſee the difference between legal and goſpel-mortification, and try yourſelves thereby.

Inquiry third, In order to try whether or not you are *delivered from the law*, as it is the *ſtrength of ſin*; enquire whether you have *renounced your own righteouſneſs*: for they that make their duties their righteouſneſs, and rely thereupon, are yet under the law, and ſo under the ſtrength of ſin.

QUEST. *Who are they that make their* DUTIES *their righteouſneſs, and eſtabliſh a righteouſneſs of their own, and rely thereupon?*

ANSW. 1. Theſe that pleaſe themſelves with a *form of godlineſs*; and, like the Phariſees, make *clean the outſide*, while yet they have a ſecret enmity at the *power of godlineſs*, having outward conformity to the letter of the law; and, like Paul before his converſion, *touching the law blameleſs*, yet little regarding the ſpirituality of it: they profeſs a regard to the law, but if they knew the inſide of it, they would hate it.

2. Theſe that reſt in a *certain pitch of religion*, when they have as much as they think will ſave them, and are for no more; not knowing what it is to *preſs towards the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus*.

3. Theſe that ſet their *duties againſt their ſins*, and againſt the wrath of God, and the fear of judgment; not fleeing to Chriſt for refuge, as all true believers do, Heb. vi. 18,; but to their duties, their prayers, and no further. Their betaking themſelves to duties would be well done, if they went a little further; but they ſet their duties againſt their ſins, and thereupon have peace, ſaying, Though my ſins be ſo and ſo great, yet my duties are ſo and ſo many; therefore, I hope all will be right. Thus they ſpeak peace to themſelves, when God never ſpake it: here is a *dead fly that ſpoils all the ointment*.

4. Theſe who are at *enmity with the doctrine of grace*; however much they may be engaged in duty, Chriſt is a *ſtumbling-block* to them, as he was to the Jews, Rom. ix. 33. The doctrine of duties and works, they underſtand; but the doctrine of grace, and of the righteouſneſs of Chriſt,

Chriſt, they will not underſtand; they ſuſpect it, as an enemy to the law, and Antinomianiſm: they are *ignorant of God's righteouſneſs.*

5. Theſe that *perform duties* in their *own ſtrength*, are eſtabliſhing a righteouſneſs of their own: though they ſay they can do nothing without Chriſt, yet they can do all without ſeeing much need of him. But, where Chriſt is the *righteouſneſs* of a ſoul, he will be the *ſtrength* alſo, Iſa. xlv. 24. Some, indeed, profeſs to take Chriſt for their ſtrength, but they ſet Chriſt againſt himſelf, as it were, by employing the ſtrength of Chriſt againſt the righteouſneſs of Chriſt; that is, when they cry to Chriſt for ſtrength to perform duties, that when they are enabled to perform them, they may make them their righteouſneſs. Hence many will ſay, O for a ſoft heart! O for an enlarged heart in duty! O for grace to ſeek, and a heart to pray! And if they get any thing like it, what make they of it? Why, then they think they have a good enough righteouſneſs, and ſeek no further.

6. Theſe that are of a *wrathful* and *implacable diſpoſition*, they diſcover themſelves to be under the law, and under the ſtrength of ſin, and ſo not delivered from eſtabliſhing a righteouſneſs of their own; *The law worketh wrath*, Rom. iv. 15. Not only wrath in God againſt man, and wrath in man againſt God; but wrath and enmity alſo in man againſt man, eſpecially upon any real or ſuppoſed injury. When wrath riſes, and reſts, and remains from day to day, from week to week, from month to month, from year to year, and the man will by no means be reconciled to one that has offered him any affront; nay, he will not pardon, he will not forgive, he will not forget; ſurely that man is under the law, and under the ſtrength of ſin: he never got a pardon from God, that cannot pardon his neighbour an offence; he has not the image of God, not being *merciful as his heavenly Father is merciful;* he cannot pray, *Forgive me my ſins, as I forgive them that ſin againſt me. Anger reſts in the boſom of fools*, ſays Solomon. Anger and wrath may riſe and rage a little in the boſom of a wiſe man, a good man, but it cannot reſt there; it reſts only in the boſom of fools. This fooliſh and implacable diſpoſition ſhews the man to be ſelfiſh and ſelf-righteous.

7. Theſe whoſe *good hope*, founded upon and drawn from duties, *never utterly failed them*, ſo as to ſay, as it is, Iſa. lvii. 10. *There is no hope;* no, *they are wearied in the greatneſs of their way, and have found the life of their hand*, &c.

8. Theſe who, the more they go about outward duties, the more *liberty they take to ſin*, ſaying, as it is, Prov. vii. 14. and 18. compared, *I have peace-offerings with me; this day have I paid my vows: come let us take our fill of love, until the morning; let us ſolace ourſelves with loves.*

9. Theſe who *neglect duties*, through deſperation and hopeleſneſs of getting any good by them, ſaying, *It is vain to ſerve the Lord*, why, what is this, but that becauſe they would rely on duties, as their Saviour, when they find they may not do ſo, they will rather forbear them, and caſt all behind their back, ſaying, *There is no hope?* Hence,

10. When men are *madly purſuing their luſts*, it may be a ſign they are relying on their duties, even when they commit ſin deſperately. Why, they are deſperate debtors; and, perhaps, have been trying, ſome time or other, to pay their debt by doing ſomething that they might live: but finding that will fail them, they ſay, There is no hope of paying that debt; therefore they deſperately take on more; Jer. ii. 25. *There is no hope; for, I have loved ſtrangers, and after them will I go:* and, Jer. xviii. 12. *There is no hope; but we will walk after our own devices, and do every one the imagination of his evil heart.* They want not a natural inclination, as all others have, to pay their debt in the way of a law of works, with their own righteouſneſs, which appears whenever conſcience is awakened; but for the preſent they are deſperate: if they cannot win to heaven by their own righteouſneſs, they will rather go to hell in their wickedneſs, than be obliged to the righteouſneſs of another for heaven and eternal life: ſo ſtrong is the law of *do and live*, even at the root of their wickedneſs. *The ſtrength of ſin is the law.*

Again, it may aſked here, *Who are they that have* RENOUNCED *their own righteouſneſs?*

ANSW. 1. Such as have renounced their own righteouſneſs, are eaſily brought to the *ſenſe* and *acknowledgement of their ſin;* whereas others are ready to ſay, with theſe who are commanded to return to the Lord, *Wherein ſhall we return to him?* Such were the Phariſees, Luke xviii. 11, 12.

2. The great care of ſuch will be to *advance in the knowledge of Chriſt;* they have a high eſteem of Chriſt's righteouſneſs, accounting all other things, on which they formerly relied, but dung; and expecting juſtification and abſolution before God, only upon the account of the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, laid hold upon by faith, Phil. iii. 8, 9.

3. From a ſight of their own imperfection, and inability in duty, they go on and make *progreſs in Chriſt's ſtrength*, Pſal. lxxi. 16. Phil. iii. 12, 13, 14. And in all their approaches to God, they are concerned how to get the Spirit with them, and the internal part of duty performed, as well as the external; and their ſpiritual joy and comfort ariſes from Chriſt: Philip. iii. 3. *They worſhip God in the Spirit, rejoice in Chriſt Jeſus, and have no confidence in the fleſh.*

4. Such will *juſtify God in all his diſpenſations of providence towards them*, though never ſo harſh; and *undervalue damages and loſſes*, if they can but win Chriſt, Phil. iii. 8.

5. As they are not *lifted up* upon the account of their *inherent righteouſneſs*, but ſay, with Job, chap. x. 15. *If I be righteous, yet will I not lift up my head;* and with the church, Iſa. lxiv. 6. *All our righteouſneſſes are as filthy rags;* and dare plead for nothing at the throne of grace on the account thereof, Dan. ix. 18. Job ix. 15.: ſo their obedience is *moſt free;* the believer acts freely, not by the coaction and compulſion of the law, and without reſpect to the promiſes or threatenings of it, as it is a covenant of life; he being, by virtue of the new nature, ready to do the will of God with pleaſure. As there is need of no law for the body, which may compel it to eat, drink, ſleep, walk, ſit, ſtand, or do any works of nature, as I ſaid before, becauſe it is ready to do theſe things naturally; ſo there is need of no law-coaction and compulſion to drive the believer to obedience: there are goſpel-threatenings and promiſes, that are lined with love, which work upon him, and conſtrain him; but to be acted by the law-threatening of death in caſe of diſobedience, or the law-promiſe of life upon obedience, is

not

not compatible with the ſtate of the believer, as ſuch; he not being *under the law*, but *under grace*, his obedience is free, Luke i. 74, 75.

6. They that have renounced their own righteouſneſs, have renounced their *own ſtrength* alſo, and ſaid, *In the Lord only have we righteouſneſs and ſtrength*, Iſa. xlv. 24. They ſee the need of the ſame creating power that began the good work, to carry it on every day, as long as the new-creation work is a working. As in the firſt creation, after God made heaven and earth, he left not the work there, but every day the Lord ſaid, Let there be this, and, Let there be that; *Let there be light;* and then, *Let there be fruit;* ſo, in the new creation, believers ſee a need every day of an almighty word, ſaying, *Let there be light*, ſpiritual light; and after that, *Let there be fruit*, ſpiritual fruit; and again, every day another word of power from God, to carry on the new-creation work, during the whole ſix days of our life here, till the Sabbath of everlaſting reſt come.

Enquiry fourth, In order to try whether or not you are *delivered from the law*, as it is the *ſtrength of ſin*; enquire whether you be *experimentally acquaint with the goſpel*, as it is the means and the ſtrength of holineſs.

QUEST. *What is it in the* GOSPEL *that contributes to the ſtrength of holineſs, that believers, who are not under the law, have ſaving experimental acquaintance with?*

ANSW. There are theſe following things in the goſpel, that contribute to the ſtrength of holineſs; and you may try what experience you have thereof.

1. What experience have you of the *ſanctifying diſcoveries* of the goſpel? Some diſcoveries are introductory and preparatory unto, and ſome are effective of holineſs to the deſtroying of the ſtrength of ſin. The *introductory* diſcoveries are ſuch, as give perſons the faith of the law; ſuch as, conviction from the evidence and demonſtration of the Spirit; this may be called a goſpel-diſcovery, in ſo far as it is by the Spirit promiſed in the goſpel, John xvi. 7, 8, 9. If it be aſked here, *Does not the law prepare us for the grace of the goſpel?* We reply; Not in itſelf, any more than ſin and miſery doth: for the law makes known ſin, and leaves a man under wrath, Rom. iii. 19. 20. The whole revelation of the remedy, and application thereof both, is by the grace of the goſpel; Luke xix. 10. *Chriſt came to ſeek and to ſave that which was loſt;* both to *ſeek*, by the revelation of the goſpel; and alſo to *ſave*, by the application thereof. Yet theſe introductory diſcoveries may be called goſpel-diſcoveries, in reſpect of the author, namely, the Spirit promiſed in the goſpel; and becauſe of their connexion, in the elect, with the ſaving work that follows, even though they be not ſaving in their own nature; and therefore, theſe convictions may be called *legal*, in reſpect of the man's ſtate, who is the ſubject thereof, he not being yet in Chriſt; and in reſpect of the ſubſerviency of the law under the influence of the Spirit, for making theſe diſcoveries of the man's ſinful and miſerable ſtate: without this faith of the law, and theſe convictions, one will never prize goſpel-grace, which is the channel wherein true holineſs runs.—But again, ſome goſpel-diſcoveries are *effective* of holineſs, namely, the diſcovery of the glory and fulneſs of Chriſt, and of the glory of the grace of God in him: *Holineſs to the Lord*, is the immediate effect thereof, 2 Cor. iii. 18. *Beholding, as in a glaſs, the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the ſame image.* Now, what know ye of this goſpel-diſcovery of a *God in Chriſt, reconciling the world to himſelf?* If ever Chriſt was revealed in you, the revelation would be ſanctifying and transforming.

2. What experience have you of the *ſanctifying attractive charms* of the goſpel? have you always ſtopt your ears at the voice of the charmer therein? and, was you never taken and captivated with the joyful ſound? or, have you been allured with the charms, and drawn by the attractives thereof? What theſe attractives are, you ſee, Hoſ. xi. 4. Jer. xxxi. 3. John xii. 32. The *bands of love*; the *divine loving-kindneſs*; and all in and through a *crucified Chriſt*, lifted upon the *croſs*, on the *throne*, and on the *goſpel-pole*. Theſe goſpel-attractives are of ſuch a ſanctifying nature, and ſo contributive to the ſtrength of holineſs, that they natively conſtrain the believer thereunto, 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. This love of God to the ſinner, begets love in the ſinner to God; *We love him, becauſe he firſt loved us:* and love to God is the very heart of holineſs; *Love is the fulfilling of the law;* and therefore, the more love, the more holineſs.

3. What experience have ye of the *ſanctifying attire* of the goſpel? for the goſpel-garment contributes to the ſtrength of holineſs. There is a twofold goſpel-garment; the one is an unchangeable, and the other a changeable one: the unchangeable goſpel-garment is the *imputed righteouſneſs* of Chriſt, which, when it is put on by faith, the ſoul is ſaid to be *clothed with the ſun*, Rev. xii. 1.; and it is ſuch an unchangeable robe, that it is never taken off the back of theſe that are once clothed with it, but they remain always fair and perfectly righteous in the ſight of God. It is true, this may be called, and is, indeed, their *juſtifying* attire; and yet I call it *ſanctifying* alſo; becauſe, as juſtification is a root and cauſe of ſanctification, ſo it is this righteouſneſs of Chriſt that purchaſed holineſs, and conſequently brings its purchaſe ſtill along with it: and hence the faith of this righteouſneſs *works by love*, and ſo producing holineſs of heart and way.—The changeable goſpel-garment is the *imparted righteouſneſs* of Chriſt; that is, holineſs itſelf: I call it changeable, like the moon; not becauſe the ſoul that is clothed with it is ever altogether naked or denuded of it again, but becauſe of the various degrees it admits of; ſometimes more and ſometimes leſs, and the changes from better to worſe, and from worſe to better therein, according to the meaſure of the communication of the Spirit, and according to the need of the new creature, Iſa. xl. 31. *They that wait on the Lord ſhall renew their ſtrength;* they ſhall CHANGE their ſtrength, as I formerly noticed, the word imports: like a man changing his clothes, having ſeveral ſuits conform to his occaſions: a garment for working, and a garment for walking abroad withal; a garment for night, and a garment for day; one for the week-day, and another for the Sabbath: he hath changes of raiment; ſo the believer hath changes of ſtrength: if he need to walk, he has walking ſtrength; if to run, running ſtrength; if to flee, flying ſtrength is communicate: for ſo it follows, *They that wait on the Lord ſhall renew their ſtrength; they ſhall mount up with wings as eagles, they ſhall run and not weary, and walk and not*

not faint.——Examine your experience with reſpect to this twofold robe: do you know the ſanctifying influence of the juſtifying righteouſneſs of Chriſt? If you be delivered from the law as it is the ſtrength of ſin, you have ſometime or other experienced, that the juſtifying righteouſneſs of Chriſt hath a ſanctifying effect; and this it hath, when the ſenſe of pardoning mercy melts the heart for ſin; when the faith of forgiveneſs draws forth heart-lothing of ſin, and heart-love to holineſs; and when the apprehenſion of the mercy, love, and grace of God, quickens the ſoul to a lively performance of duty, and *enlarges the heart to run the way of God's commandments.*

4. What experience have you of the *ſanctifying promiſes* of the goſpel? That they contribute to the ſtrength of holineſs, is evident from 2 Cor. vii. 1. 2 Pet. i. 4. Was ever a promiſe applied with power and majeſty to your heart? If ſo, then, what effect had it? Did you not ſee your own helliſh nature, even to ſelf-abhorrence? and, was not the deſire of your ſoul after the participation of the divine nature, excited to ſuch a degree, that, perhaps, you could have wiſhed rather to die, than not to be holy; and your breathing was, O to be holy! O to be like unto Chriſt! O to have all heart-plagues healed, and all ſpiritual maladies cured.

5. What experience have you of the *ſanctifying principles, truths, tenets,* and *doctrines* of the goſpel? *Ye ſhall know the truth,* ſays Chriſt, *and the truth ſhall make you free;* free from the ruling power of ſin; free from the bondage of the law; at liberty to ſerve the Lord; free from that ſlavery to ſin and Satan, that the reſt of the world are under, who want the true knowledge of the ſanctifying principles and doctrines of the goſpel, Eph. iv. 19, 20, 21.; where we ſee, that the knowledge of the goſpel directs to another courſe than the world take; ſome are altogether ignorant of the ſanctifying principles of the goſpel, others have a head-knowledge and notion of ſome goſpel principles, but no ſanctifying knowledge thereof; theſe abuſe the grace of God to licentiouſneſs. But, what experience have you of the power of goſpel-truth, and the ſanctifying virtue of goſpel-doctrine? If the grace of God has taught you nothing but looſeneſs, you have no true knowledge of it; for it teaches otherwiſe, Tit. ii. 12. Did never the doctrine of *Chriſt's death* and *reſurrection,* as the *Lord our righteouſneſs,* tend to beget you to a *new and lively hope?* Did you never feel the power of that doctrine for killing ſin? Examine your experience by that of Paul, who deſired *to know more and more of Chriſt, and of the power of his reſurrection.* Phil. iii. 10. compared with 1 Pet. i. 3.

6. What experience have you of the *ſanctifying privileges* of the goſpel? Goſpel-privileges, enjoyed by believers, are the foundation of goſpel-holineſs. By the law of works, obedience was firſt to take place, and then privileges; but by the goſpel of grace, privileges firſt come in, and thereupon obedience influenced thereby. Have you experienced goſpel-joys and comforts in the Lord, inſomuch that the *joy of the Lord was your ſtrength?* Goſpel-conſolation is a great furtherance of goſpel-ſanctification. Have you ever experienced a goſpel-day, I mean, not a day of preaching only, but a day of power? Why then, ſurely willingneſs to ſerve the Lord in holineſs was wrought; *Thy people ſhall be willing in the day of thy power.* But not to enlarge this uſe further, I come to cloſe with a word, by way of *exhortation.*

And our *exhortation* ſhall be *firſt* to *unbelievers,* that are *under the law,* and ſo under the *commanding* and *condemning ſtrength of ſin.* Oh! Sirs, do not ſtay there; for it is a fearful ſtate, to be under the law, and under the power of ſin: if you die in that ſtate, you muſt bear the weight of your ſins for ever; and, how dreadful will it be, when God ſhall open the treaſures of his wrath, and ſhut the bowels of his mercy for ever upon you! O unbelievers! ſee the neceſſity of fleeing to Chriſt and his righteouſneſs: think not to pleaſe God by your own feeble endeavours; there is but one way in all the world to get from under the law-curſe, and ſo from under ſin's ruining power, and that is, to get in to Chriſt, who hath fulfilled, and is the *end of the law for righteouſneſs to every one that believeth.* Where there is but one way, there is no room for conſultation: were there many ways to heaven, you might conſult which to take; but there is only one, *Chriſt the way, the truth, and the life; there remains no more ſacrifice for ſin.* If a man were fallen into a great pit, full of ſnakes, and ſerpents, and fire, and all that can be imagined terrible and dreadful; and there comes one, and caſts a rope into this deep pit; will there be need of arguments to perſuade the man to take hold of it? He is in a miſerable caſe, and there is no other way to help him: even ſo here, you are in a pit full of ſnakes, and ſerpents, and fire, the power of Satan, the ſting of ſin, the fire of God's wrath; you are in a manner in hell already; and God has ſent his Son, with a law-biding righteouſneſs in him; he lets down this rope, that poor periſhing ſinners may lay hold upon it: what will you do in this caſe? will you put off time, ſaying, *What ſhall I do?* when there is no other way left for you, but to come to Chriſt, as the Lord your righteouſneſs. Alas! ſtand not trifling and dallying till you go to the devil in hell, as many do. Will you take adviſement till the next year, when, for ought you know, you may be in hell the next hour? Are you brought to that queſtion, *What ſhall I do to be ſaved?* There is no other anſwer in the world to be given to it, but this one, *Believe in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and you ſhall be ſaved;* deſpair of life by the law, as you would not live under the ruling, and die under the damning ſtrength of ſin: but repair to the goſpel, by applying the promiſe thereof; for there is exhibite to you the ſaving ſtrength of Chriſt. Give up with the old covenant of works; for there ſin reigns, through want of righteouſneſs, to eternal death: but take hold of the new covenant of promiſe; for there *grace reigns, through righteouſneſs, unto eternal life, by Jeſus Chriſt our Lord,* Rom. v. 21. Be content not to think of paying a farthing of your own debt to the law, and to be obliged to Chriſt for paying it all for you. To believe in Chriſt, is to come out from under the law, that you may be under grace: and to come under grace, is to be ſubject to it, ſo as to be content to be in grace's debt, and that grace do all for you and in you, and that grace be glorified in you, and Chriſt glorified in grace, and God glorified in Chriſt. May the power of grace perſuade you to flee to Chriſt, and out from under the law, which is the ſtrength of ſin.

ſin.——I might here adduce manifold motives and directions; but, referring you to other parallel ſubjects, and having enlarged ſo much beyond my intent in the preceding parts of this diſcourſe, I haſten to a concluſion. Therefore,

2dly, I would offer a ſhort word of exhortation to *believers*, that are NOT *under the law*, and ſo are *delivered* from the *ſtrength of ſin*. O let it be your care to ſtudy conformity to the law as a rule of life, ſince you are graciouſly delivered from it as a covenant of life: give evidence, that being delivered from the law, you are delivered from the ſtrength of ſin: ſhake off the power and dominion of it; you are under ſtronger obligations to mortify ſin than any in the world; yea, than Adam in a ſtate of innocency; for you are not under the law that he was under, but under grace; and grace hath brought you to poſſeſs a more glorious and honourable righteouſneſs than ever Adam could have yielded, though he had never violate the covenant of works. Grace gives you more encouragement to obey the law, as a rule, than ever Adam had to obey it, as a covenant. You have ſuch grace as Adam never had in that ſtate, even grace in a better hand, where it can never be loſt. Adam never had a title to life by the covenant of works, becauſe he failed in the condition; but you have a title to life, and the condition alſo in your Head: *Will you ſin, becauſe you are under grace? God forbid.* Will you turn looſe, and carnal, and formal, becauſe you are *not under the law, but under grace?* God forbid. Will you hate God, becauſe he loves you? Oh! monſtrous ingratitude! Becauſe God has a regard for your happineſs, will you have no regard to his honour? Becauſe he is gracious, will you be ungrateful? Alas! *tell it not in Gath!*—Has grace juſtified you, and will you not evidence your juſtification by your ſanctification? — Has grace adopted you, and will you not be *followers of God as dear children?* —Has grace given you the hope of glory, and will you not, having this hope, *purify yourſelf even as he is pure?*—Has grace given you all the promiſes, and will you not, having theſe promiſes, *cleanſe yourſelves from all filthineſs of the fleſh and ſpirit, perfecting holineſs in the fear of God?*—O give evidence that you are not under the law, which is the ſtrength of ſin; but under grace, which is the ſtrength of holineſs. If you be under grace, ſurely you will have a regard to the glory of God, and to the credit of grace, that the goſpel of grace be not reproached as an Antinomian doctrine of licentiouſneſs. We call you to mortify ſin, and ſtudy holineſs and conformity to the law, as a rule of life, as you have a regard to the love and grace of God, and to your own peace and comfort; for, *Great peace have they that love* his *law:* as you have a regard to the welfare of others, and their converſion and converſion; and as you have a regard to your family and poſterity, and would entail a bleſſing on following generations, and leave a bleſſing behind you. In a word, it is by your holineſs of heart and life, that the power of grace is ſeen, the truth of grace is tried, the beauty of grace is diſcovered, and the comfort of grace is felt, as I noticed on a former occaſion. The *power* of grace will not be ſeen, if you be not holy, and if it be not ſo powerful, as to make the hardeſt command eaſy to you: The *truth* of grace will not be evident to you, if you be not holy; for ſin will caſt a cloud over it: The *beauty* of grace will not appear to others, if you be not holy; they will ſay, You are juſt like neighbour and other, if you do not *ſhow your faith by your works:* The *comfort* of grace will not accrue to you, if you be not holy; it is they that walk in the fear of the Lord, that walk in the comforts of the Holy Ghoſt. The ſweets of religion, and the exerciſe of it go together. Go therefore in the ſtrength of grace, leaning upon your Beloved, ſetting the ſtrength of Chriſt, who is the Lord your righteouſneſs, againſt the ſtrength of ſin, which is the law. The more firm and fixed that a man's faith is, with reſpect to Chriſt, as the *end of the law for righteouſneſs*, the more faſt will he follow the Lord in the works of holineſs; for the true believer hath two feet, as I have formerly ſaid elſewhere, like the feet of a pair of compaſſes, the one foot ſtands faſt in the centre, and the other draws the line, and goes round; now, if the foot that is in the centre do not ſtand firm and fixed, if it move out of its place while the line is a drawing, then the other foot can never make an exact circle: ſo here, the believer hath two feet, the one is the aſſured faith of juſtifying grace, this ſhould be ſtill firmly fixed in its centre Chriſt, the *Lord our righteouſneſs*; the other foot is goſpel-obedience, and a holy walk influenced by faith, and this ſhould be always moving about in the work of the Lord, and running its holy round of ſpiritual duties: now, if one foot, namely, the faith of juſtifying grace, be not fixed, and firmly eſtabliſhed in its centre, then the other foot, namely, that of obedience, cannot perform its motion with any exactneſs. While a believer is fixed in the faith of God's grace and love, then this love conſtrains him to obedience; but when his faith begins to waver and totter, and he begins to jealouſe the Lord's love, and to deny his grace, then he loſes his heart, and ſtrength, and courage; and ſo, by an *evil heart of unbelief, departs from the living God.* O then, ſeek to be firmly fixed in the faith of divine grace, and in the full aſſurance of your privilege, that *you are not under the law, but under grace*; then ſhall you be able to mortify ſin with ſucceſs. And, ſeeing the moſt thankful believer is the moſt obedient, entertain ſtill a thankful rememberance of your merciful deliverance from the law, and let the apoſtle's ſong of victory in the text be much in your hearts and mouths, *O death, where is thy ſting? O grave, where is thy victory? The ſting of death is ſin, and the ſtrength of ſin is the law: but thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*

SERMON

SERMON LI.

The MEDIATOR'S POWER in Heaven and Earth.*

MATTH. xxviii. 18.

And Jeſus came and ſpake unto them, ſaying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

HAVING now in view the adminiſtration of one of the moſt ſolemn and auguſt ordinances of God upon earth, namely, our New-Teſtament ſolemn feaſt, the ſacramental Supper of our Lord Jeſus; if any ſhould queſtion, by what authority we ſet about ſuch a work? We need only look to the context here, and notice the Lord Jeſus giving a commiſſion to his diſciples, and their ſucceſſors to the end of the world, to diſpenſe the word and ſacraments to all nations. The ſacrament of baptiſm is here mentioned, and the ſacrament of the ſupper included in that word, ver. 20. *Teaching them to obſerve all things whatſoever I have commanded you*; and this commandment among the reſt they received of the Lord, 1 Cor. xi. 23. But, to corroberate and fortify this commiſſion given to his ſervants, if any ſhould queſtion further, by what authority did Chriſt give a commiſſion to this effect in the church of God? If he had aſſumed a power to himſelf, without having any divine commiſſion of his own, then theirs, received from him, might be reckoned not valid; therefore, our Lord here clears to them the validity of their commiſſion, by declaring to them the nature and extent of his own, ſaying, *All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.*

My friends, we are called this day to commemorate the death and ſufferings of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; yet it may be no loſs to our faith, that it is not the *manner* of his death and paſſion, but rather the remarkable *effects* of his death, and the grand *reward* of his ſufferings, that my text leads me to: I ſay, it may be no loſs, but rather an advantage to our faith, could we follow him from the croſs to the crown; for, though they believe to advantage, who look to a crucified Chriſt hanging on a croſs, yet they believe to more advantage, who ſtep up a little higher, and look to a crucified Chriſt ſitting upon a throne of power and majeſty. It is beſt looking to Chriſt where he is, and not where he was: as the angel ſaid to the woman, ver. 6th of this chapter, *He is not here, for he is riſen*, when they were ſeeking him in the grave; ſo we may ſay to theſe who would ſeek Chriſt upon the croſs, He is not here, but upon the throne. It it true, as the angel further ſaid to the woman, *Come ſee the place where the Lord lay*, though they were not to ſtay there, but ſeek after a riſen Chriſt; ſo may we ſay to you, it is not amiſs for you to come ſee the place where he was, namely, in Golgatha, hanging on a croſs, *Making his ſoul an offering for ſin:* but, having finiſhed that work, he is not there; therefore, let not faith ſtop and tarry only in the place where he was, but come ſee the place where the Lord is: and, behold, it is a place of abſolute ſupremacy and univerſal government wherein now he is fixed: *All power in heaven and in earth is given unto me.*

Our Lord Jeſus, after his reſurrection, having appeared to the eleven diſciples, ver. 16. we find the different entertainment he met with from them, ver. 17. *When they ſaw him, ſome worſhipped him, and ſome doubted.* Now, the words of our text meet with the caſe both of worſhipping and doubting diſciples; for, that the *worſhipping* diſciples might know they had a right object of worſhip, and that the *doubting* diſciples might know they had no reaſon to doubt, he tells them, *All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.* Theſe words have both a retroſpect or back-look to what went before, and a proſpect or looking forward to what follows. As they have a reference to what went before, they ſhow, that as there is good reaſon why all ſhould worſhip him, ſo there is no reaſon why any ſhould doubt concerning him; for, *All power in heaven and in earth is given unto him.* Again, as they have a reference to what follows, they ſhow not only the ground and foundation of all our miniſterial adminiſtrations of word and ſacraments, as I ſaid already, but alſo the ground of hope we have of ſucceſs therein, according to the promiſe in the cloſe of the chapter, *Lo, I am with you alway to the end of the world*; q. d. As I have power and authority to inſtitute theſe ordinances, ſo you may be ſure that my powerful and ſpiritual preſence will never be wholly wanting to make them effectual; for, *All power in heaven and in earth is given unto me.* Here is a great word, ſuch as none but he can ſay; and it imports a great dignity and advancement.

More particularly, you may notice therein theſe *four* things following.

1. The *Perſon* dignified, even our LORD JESUS CHRIST, the bleſſed ſpeaker of theſe words, who lately before this was hanging on a croſs, and lying in a grave; humbled to the loweſt, and now exalted to the higheſt.

2. Notice the *nature* and *kind* of this dignity; namely, *power*, and ALL *power* repoſed in him; all ſupremacy, ſovereignty, might, and dominion; and a plenitude thereof.

3. Notice the *degree* of this dignity, or the *extent* thereof; what are the vaſt dominions to which his power extends? Why, it is *all power in heaven and in earth.* Our Mediator is an univerſal Monarch, having all power in heaven above, and earth beneath.

4. Notice here the *manner* of the *conveyance* of this dignity, and the way how he came by it as Mediator; it is *given* to him; *All power is* GIVEN *unto me.* He did not uſurp this dominion, but was legally intitled to it, and inveſted with

* This ſubject was handled in an Action-ſermon, preached immediately before the celebration of the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper, at Dunfermline, July 14th, 1728. It hath undergone four impreſſions.

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it by divine donation. Chriſt hath a twofold right to this power and univerſal dominion.

(1.) A *natural* right, as he is God, equal with the Father; and thus, all power is *originally* and *eſſentially* his: he is the omnipotent God.

(2.) A *donative* right, as he is Mediator, God-man; and thus, all power is *given* to him. But who is the giver? Who can give all power? Who but God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, eſſentially conſidered, hath lodged all power in the perſon of the Man, the God-man, Jeſus Chriſt, as our Mediator? Wherever this donation is aſcribed to the Father, there the Father is to be conſidered eſſentially; as in Mat. xi. 27. It is the whole glorious Trinity, one God in three perſons, by mutual concert, that confer this honour and dignity upon the Man Chriſt; as may appear in the ſequel. The further explication of this great ſubject I refer to the proſecution of a doctrine.

OBSERV. *That all ſovereignty and ſupremacy of power is delegated to, and reſides in the perſon of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt:* or, to the ſame purpoſe, *That, by divine donation, Chriſt is inveſted with all power and dominion over the whole creation of God.* ALL POWER IN HEAVEN AND IN EARTH IS GIVEN TO ME.

Now, as he that hath all power may be pleaſed to aſſiſt and enable, I will ſpeak to this great doctrine in the following method;

I. I would *confirm* the truth thereof from other parallel texts, and ſcriptural inſtances.

II. Enquire what this *power* is, that is delegated to, and reſides in the perſon of Chriſt.

III. Speak of the *extent* of his power, as it is declared to be *all power in heaven and in earth.*

IV. Touch at the divine *donation* thereof, by ſhewing when and how it was given to our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

V. Offer ſome *reaſons* of the doctrine, why it is that all power in heaven and earth is given to him.

VI. Draw ſome *inferences* for the *application.*

And, O may our eyes be towards him for power to ſpeak and hear of his power! His powerful preſence would make it a precious communion-day to us.

I. The *firſt* head propoſed is, To *confirm* the truth of the doctrine. But what do I ſpeak of confirming a truth that is delivered out of the mouth of TRUTH itſelf? What needs more confirmation than his own declaring it here, *All power in heaven and in earth is given unto me?* Here is the teſtimony of the faithful and true Witneſs concerning himſelf, and that after he was *declared to be the Son of God with power, by his reſurrection from the dead.* It is the teſtimony of the eternal Son of God, in the name of his eternal Father, under the glorious effuſion of his eternal Spirit; and therefore, to doubt of this teſtimony, would import the higheſt blaſphemy, and be a queſtioning the veracity of the glorious God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt. Therefore, not to ſay for the *eſtabliſhing* of this doctrine, but for confirming our *faith* therein; let us conſider, that what Chriſt ſays here, is the ſame that he ſays elſewhere, and that the Father ſays of him, and that the whole ſcripture teſtifies concerning him. I ſhall, for clearing of this, give you a ſhort view of ſeveral things that are ſaid to be given to Chriſt, which carry in them this gift of all power.

As Chriſt is the *unſpeakable gift of God*, ſo every thing that he hath, as Mediator, is the gift of a glorious Trinity made over to him.

1. A *call* and *commiſſion* was given to him, and that from all eternity in the *counſel of peace*, when he was *ſet up from everlaſting*, with reſpect to his being the Mediator betwixt God and man, and the Saviour of a company of loſt ſinners, whom he was to redeem by the price of his blood, and the power of his Spirit, according to that gracious covenant-tranſaction, Iſa. lxii. 6. *I the Lord have called thee in righteouſneſs,—and will give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles*, &c. This is what our Lord Jeſus points at, John x. 18. when he ſpeaks of the *commandment given him of the Father*, concerning his giving his life a ranſom for many, and taking his life again, to complete the redemption-work by power as well as by price. Here was a call and commiſſion given him, with reference to a work attended with ſuch difficulties from heaven above, and earth beneath, that indeed required all power in heaven and earth to accompliſh it; and the giving of the former, plainly ſuppoſes and imports the giving of the latter to him.

2. A *ſeed* was given him, and that alſo from all eternity; an elect ſeed and offſpring, which it was promiſed he ſhould actually ſee in time and to eternity, when once he made his ſoul an offering for ſin; Iſa. liii. 10. *He ſhall ſee his ſeed, he ſhall prolong his days, and the pleaſure of the Lord ſhall proſper in his hand; he ſhall ſee the travel of his ſoul, and ſhall be ſatisfied.* Concerning this ſeed that was given him, he ſpeaks, John xvii. 6. *Thine they were, and thou gaveſt them me.* Now, here was a vaſt ſeed; when God declares the decree concerning it, Pſal. ii. 7, 8. he ſays, *I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermoſt ends of the earth for thy poſſeſſion:* yea, it is a *numberleſs number out of all nations* that was given him, Rev. vii. 9. Now, when ſuch a ſeed was given him, to be ſaved and governed by him, to be fitted for heaven, and guided on earth, it required and imported all power in heaven and in earth, which accordingly was given him.

3. A *body* was given to him in *time*, for accompliſhing, in our nature, the great buſineſs that was committed to him from *eternity*; Heb. x. 5. *It is not poſſible that the blood of bulls and of goats ſhould take away ſins; wherefore when he came into the world, he ſays, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldſt not, but a body haſt thou prepared me*; that is, a human nature to be a ſacrifice to offended juſtice; which ſacrifice we commemorate this day: and, O may it be a day of power from him that hath all power in heaven and in earth! O ſure, when this body was given to the Son of God, and our nature was joined into the ſame perſonality with him, then he had all the power of heaven and earth to grapple with; all the vengeance of heaven, and all the violence of earth lighted upon him: and, did not this require all power in heaven and in earth to be given for his ſupport? But ſome may think, What! had he the power of heaven to grapple with, and yet the power of heaven to ſupport him? Was there a battle betwixt two powers in heaven? Yes, there was a ſeeming war in heaven betwixt the power of God's wrath and the

the power of his love; the power of his wrath must vent againſt ſin, and yet the power of his love muſt vent upon the ſinner, according to the eternal concert: but finite wiſdom cannot tell how both theſe could come to paſs; but, behold, theſe two powers made an appointment, as it were, with mutual conſent, to meet in the body, the humanity that was given to our IMMANUEL, and there they *met together, and kiſſed each other*, Pſal. lxxxv. 10. And can you tell me which of theſe powers prevailed? Indeed, I think, they both prevailed; and none of them without blood upon this wonderful field of battle: for, *Without ſhedding of blood there could be no remiſſion.* The power of God's wrath prevailed, and got a condign ſatisfaction by that ſacrifice: and the power of his love prevailed, and got a bleſſed vent through that ſacrifice: therefore, if it be ſaid, *Who knows the power of his wrath?* May I not alſo ſay, *Who knows the power of his love?* Now, when the humanity of our IMMANUEL was the theatre on which this wonderful ſcene was acted, ſurely, while all the vengeance of heaven and violence of earth was preſſing him down, he needed all power in heaven and earth to bear him up, and accordingly he had it: for,

4. *Help* was given him; yea, all the help and aſſiſtance of the glorious Trinity was given to him; Iſa lxii. 6. *I the Lord have called thee, and will hold thine hand and keep thee*; and ver. 1. *Behold my Servant, whom I uphold.* To this ſame purpoſe you read, Iſa. xlix 8. and l. 6, 7. The fountain of all power was opened, and guſhed in upon him in an everlaſting flood; while he offered his human nature a ſacrifice on the altar of his eternal Godhead, he was upheld in the arms of his eternal Father, and the power of his eternal Spirit: for,

5. The *Spirit* was given him, even the Spirit of power; Iſa. xi. 1, 2. and xlii. 1. *I have put my Spirit upon him, and he ſhall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.* Iſa. lxi. 1. *The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, for he hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek.* And, according to the promiſe and prophecy concerning him, the *Spirit deſcended and reſted upon him*, Mat. iii. 16. And he received not the Spirit by meaſure, but above meaſure; *For God gives not the Spirit by meaſure unto him*, John iii. 34. Now, the Spirit of power above meaſure given to him, carries in it all power in heaven and in earth given to him.

6. To ſhew that it was no dumb Spirit that was given to our Lord Jeſus, he that gave him a *body* to be a ſacrifice, gave him a *tongue* to be a teacher; and a powerful tongue, to teach with a ſtrong hand, and to *ſpeak as never man ſpake*; Iſa. l. 4. *The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I ſhould know how to ſpeak a word in ſeaſon to him that is weary.* O! *Who teaches like him!* None in heaven or earth hath power to teach like him; *To whom ſhall we go? thou haſt the words of eternal life*, John vi. 68. Such grace is poured into his lips, that eternal life hangs upon his tongue, and depends upon a word from him; *The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead ſhall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear ſhall live*, John v. 25. He that, by his divine power, ſpoke the world from a ſtate of nothing to a ſtate of being, even he had the tongue of a man, a human tongue given him, to ſpeak man from a ſtate of death to a ſtate of life. But whence can he do this? Why, that bleſſed tongue is in the mouth of a God-man, who can ſpeak words of power from heaven to earth, and that even by the means of poor mortal tongues whom he employs for him; which imports all power in heaven and earth given to him.

7. A *robe* and *raiment* was given to him, Iſa. lxi. 10. It is our Lord Jeſus that is there ſpeaking both of himſelf and his bride, *I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my ſoul ſhall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of ſalvation, and covered me with the robe of righteouſneſs, as a bridegroom decketh himſelf with ornaments, and as a bride adorns herſelf with her jewels.* Chriſt, as Mediator and Surety, the bleſſed Bridegroom of his church, rejoiceth in his being clothed with this garment of ſalvation and robe of righteouſneſs for the behoof of his bride, whom he covers with the ſame mantle, and fills with the ſame joy. As he was, in the capacity of Surety and Cautioner, ſolemnly condemned in the fleſh for our ſin; ſo, having paid all the debt by his doing and dying, he was as ſolemnly *juſtified in the Spirit*, and abſolved as the *Lord our righteouſneſs*; and, having riſen again, is clothed with righteouſneſs and ſalvation: and the Man Chriſt rejoices in God as his Father and Juſtifier, that hath thus clothed and adorned him; *He is near that juſtifies me, who will contend with me?* Iſa. l. 8. Now, this righteouſneſs being ſuch a glorious one, as brings in glory to God in the higheſt heaven, and peace and good-will towards men on earth, implies all power in heaven and in earth that was given to him.

8. A *throne* was given to him: not only a prophetical tongue and a prieſtly righteouſneſs, but alſo a royal kingly throne, according to God's oath unto David, Acts ii. 30. which refers unto Pſal. cxxxii. 11.; and therefore ſays the apoſtle, Acts ii. 30. *Let all the houſe of Iſrael know aſſuredly that God hath made that ſame Jeſus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Chriſt.* See how he was ſet upon this throne, Pſal. ii. 6, 7. *I have ſet my King upon my holy hill of Zion: I will declare the decree; the Lord hath ſaid to me, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.* As God coequal with the Father, he ſits upon the ſame ſupreme throne with the Father and eternal Spirit, which are one God in three perſons; but, as God-man, the imperial throne is given him, and his throne is an everlaſting throne; *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; the ſceptre of thy kingdom is a right ſceptre*, Heb. i. 8. Pſal. xlv. 6. Heaven is his throne, and the earth is his footſtool; which imports all power in heaven and in earth.

9. A *name* was given him ſuitable to his throne, majeſty, and dignity, Phil. ii. 9, 10. *God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name.* It is a name above *men*; *Thou art fairer than the ſons of men*: a name above *ſaints*; for he is the *King of ſaints*: a name above *angels*; for he is the *Lord of angels*: a name above *all names*; for he is the *Head of all principality and power.* See his name that is given him, Iſa. ix. 6. *To us a Child is born, to us a Son is given, and the government ſhall be upon his ſhoulders; and his name ſhall be called, Wonderful, Counſellor, the mighty God, the everlaſting Father, the Prince of Peace.* See his name, Rev. xix. 16. *He hath upon his veſture and his thigh a name written*, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. In a word, his name is, JEHOVAH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. And who can explain his name, or his Father's name? Prov. xxx. 4. *What is his name, and what is his*

Son's

Son's name, if thou canſt tell? Becauſe he is God as well as man, God equal with the Father, therefore, though he hath a new name with relation to us, yet his name is not changed no more than his nature; the man Jeſus Chriſt is the ſupreme God: it is Arian blaſphemy that would rob him of this part of his name. But in vain do they rob him of that which God hath given him; God the Father calls him *God*, Pſal. xlv. 6. *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever:* there is a name given him above all names. But, perhaps, ſome one may think, if it be only *given* to him, then it does not belong to him but by *gift*, and ſo not by *nature*. I anſwer, As *God*, it is not given to him, for it is natural to him to be God; but it is given to the *man* Chriſt, becauſe he is God eſſentially, as well as man; and God-man in one perſon: *He hath then given him a name above every name.* And as there is no name above his, ſo there is no God above him; he is the God, the Angel that *ſwears by himſelf*, becauſe he could ſwear by no greater, Heb. vi. 13. *I am God, and there is none elſe*, ſays Chriſt, Iſa. xlv. 22. And hence his name is *the Supreme, the moſt mighty God*, Pſal. xlv. 3. *Gird thy ſword upon thy thigh, O moſt Mighty, with thy glory and thy majeſty.* Thus then all power in heaven and earth muſt be given to him.

10. To add no more, *all things* were given to him, and therefore all power in heaven and in earth; Mat. xi. 27. *All things are delivered unto me of my Father.* John iii. 37. *The Father hath given all things into his hand.* John xiii. 3. *Knowing that the Father had given all things into his hand;* and therefore he ſays, John xvi. 15. *All things that the Father hath are mine.* Here I might tell you ſome of theſe *all things* that are given him. —All *gifts* and *graces* are given to him; *He hath aſcended up on high, received gifts for men, even for the rebellious, that God the Lord might dwell among them.* —All *bleſſings* are given to him: all the ſtock we loſt in the firſt Adam is more abundantly in him; *Grace is poured into thy lips, therefore God thy God hath bleſſed thee:* and hence he is the fountain of all bleſſings; and *men ſhall be bleſſed in him.* —All *treaſures* are given to him: *In him are hid all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge;* all the treaſures of power and pity, grace and glory. —All *fulneſs* is given to him; *It pleaſed the Father that in him ſhould all fulneſs dwell:* yea, *In him dwells all the fulneſs of the Godhead bodily.* —— Now, there is not one of theſe things I have mentioned on this head, that could have been given him, unleſs all power in heaven and earth alſo had been given him. Let our faith then be fortified in the truth of this doctrine of Chriſt here. What could he have done with *all things*, if he had not *all power* to manage them? Yea, it could not be true that all things were given him, if all power were withheld: but it is an eternal truth, that our God and Saviour, the fountain of truth, ſays here, *All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.* I go on,

II. To the *ſecond* head propoſed, which was, To enquire, *what* this power is, that is delegated to, and reſides in the perſon of Chriſt: *All power*, ſays he, *is given unto me.* As to the nature of this power, I ſhall only ſay in general, it is what we cannot define nor pretend to give a full deſcription of: only, to hint at the ſcriptural definition of it; It is a power above all power that Chriſt hath; for he is *ſet far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but alſo in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet, and given him to be head over all things to his church*, Eph. i. 21, 22. It imports his juſt and indiſputable right to govern the world, and diſpoſe of all creatures in it according to his ſovereign will and pleaſure. But, more particularly, to give ſome further ſcriptural account of this power that is given to Chriſt, I would touch at theſe four things, 1. The kind of this power. 2. The parts. 3. The acts. 4. The qualities and properties thereof.

1ſt, I would touch at the *kinds* of this power of Chriſt: and it is twofold, either *eſſential* or *œconomical*.

1. His *eſſential* power, as he is the *great God*, from *everlaſting to everlaſting*, whoſe *kingdom ruleth over all*; Rom. ix. 5.—*Of whom as concerning the fleſh Chriſt came, who is over all, God bleſſed for ever, Amen*, ſays the apoſtle; ſo it is, ſo let it be, and ſo ſhall it be: and, AMEN, will all the church of Chriſt ſay, except damnable Arian and Socinian blaſphemers. And if he were not a God of infinite patience, as well as of infinite power, he could not have born ſo long with the high affronts which have been of late caſt upon his ſupreme Deity in Britain and Ireland, and even in the church of Scotland alſo; wherein the groundleſs noiſe and outcry of *novelties in doctrine*, and *dangerous Antinomianiſm**, is, in the righteous providence of God, like to be drowned with a more hideous noiſe of *damnable Arianiſm* †. However, this eſſential power of our Lord Jeſus is the ſame with that of the Father and Holy Ghoſt, who are one in eſſence. And if we view him in his perſonality, as he is the eternal Son of God, he is equal in power and glory with the Father and eternal Spirit; *He was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God*, Phil. ii. 6.; being the *brightneſs of his glory, and the expreſs image of his perſon, and upholding all things by the word of his power*, Heb. i. 3.

2. His *œconomical* power, as he is the great Meſſias, God in our nature. This is the power, that is properly ſaid to be given to him: and this mediatorial power of Chriſt, though it be of another kind, yet it is not ſeparate from, but founded upon his eſſential power, inſomuch, that he could not be our almighty Mediator, if he had not been the almighty God; but our *help* was *laid upon One that is mighty*, Pſal. lxxxix. 19. *One that is* MIGHTY; there is his eſſential power: *I have* LAID *help upon him*; there is his œconomical power, given to him as Mediator: in which reſpect, it is *given him* to have *power over all fleſh*, John xvii. 2.; and to be *Head over all things to his church*, Eph. i. 22.

2dly, I would touch at the *parts* of this power that was given to the Lord Jeſus. For clearing of this, you are to conſider, that the œconomical, or mediatorial power of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt is twofold, namely, his power of *authority*, and his power of *ability*.

1. His power of *authority*: he took not [illegible] *office on himſelf*, without the call of God, Heb. v. 4.; He was *choſen* of God to it, Mat. xii. 18.; He was *anointed* to it, Pſal. ii. 6.; and thus *ſealed* and *authoriſed* of the Father, John vi. 27. This divine call and commiſſion conveys authority to all his mediatory acts. The word here in the text, πᾶσα ἐξουσία, properly ſignifies, not

* See this accuſation opened up, p. 70, 149, 150, 178, 190.

† See this matter briefly cleared up, p. 322, 454.

not simply *potentia*, that is, *force* and *strength*, as δύναμις among the Grecians does; but *potestas*, that is, *authority* and *right to rule*, grounded upon law: a legal authority, a rightful power over all.

2. His power of *ability*, whereby *he is able to save to the uttermost*, Heb. vii. 25.; yea, both *able to save and to destroy*, James iv. 12. And no wonder, he is the very same person who was able to create the world out of nothing, and did so; who *clave the sea, and made a way for his ransomed to pass over*; who was *able to lay down his life, and to take it up again*; which accordingly he did, John x. 17, 18. These two parts of power in the Lord Jesus Christ are inseparable, notwithstanding that they are distinct things, and separable in themselves. Some kings, for example, have a power of legal authority over their rebellious subjects, but they want a power of ability to repress them; that is, they have *right*, but they want *might*: others again have a power of ability to subdue their neighbours, but it is an act of iniquity, for they have no legal authority over them; that is, they have *might*, but they want *right*: but both these, you see, do concur in our Lord Jesus Christ; he hath both a power of authority, and a power of ability over all things in heaven and earth; *All power is given unto me.* Now, from these essential parts of his œconomical, or mediatorial, power issue these four consequential parts thereof, which I but name.

(1.) There is a power of *pre-eminency* given him; *He is the Head of the body the church, who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence*, Col. i. 18. *He that came from above is above all*, John iii. 31.: above all, by nature, as God; and above all, by donation, as Mediator; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence.

(2.) There is a power of *dominion* that is given to him, a power of government; *The government shall be upon his shoulders*, Isa. ix. 6. This dominion is an universal dominion over all in general, as he is the *King of kings*; and particularly over his church, as he is the *King of Zion*, and *Head over all things to his church*.

(3.) There is a power of *dispensation* that is given to him, to dispense, distribute, communicate, give, and bestow what he will upon whom he will; John xvii. 2. *Thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he might give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him*; that is, to as many as he pleased: *for he and his Father are one* in will and pleasure, as well as in essence and nature.

(4.) There is a power of *judgment* given to him; *As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son*, even as Mediator, *to have life in himself, and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man*, John v. 26, 27. Authority to execute judgment both in this world and at the last day. Thus, I say, there is given to him all power of *authority* and *right*; all power of *ability* and *might*; all power of *pre-eminency*, whereby he is above all; all power of *dominion*, whereby he rules over all; all power of *dispensation*, to give what he pleases, to whom he pleases; and all power of *judgment*, to acquit or condemn whom he will. These are the parts of his power.

3*dly*, I would touch at the *acts* of his power; whereby he exercises that power that is given him. And here, all that can be said is but a dilating upon the former head; for all these acts of power that can be mentioned, are but so many more pieces of his power, founded upon, and included in what I have said. The acts then and egress of his power may be viewed in these following outgoings thereof, especially in his church.

1. He hath power to *gather a church* to himself out of all the corners of the world, as it is said, *To him shall the gathering of the people be*: so he, having all this power in his hand, hath no more to do but to lift up his royal standard, and then there is a rendezvous under his banner, who is the *standard-bearer among ten thousand*; Isa. xi. 11, 12. *He shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah, from the four corners of the earth.*

2. He hath power to give *laws* and *ordinances* in his church, and to commissionate officers and servants to dispense these ordinances of his appointment: hence it follows in the context here, *All power is given unto me; Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations.* Well, but may they teach any thing he hath not ordered nor invented, any new ceremonies he hath not instituted? No; *Teach them to observe whatsoever I have commanded you.* Whatever, therefore, is not his institution, but of human invention, is to be rejected as spurious, though it were inforced with the authority of all principalities and powers in heaven, let be of all the popes and prelates on earth; if it bears not his superscription, who hath all power in heaven and earth, it is to be rejected.

3. He hath power to *convert sinners*, to *subdue rebels*, and to draw whom he will to his obedience; *Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power*, Psal. cx. 3. *When I am lifted up, I will draw all men after me.* There is many a hard, stony heart here; but, O Sirs, it is good news that he hath power even *out of stones to raise up children to Abraham.*

4. He hath power to *justify the guilty*, and *pardon* whom he pleases, Mat. ix. 6.: there he wills us to know that the *Son of man hath power even on earth to forgive sins.* Had the *Prince of peace* this power when he was in a state of humiliation, in the depth of his povery? Who then will question, his power now when exalted to the height of his pomp, and when he is exalted by, and to the right-hand of God, to be a *Prince and a Saviour*, for this very end, *to give repentance unto Israel and remission of sin?*

5. He hath power to *adopt the fatherless*, and to bring these that are the children of wrath, by nature, out of the devil's family, and to make them the children of God by faith, whereof he himself is the powerful author; *To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the children of God, even to them that believe on his name*, John i. 12. The power of adoption and filiation is in his hand, whereby he can make these that were heirs of hell to be heirs of God, and joint heirs with himself: for, as he is the everlasting Son, so he is the everlasting Father.

6. He hath power to *sanctify the filthy*, and to purify his church, and to *present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot*, Eph. v. 26. It is he that hath *power to purify the sons of Levi*, Mal. iii. 3. And though it seem to be a contemptible office for him that hath all power in heaven and earth, to stoop down so low as to wash and purify such abominable filthy lepers as we are; yet,

yet, if *he waſh us not, we have no part in him:* and he wills us not to ſay to him, *Depart from us, for we are ſinful men;* nay, but rather, Come to us, for this very reaſon, becauſe we are ſinful men and women. For as he alone hath power to waſh us in his blood, and invites us to come to him that he may waſh us, ſo he commands us to invite him to come to us and waſh us; *Take with you words, and ſay, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciouſly*, Hoſ. xiv. 2.—But to mention all acts and outgoings of his power, is impoſſible: he hath power to *reveal all myſteries*, and to make known the very mind and heart of God; *All things are delivered to me of my Father, and no man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father ſave the Son, and he to whomſoever the Son will reveal him*, Mat. xi. 27. *No man hath ſeen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the boſom of the Father, he hath declared him*, John i. 18.—And again, he hath power to make *effectual all his ordinances, word*, and *ſacraments:* they are all lifeleſs and powerleſs without him; but they are effectual through his powerful preſence, which, glory to his name, he promiſed when he appointed them; *Lo, I am with you always to the end of the world*, Mat. xxviii. 20.—He hath power to *deſtroy unbelief*, and *create faith*, being the *author and finiſher* of it: and indeed, in working it, he ſhews the *exceeding greatneſs of his power*, Eph. i. 19. For why, (O admire his power!) he hath *power to ſend the Spirit*, John xv. 26. and xvii. 7. Here is a power above all finite power, a power to ſend the Holy Ghoſt, the third perſon of the glorious Trinity, that is equal in power and glory with the Father and with the Son; *If I go, I will ſend him:* when I go up, I will ſend him down. O let us ſay, AMEN, Lord; thou haſt gone, therefore now ſend him, ſend him, ſend him: the Father promiſed the Son, and he ſent him; the Son hath promiſed the Spirit, and will he not ſend him? Yea, he hath ſent him already many a time ſince he went away: but hath he not promiſed to ſend him to the end of time, when he ſaid, *Lo, I am with you to the end of the world?* Yea, he hath promiſed, and therefore rely on the promiſe. Thou haſt gone, Lord Jeſus; therefore ſend the Spirit, according to thy word. O bleſſed power of our Lord Jeſus!—He hath power to ſend the *Spirit of power*, as he did on the day of Pentecoſt, Acts ii. 33. And, O! here is the great reaſon why he can give us power to preach, and power to hear, power to believe, and power to repent, and power to love, and power to pray, and power to praiſe, and power to communicate, becauſe he hath power to ſend the Spirit of power, by whoſe power alone we can do all things. What ſhall I ſay? Surely I cannot give any more glorious inſtance of his power than what I have done.—He hath power to looſe all *bonds*, to liberate *captives*, and bring them to the glorious liberty of the children of God; *If the Son make you free, you ſhall be free indeed*, John viii. 36. A freedom from the curſe of the law, freedom from the wrath of God, freedom from the power of ſin, and from the ſlavery of Satan. Let the bonds of ſin and corruption be never ſo ſtrong about you, man, woman; let the bonds of death and deſpair be never ſo powerful, he can, in a moment, looſe them, and let you go free, ſaying, *Come forth ye priſoners of hope.*——But, paſſing many particulars that might here be mentioned, I ſhall proceed,

4*thly*, To touch at ſome of the *properties* of this power that is given to our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. I might here ſhew you that his power is not only a *legiſlative* power, a power to give laws to, and write his laws in the hearts of his ſubjects, Jer. xxxi. 33. which no king could ever do but himſelf; but alſo an *executive* power, for executing his royal acts and orders, whether they be acts of grace and mercy promiſed towards his willing ſubjects, whom he makes ſo in the day of his power, or acts of juſtice and vengeance threatened againſt his rebellious enemies; of both which we read, Pſal. lxxxix. 21, 22. compared with ver. 28, 29. and downward, and alſo with what is ſpoken of him both in the ſecond and hundred and tenth pſalm. Some have power to make laws and acts, but no power to execute them: it is not ſo with him, that hath *all power in heaven and in earth*. But more particularly, there are theſe few properties of his power I would mention.

1. It is an *irreſiſtible* power: if all power is given to him, then, what can reſiſt him? His power is invincible, and who but he can ſpeak in that language, Rev. i. 8. *I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty?* Hence, when his day of power for drawing ſinners to him comes, there is no ſtanding before it; why, it is the power of an irreſiſtible will; *For, who hath reſiſted his will?* Rom. ix. 19.; and the power of an irreſiſtible arm; *The right-hand of the Lord* being *exalted, the right-hand of the Lord does valiantly*, Pſal. cxviii. 15, 16.

2. It is a *ſerviceable* power: though it be not communicable to any, in the manner that it is in him, yet it is ſerviceable to many, and communicable in the effects and outgoings thereof, to impower and ſtrengthen them, and to *perfect ſtrength in their weakneſs*. Yea, as his power is omnipotent, ſo it is omnipatent; it is laid open and expoſed for the uſe and ſervice of ſinners, who are therefore called to *lay hold on his ſtrength, that they may make peace with him*, Iſa. xxvii. 5. Our ſtock of ſtrength, in the firſt Adam, was loſt; and now all ſhops are cloſed, but Chriſt's ſhop ſtands open: and whoſoever will, may come and take ſupply freely, and get a better ſtock in a better hand, even that of Jeſus, who is *Jehovah our righteouſneſs and ſtrength*; therefore, *Truſt ye in the Lord for ever*, ſays the prophet, Iſa. xxvi. 4.; *for in the Lord Jehovah is everlaſting ſtrength.* Which leads to another property,

3. It is *everlaſting* power, everlaſting ſtrength: his power is, like himſelf, unchangeable; the *ſame yeſterday, to-day, and for ever: his kingdom is an everlaſting kingdom.* It is true, the time is coming when it is ſaid, *He will deliver up the kingdom to the Father*, 1 Cor. xv. 24. But this reſpects the *different adminiſtration* of it at the end of time, when he ſhall have no more ſubjects to bring in, nor enemies to bring down, and when all his mediatorial power will be ſeen to have been given him for glorious deſigns, and God will appear to have been, and to be *all in all* in this wonderful buſineſs of redemption. Chriſt will give an honeſt and honourable account of the whole work put into his hand, when he ſhall ſay, *Behold I, and the children which thou haſt given me*, Heb. ii. 13. And, *Of all that thou haſt given me, I have loſt nothing*, but managed all according to thy will, John vi. 39. But the God-man will never ceaſe to be King, and his kingdom, power, and authority will

will be everlasting and unchangeable: for it is to him the Father says, *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever*, Heb. i. 3. The believer may be sometimes weak and sometimes strong, as well as empty by turns; but, O the power that is in this glorious Head is everlasting power! This is the ground of his peoples everlasting peace, everlasting pardon, everlasting consolation, and everlasting glory.

4. It is a *suitable* power; suitable to the royal dignity of the person to whom it is given, suitable to his station and quality as God-man, Mediator; it well becomes him to have all the power that is given him: it is suitable to the great end that God proposed, namely, his highest glory and honour in the salvation and redemption of his people: it is suitable to the trust that God repose in him; and suitable to the honour that God would confer upon him: it is suitable to the delight the Father hath in him; and suitable to the agreement the Father made with him: it is suitable to his office that had so much ado with God: and suitable to his people that had so much ado with him. In a word, it is suitable for his work that he be thus qualified; and suitable for his reward that he be thus glorified: *All power is given unto me.* Hence,

5. It is a *glorious* power; *Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most Mighty, even thy glory and thy majesty*, Psal. xlv. 3. His powerful sword is *glorious majesty*, Psal. lxiii. 2. Why is the sight of his power and of his glory in the sanctuary put together, but because his glory is a powerful glory, and his power a glorious power? It is a glorious divine power. Christ crucified is the *wisdom of God*, and the *power of God*, and the *glory of the power of God*; for, he is the *brightness of the Father's glory*: and the power of God being the glory of God, Christ is the brightness of the glory of the power of God, in whom his power shines more than in all the works of creation and providence: for in his powerful saving of sinners out of the hands of sin, guilt, Satan, death and the law, and out of the hand of all the powers of earth and hell, and out of the hand of infinite justice and incensed wrath, the glory of God's power shines so much, that if God had made ten thousand worlds more and greater than this, he could not thereby have given such a discovery of the glory of his power as he hath done in the face of Jesus Christ. O! hath the God, who *commanded light to shine out of darkness, shined into our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of his glory, in the face of Jesus Christ*, and among the rest the glory of his power!

6. It is an *universal* and *extensive* power; ALL *power is given unto me.* As it hath *pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell*, so all fulness imports all power; yea, *in him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily*, and so all the power of the Godhead. Creatures may have some power by communication from him; but where is there another beside him that hath *all* power, and that both in heaven and in earth? But this leads me,

III. To the *third* head proposed in the general method, which was, To speak a little of the *extent* of this power, as it is declared in the text to be *all power in heaven and in earth*; which I consider under a distinct head, because it is so particularly mentioned, as extending to heaven above, and earth below. Let us consider then, 1. What lies in this, *All power in heaven.* 2. What lies in this, *All power in earth.*

1st, All power in *heaven* is given to Christ; What is that? O! who can declare this but the God of heaven? We shall only touch a little at what he hath said in his word concerning it. I think it imports these two things.

1. All power in *heaven*, imports, a power reaching *over* heaven, even all the *principalities and powers, in heavenly places*, as they are called, Eph. i. 20, 21. He appointed them to serve his saints upon earth; *Are they not all ministring spirits, sent forth to minister unto the heirs of salvation?* Heb. i. 14. Even when Christ was upon earth in his lowest state, as they were apprehending him, he could have *ordered twelve legions of angels for his assistance*, Mat. xxvi. 53.; but that this was not agreeable to the glorious work of redemption that he was pursuing, according to the scripture: and now, in his exalted state, he hath the ordering of the heavenly hosts as he pleases, and to what errand he will. See how all the saints and angels about the throne are employed, Rev. v. 9,—12.: and this in a suitableness to the orders given, Heb. i. 6. *When he brings the First-begotten into the world, he says, Let all the angels of God worship him.* In a word, *The chariots of our Lord are twenty thousand*, Psal. lxviii. 17.: he drives these heavenly chariots where he will.

2. All power in *heaven*, imports, a power reaching *above* heaven: not only a power *over* heaven, and all the heavenly inhabitants, whether angels or saints; but a power *above* heaven; I mean, with God, that is infinitely above heaven: a power with his eternal Father, and a power with his eternal Spirit. Such a power of *intercession* with the Father, that nothing he demands can be denied; for, *the Father hears him always*; for he always intercedes in the virtue of the sacrifice and atonement that he made, which is infinitely well-pleasing unto God. Such a power of *mission*, with respect to the Holy Ghost, that when he will he can send him, as I was shewing already; it is a power and authority to pour out the Spirit, Isa. xliv. 3. *I will pour water on him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground.* What is that? even *my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing on thine offspring.* Such a power with God hath the Lord Jesus, that his will is a law to his Father; *Father, I will, that these whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory that thou hast given me; for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world*, John xvii. 24. *Father, I will*; there is a power infinitely above the heavens. Such a power hath Christ, with respect to the Holy Ghost, that the Spirit's descending from heaven to earth, depended, in a manner, upon his ascending from earth to heaven; *I tell you the truth, it is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come*, John xvi. 17. And according to the stated œconomy of the glorious work of redemption, the Holy Ghost comes not down without a mission from heaven; therefore he adds, *If I depart, I will send him:* Whence will he send him? Is it only from heaven? nay, there is more, *I will send him from the Father*, John xv. 26. There is a power above the heaven of heavens, a power to send the eternal Spirit from the eternal Father!——See then what it is to have *all power in heaven*; it is a power reaching

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over heaven, and a power reaching *above* heaven. O what a powerful Saviour have we to look unto! *All power in heaven is given unto me.*

2*dly*, All power in *earth* is given unto Chriſt: What is that? This to be ſure, follows of conſequence; for, he that hath *all power in heaven*, cannot but have *all power in earth:* and, I think, this imports two things alſo, namly, a power *over* the earth, and a power *under* the earth.

1. A power *over* the earth. Though *his kingdom be not of this world*, but diſtinct from all earthly kingdoms, yet he hath a power over the earth; a general power over all things and all perſons on earth, from the greateſt to the moſt minute: for, he being *King of kings*, and *Lord of lords*, his *kingdom ruleth over all.* His providential power and government extend from the king upon the throne, to the ſparrow upon the buſh; from the diſpoſing of kingdoms and ſceptres on the earth, to the numbering of the hairs on our head. But there is a particular power and authority that he hath over his church on earth; this I have touched at already: and therefore ſhall only ſay, He hath power over all *gifts* in the earth; to beſtow all gifts and graces, and all ſpiritual bleſſings: for, Pſal. lxviii. 18. *He hath aſcended on high, and led captivity captive, and received gifts for men, even for the rebellious, that the Lord God might dwell among them.*—He hath power over all *ſouls* in the earth, both to ſave and to damn them. Power to *ſave;* and therefore ſays, *Look unto me, and be ſaved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none elſe.* Power to *damn;* and therefore ſays, He that looketh not, *he that believeth not, ſhall be damned.*—He hath power over all *things* on earth, ſo as to *make all things work together for good to them that love him, and are the called according to his purpoſe.*—He hath power over all *enemies* of his church upon earth; when *the floods lift up their voice, the Lord on high is mightier than the noiſe of many waters.*—He hath power over all *caſes* of ſinners on earth, and can ſave in the moſt deſperate caſes; from the utmoſt point of ſin and miſery, to the utmoſt point of happineſs and glory; *He is able to ſave to the uttermoſt all that come to him, becauſe he ever liveth to make interceſſion*, Heb. vii. 25. *The Son quickenth who he will*, John v. 21. His voice will raiſe the dead at the laſt day, when he comes to judge the world; and his voice can raiſe the dead ſinner out of the grave of ſin and ſecurity.

2. A power *under* the earth belongs to him alſo, and is imported in this *all power in earth*, that is *given to him:* for, if there be any under the earth that attempts to undermine and oppoſe his power and authority in it, that muſt alſo be under his check and controul, and his power muſt extend thereunto; otherwiſe he could not be ſaid to have all power in earth. His power then extends not only to things *of* and *in* the earth, but to things *under* the earth, Phil. ii. 10. *That at* [or IN] *the name of Jeſus every knee ſhould bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things* UNDER *the earth:* that is, a power over all the devils in hell. Chriſt could not have run through his kingly office, if he had not had this power over devils; he could not have been able to bind the ſtrong man, if he had not been ſtronger: nay, he came for this very end to the earth, to *bruiſe the head of the ſerpent;* and *by death to deſtroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;* and accordingly, *having ſpoiled principalities and powers, he made a ſhow of them openly, triumphing over them in his croſs*, Col. ii. 15. And if he triumphed above them, when the croſs was on his back, how does he now triumph and exert his power above them when the crown is on his head? His having *all power in heaven and earth*, then, imports alſo, that he hath all power in *hell*, and *under the earth*, which that word perhaps relates unto, Rev. i. 18. *I am he that lives and was dead; and, behold, I live for evermore;* AMEN: *I have the keys of hell and death.* The keys argue power; for it is metaphor from conquerors, when they take a city, they have the keys delivered to them, in token that the city is now under their command. Chriſt hath the keys of hell, and can ſend whom he will to it. In a word, the power of the keys is only his; *He hath the key of David, that opens and none ſhuts, and ſhuts and none opens*, Rev. iii. 7. All the keys of power and authority hang at his girdle; theſe four keys particularly. (1.) The keys of *heaven*, to open heaven, and let in whom he will to glory: and he muſt needs have ſupremacy of power, that can ſet a crown of glory on the head of all his ranſomed ones, who *ſhall return and come to Zion with ſongs, and everlaſting joy upon their heads.* (2.) He hath the key of *hell*, to ſhut up whom he will into the pit. (3.) He hath the key of the *word*, to open it, and diſcover the myſteries of the kingdom to whom he will. (4.) He hath the key of the *heart*, to open it, as he did the heart of Lydia, when he pleaſes: and, indeed, no leſs power than that of his, who hath *all power in heaven and earth*, can open the heart of man upon earth, to let in this *King of glory*, this *mighty King*.

Let us then view the *extent* of this power that is given him, even all power in heaven, over heaven, and above the heavens; and all power in earth, over the earth, and under the earth. His power then extends from the battlement of heaven to the bottom of hell: it is a power over all the angels in heaven, and power over all the devils in hell; power to pacify the God of heaven, and power to deſtroy the god of this world. *All power in heaven and earth is given unto me.*

IV. The *fourth* general head propoſed, was, To touch at the *divine donation* of this power, by ſhewing *when* and *how* this power was given to the Lord Jeſus. And,

1*ſt*, *When* was all power in heaven and earth given unto him? There are four periods we may caſt our eye upon, in anſwering this queſtion.

The *firſt* period is from all *eternity*, before the foundation of the world was laid, in the counſel of peace. Upon his undertaking the work of redemption, all power was given him *decretively* and *federally*, according to that glorious tranſaction betwixt the Father and him: and hence the goſpel is ſaid to be but the declaration of the decree concerning him; *I will declare the decree*, Pſal. ii. 7. What decree is it? even of giving Chriſt *all power in heaven and earth*, of giving him a throne in Zion, and giving him the *heathen for his heritage, and the uttermoſt ends of the earth for his poſſeſſion:* and hence alſo he is ſaid to be *ſet up from everlaſting, ere ever the earth was*, when, in the proſpect of this great work now declared unto us, he was his Father's *delight;* and his *delights were with the ſons of men*, Prov. viii. 23, 30.

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The *second* period is from the *beginning* of the world; or rather, when, upon the back of the fall, the first promise was proclaimed in Paradise, *The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent*, all power was given to him *virtually*, insomuch, that it was not only promised he should have all power to destroy the old serpent's devices, but his parole and word of honour, in the counsel of peace, was so much regarded, and the Father put so much trust and confidence in him, that he intrusted him with all power and authority, even before his incarnation, and before ever he paid the debt of obedience and satisfaction: and upon this ground it was, that by virtue of this power lodged in him he bestowed the Spirit, and many spiritual blessings upon his people, under the Old Testament, before he took on our nature; yea, upon this ground, all that were appointed to life, from the beginning of the world, and during the time of the Old-Testament dispensation before Christ assumed our flesh, were saved by this Mediatorial power and grace that was given him upon trust: hence says the apostle, Acts xv. 11. *We believe we shall be saved by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, even as they.*

The *third* period wherein all power was actually given to him, and *initially*, was even in the days of his *humiliation*; for therein he was, as God in our nature, clothed with all this power for performing the work that belonged to his humbled state. The New-Testament history, therefore, is full of the account of his power that he exerted in working miracles, healing diseases, opening the eyes of the blind, and the like. When the *Word was made flesh and dwelt among us*, says the apostle, even then, *We beheld his glory, full of grace and truth:* and even when he was riding to Jerusalem on an ass; yea, when he was hanging on a cross, and lying in a grave, he was clothed with the same royal power and glory that was manifested to the wisemen of the east, when he was lying in a manger. There were, indeed, some remarkable times wherein his glory was discovered in a more special manner, witness at his baptism and transfiguration. But then,

The *fourth* period wherein all power in heaven and earth was most eminently given to him, was immediately upon his *resurrection*; then he was more signally and solemnly invested with all power.—The first step of his exaltation, namely, his *rising again from the dead*, was the first step of his solemn investiture with universal power and authority: for clearing of this, compare Psal. ii. 6, 7. with Acts xiii. 33. When is it that God says, *I have set my King upon my holy hill of Zion*, and *declared the decree*, saying, *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? God hath fulfilled the same unto us*, says the apostle, *in that he hath raised up Jesus again, as it is written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee*; why, his resurrection was the great proof and declaration of his being the Son of God; for then, *He was declared to be the Son of God with power, by his resurrection from the dead*, Rom. i. 4. And though it would not be improper to apply that word, *This day have I begotten thee*, to his eternal generation; for, *From everlasting to everlasting he is God*, as it were, one and the same eternal day: yet we see it is accommodate to his resurrection in point of declaration; *I will declare the decree; this day have I* made it appear that I *have begotten thee*. His resurrection was the declaration of his being the Son of God with power.—The other steps of Christ's exaltation, his *ascending up into heaven*, and *sitting at the right-hand of God*, were so many other steps up to the glorious throne of universal power and supreme authority, Phil. ii. 9. When God *highly exalted him*, then he *gave him a name above every name*; a throne above every throne: when he *ascended up on high, then he received gifts for men*; and here is the sum of his gifts, *All power in heaven and earth is given unto me.*——You see the time *when* it was that *all power* was given to him.

2*dly*, As to the *manner* how all power was given to him. Here it might be shown by whose pleasure and by what means and acts this power was given to him.

[1.] As to the *first*, by whose *pleasure* was it, or who could give him this power? I answer, in a word, it *pleased the Father*, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, one God in three persons, *that in him*, the second person, as God-man, Mediator, *should all fullness dwell*, even *all the fulness of the Godhead bodily*, Col. i. 19. and ii. 9. It pleased the Father, that all the fulness of his Godhead; it pleased the Son, that all the fulness of his Godhead; it pleased the Holy Ghost, that all the fulness of his Godhead; or, it was the pleasure of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, that all the fulness of the Godhead should centre and reside in the Man, the God-man, Christ Jesus. And, because God the Father is the first in the order, or manner, of the subsistence of the three persons of the glorious Trinity, therefore it is especially ascribed to the Father, *It pleased the Father*; and again, *All things are delivered to me of my Father*: yet here the Father is to be considered *essentially*, including the eternal Son, and the eternal Spirit, in the unity of the same essence; for, though Christ is God, yet being somewhat else beside God, and acting in this glorious dispensation not as God *absolutely*, nor as the offended majesty, but as one interposing in favours of his offending creatures, he is said to have this power given him; which, therefore, must be by the pleasure of the offended Trinity; the pleasure of the great God, in pursuance of this grand device for averting his just displeasure from us. Christ then derived his Mediatorial and œconomical power in our behalf from the united infinite power of the glorious Trinity, and thus delegated to him, with infinite pleasure and satisfaction; God having a rapturous delight in that method of man's salvation.

[2.] By what *means* or *acts* was all power in heaven and earth given to him? We reply; It was given him by the following acts, or with the following solemnity: as all power is originally in him by nature, as God; so all power is delegated to him, by office, as Mediator, in this manner:

1. All power was given to him by solemn *election*, Isa. xlii. 1. compared with Mat. xii. 18. *Behold my Servant, whom I uphold; mine Elect, in whom my soul delighteth.*—He was chosen of God to be *joint Emperor* with himself: and as David set up his son Solomon to reign, and gave all the dominion to him; so God hath given all to Christ, as if he would meddle with nothing; *For, the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son*, John v. 22. This was done then by an antient statute of heaven, insomuch, that

that the exhibition of Chriſt, upon his throne, is called, a *declaring the decree*. He was choſen of God to the *univerſal government*; and there was more of God in the election of that one Man, Chriſt, than in the election of all the angels and ſaints in heaven.—He was choſen to be the *Lord of angels*, and alſo to be the *King of ſaints*; and they were *choſen in him before the foundation of the world*, Eph. i. 4.

2. All power was given to him by ſolemn *tranſaction*; Pſal. lxxxix. 3. *I have made a covenant with my Choſen.* The Father tranſacted with him to this effect, that, upon condition he ſhould *pour out his ſoul unto death*, he ſhould *divide the ſpoil with the ſtrong*, Iſa. liii. 12. And, becauſe it was a bargain betwixt them, therefore,

3. All power was given to him by ſolemn *promiſe*; Pſal. lxxxix. 19,—27. where God having ſaid, *I have laid help upon One that is mighty, and exalted One choſen out of the people*, it follows, *With him my hand ſhall be eſtabliſhed, and mine arm ſhall ſtrengthen him: in my name ſhall his horn be exalted; I will ſet his hand in the ſea, and his right-hand in the rivers*; that is, he ſhall be Lord of the iſles in the ſea, as well as King of nations. ver. 17. *I will make him my firſt-born, higher than the kings of the earth.*

4. All power was given him by ſolemn *oath*; Pſal. lxxx. 3, 4. *I have ſworn unto David my ſervant; Thy ſeed will I eſtabliſh for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations*, SELAH. With Pſal. cx. 4. *The Lord hath ſworn, and will not repent, Thou art a Prieſt for ever*: a Prieſt upon a throne, with a ſovereign ſceptre in his hand; even the rod of his ſtrength, *Rule thou in the midſt of thine enemies.*

5. All power was given to him by ſolemn *inauguration* and legal *inſtalment* into the government of his church; Pſal. ii. 6. *I have ſet my King upon my holy hill of Zion*: and accordingly, *the government is* put *upon his ſhoulders*, and *of the increaſe of his government and peace there ſhall be no end.*

6. All power was given to him by ſolemn *obſignation* and ſupereminent *unction*; Pſal. ii. 6. *I have* ANOINTED *my King*, as the word ſignifies; and, Pſal. lxxxix. 20. *With my holy oil have I anointed him*: Pſal. xlv. 6, 7. *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; the ſceptre of thy kingdom is a right ſceptre. Thou loveſt righteouſneſs, and hateſt wickedneſs; therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladneſs above thy fellows.* Chriſt himſelf ſpeaks of this, ſaying, *The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, for he hath anointed me*; and again, *Him hath God the Father ſealed.*

7. All power was given to him by ſolemn *proclamation*, and that by a voice from the moſt excellent glory, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleaſed*, 2 Pet. i. 17. Yea, with many great *Oyes*, with many a ſweet *Behold* he hath been proclaimed King ſince the beginning of the world. His royal power and authority was proclaimed in the firſt promiſe: he was proclaimed in all the after-promiſes, prophecies, types and ſacrifices, whereof the voice of all was, *Behold, O Zion, thy ſalvation cometh; behold, thy King comes*: he was proclaimed by his harbinger, *John the Baptiſt*, who was *the voice of one crying in the wilderneſs, Prepare ye the way of the Lord*: he was proclaimed by an heavenly hoſt, when he made his entrance into this world on the ſtage of time in our fleſh, when the angels of heaven, in the hearing of the ſhepherds, cried out, ſinging and ſaying, *Glory to God in the higheſt, on earth peace, and good-will towards men; for, behold the good tidings of great joy that ſhall be unto all people; for unto you is born, this day, a Saviour, which is Chriſt the Lord*; even Chriſt the Lord of lords, the Lord of angels and men: he was proclaimed again at his baptiſm, and tranſfiguration, with a voice from heaven: he proclaimed himſelf alſo by his own authoritative preaching and miraculous works; and afterwards he ordered his ambaſſadors to go and proclaim him to the world, even to teach all nations, and preach the goſpel of his kingdom to every creature. And then, laſt of all,

8. All power was given to him by ſolemn *coronation*, being crowned univerſal Monarch on the right-hand of power; *We ſee Jeſus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the ſuffering of death, crowned with glory and honour*, Heb. ii. 6. For the crown of thorns he hath the crown of glory, power, and authority put upon his head. There are two coronation-days of our Lord Jeſus; one is, the day when he aſcended into heaven in perſon, and ſat down at the right-hand of the throne of God; where the twenty-four elders fall down before the Lamb that ſits upon the throne, and lay down their crowns at his feet! another is, the day when he deſcends down to the earth in the power of his Spirit among his people, enabling them, by faith, to put the crown upon his head, and to put honour upon him, by counting all but *loſs and dung, for the excellency of the knowledge* of his glory: and, O what a happy day would this be, were I preaching the coronation-ſermon of our glorious Lord Jeſus upon his coronation-day! O behold his glory! behold his crown! *Behold king Solomon, with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him, in the day of his eſpouſals, in the day of the gladneſs of his heart*; yea, behold King Jeſus, with the crown wherewith his Father crowned him! *All power in heaven and earth is given unto me.* I proceed now,

V. To the *fifth* head, namely, To offer ſome *reaſons* why it is that all power is thus given to our Lord Jeſus Chriſt: why it is delegated to and reſides in his perſon? There is the greateſt reaſon for it, and that in theſe following reſpects:

1. All power in heaven and earth is given to him, to REWARD *him for the work that he hath done*; and particularly for his *obedience unto death, even the death of the croſs*, according to the eternal purpoſe and concert wherein all this buſineſs was laid down and agreed to: Chriſt having finiſhed the work of his humiliation, he was to be advanced to a ſtate of exaltation: Phil. ii. 6, 9. He, who was in the *form of God, took upon him the form of a ſervant, and humbled himſelf, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the croſs; wherefore God hath given him a name above every name*: hence it is ſaid, that *for the joy that was ſet before him, he endured the croſs, deſpiſed the ſhame, and now is ſet down at the right-hand of the throne of God*, Heb. xii. 2.: having *drunk of the brook in the way*, he was to *lift up his head*, Pſal. cx. 7. The prophecy of Iſaiah is full of this; yea, all the prophets treat ſo much of it, that our Lord reproves his diſciples going to Emmaus, in theſe terms, Luke xxiv. 25, 26. *O fools, and ſlow of heart to believe all that the prophets have ſpoken; ought not Chriſt to ſuffer all theſe things, and then to enter into his glory?* All power then is giv-

en to him in recompence of his work of doing and suffering, and as the reward of that death of his, which we celebrate the memorials of this day: that sacrifice Christ offered was of such a *sweet smelling savour unto God*, that he cannot reward him too highly for it; nor for his assuming our nature, that therein he might offer it to the eternal satisfaction of his justice, and the vindication of the honour of all his excellencies. Hence it is said, John v. 27. that *authority to execute judgment is given him, because he is the Son of man*; that is, *All power in heaven and earth is given him*, and universal government. But why is it said, *Because he is the Son of* MAN, and not rather, *because he is the Son of* GOD? Why, as he is the Son of God *absolutely*, he hath no need of this gift of power and authority; it belongs to him naturally and essentially: but it is given him because he is the Son of man; because he condescended to assume our nature and become man; he became a *true* man; having a true body and a reasonable soul: a *poor* man; that had *no where to lay his head*: a *distressed* man; a man of *sorrows and acquainted with grief*: a *mortal* man; that actually died the cursed death of the cross: and now, all power is given to him, because he was the Son of Man, the true promised Messias, that, in our nature, humbled himself to the lowest, therefore he is exalted to the highest throne of power and glory.

2. All power in heaven and earth is given to him, not only to reward him for the work he hath done, but also to FURNISH *him for the work he hath to do*; namely, to carry on and finish the work of redemption by power; as he hath done by price; to apply what he hath purchased, and give out the blessings he hath bought; John xvii. 2. *Thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him*: How many is that? Even as many as he will, John v. 21. *Even as the Son quickens whom he will.* Here is a great work, that, indeed, requires great power, namely, to give eternal life to whom he pleases, in all nations under heaven: and therefore, immediately after, he shows the power given him, he gives a commission to his servants here, saying, *Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations; lo, I am with you to the end of the world; go ye and preach the gospel to every creature*; intimating, that the great end of his getting all power in heaven and earth, was, that he might exert his power by a preached gospel, in the conviction, conversion, and eternal salvation of all whom he pleases to save. This gift then is for our behoof given to him: when *he ascended up on high he received gifts for men, even for the rebellious*, Psal. lxviii. 18.: and the sum of all these gifts is here, that *all power in heaven and earth is given him.* But what he received for men, he will not keep up from men; nay, what he gets for men, he gives to them: therefore, what the psalmist calls *receiving gifts for men*, the apostle calls his *giving gifts to men*, Eph. iv. 8. *When he ascended up on high, he gave gifts unto men*: and thereupon a description of a gospel-ministry follows in the main principal ends thereof, namely, *The perfecting of the saints, the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of the faith and knowlege of the Son of God to a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ*, ver. 12, 13. What! might the disciples say, Can any great thing be expected by our preaching? What can a company of poor fisher-men do to the subduing of rebellious sinners, and the spreading of the gospel with any success among all nations? Never fear that, says Christ, *All power is given unto me*; and, *lo, I am with you.* We that are ministers, being also poor frail sinful men, might faint and give over, if it were not for this, that the work is his; and all power is given to him: because all the work is committed to him, he is well furnished for it.

3. All power is given to him, because *all his enemies are to be* SUBJECTED *by him*, and *subdued*, either in mercy or in wrath: some in *mercy*, Psal. cx. 3. *Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power*: thus his *arrows* are said to be *sharp in the hearts of* his *enemies; whereby the people fall under him*, Psal. xlv. 5. —Some in *wrath*, Psal. cx. 1. *Sit thou at my right-hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.* And, ver. 5. *The Lord at thy right-hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath.* Psal. ii. 9. *Thou shalt break them in pieces with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.* His church's enemies, his peoples enemies, whether outward or inward, are to be subdued, the devil, the world, and the flesh; and it requires *all power in heaven and earth* to break the power of sin, and destroy the works of the devil in them.

4. All power is given to him, because *all* GLORY *comes to God thereby*; for, when Christ is exalted and glorified, God is glorified in him; *God hath highly exalted him*, that the world may see and own *that Jesus is the Lord, to the glory of God the Father*, Phil. ii. 9, 11. *Father, glorify thy name*; says Christ: yes, I will, says the Father; *I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again:* and, how does he it? Even by exalting Christ to the highest, he gets glory in the highest ascribed to him. Christ, who is said to be *set up from everlasting*, was in time set up first upon a cross, that the glory of God's love and grace might be seen in him; therefore, says Christ, before he was lifted up on the cross, *Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him.* Next, He was set up on a throne of power and majesty, where a crucified Christ appears more eminently to be the *wisdom of God, and the power of God*: and, *Now, is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him.*

5. All power is given to Christ, that *all* HONOUR *may be given to him*; John v. 22, 23. *The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son; that all men may honour the Son even as they honour the Father: for he that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father that sent him.* How can they honour the God of heaven, who do not honour him that is invested with all the power and authority of the God of heaven?

6. All power is given to Christ, and resides in his person, because of the PERPETUITY *of his priesthood and mediation*; Heb. vii. 25. *He is able to save to the uttermost, all that come to God by him, because he ever lives to make intercession.* He intercedes upon the ground of the full satisfactory atonement that he hath made; and, being a *Priest for ever*, his everlasting priesthood is the foundation of his everlasting power, whereby he is able to save to the uttermost.

7. All power is given to Christ, for the SECURITY *of the new covenant*, that stands fast in him: Why? because he is *higher than the kings of the earth, and his throne as the days of heaven*, Psal. lxxxix. 27, 28, 29.: Christ is the great guarantee of the new covenant; *all the promises are* YEA *and* AMEN *in him*; and therefore must be

be the *ſure mercies of David.* Our ſtock is better ſecured than it was in the hands of the firſt Adam; nay, all the power and policy of hell cannot rob us of it, becauſe it is in his hand that hath *all power in heaven and earth.*

8. All power is given to him, that *all* BLESSINGS *may be given out by him to his church*; Acts v. 31. *Him hath God exalted with his right-hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance unto Iſrael, and forgiveneſs of ſin.* *Repentance* here, implies faith, and all the other graces of the Spirit; and *forgiveneſs of ſin* here, implies juſtification, and all the other bleſſings and benefits of the covenant: and Chriſt being exalted by and to the right-hand of God, as a *Prince and a Saviour*, to give theſe things to ſinners; to *impenitent* ſinners, for only ſuch need *repentance*; to *guilty* ſinners, for only ſuch need *forgiveneſs of ſin*: it ſays, that all power is given to Chriſt, that he may be in caſe to give all bleſſings to ſinners like us. Therefore,

9. All power is given to him in heaven and in earth, that all SINNERS under heaven and upon the earth, may *flee to him alone for righteouſneſs and ſtrength*, and glory only in him; Iſa. xlv. 22, — 25. *Look to me, and be ſaved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none elſe:* They are to look to him by faith, ſaying, *Surely in the Lord have I righteouſneſs and ſtrength: To him ſhall men come*, &c. And again, *In the Lord ſhall all the ſeed of Iſrael be juſtified, and ſhall glory.* All power is given to him, that all fleſh may look to him, and that *no fleſh may glory in his preſence, but that he that glories may glory in the Lord*, 1 Cor. i. 29, 30, 31. If any power were in us, there would be matter of boaſting.

10. All power in heaven and earth is given to Chriſt, becauſe he is the FITTEST *perſon for receiving ſuch a gift:* ſhould we ſearch heaven and earth, there is none ſo fit as he: why? there is none ſo capable of it among angels or creatures; there is none able to bear the weight of it: therefore, in Zech. vi. 13. it is ſaid, *He ſhall build the temple of the Lord, and he ſhall bear the glory.* No cherubim or ſeraphim in heaven is able to bear the glory of all the power in heaven and earth, but Chriſt can well bear it; he that bore the greateſt weight of wrath, does bear the greateſt weight of glory. — Again, as there is none ſo *capable* to bear it, ſo there is none ſo *creditable* to poſſeſs it; for he, being in the *form of God*, counts it *no robbery to be equal with God.* God cannot have a more honourable repreſentative; God does not diſcredit himſelf by making Chriſt the repoſitory of all fulneſs, the ſtorehouſe of all power. — Again, as there is none ſo capable, none ſo creditable; ſo there is none ſo *reſponſible* as he, ſo as to improve that great ſtock to the greateſt glory of God, and to the beſt advantage of his people: he was found to be reſponſible enough in his humbled ſtate. If God had exacted the payment of the infinite debt that we owed to juſtice from the hands of any beſides Chriſt, all the creatures would have ſaid, We are not *ſolvendo*, we are not in caſe to pay: but, behold, our *help* was *laid upon One that is mighty*; mighty to ſave, mighty to ſatisfy, mighty to give the law and juſtice all their due. And now in his exalted ſtate, being intruſted with the buſineſs of ſaving, by the power of his Spirit, all whom he hath ſaved by the price of his blood, he is no leſs reſponſible, being *able to ſave to the uttermoſt*, and to bring in all the rent and revenue of praiſe and glory to God in the higheſt by ſo doing. — Again, as there is none ſo capable of all power, none ſo creditable to poſſeſs it, none ſo reſponſible to make a good account of ſuch a truſt, ſo there is none ſo *acceptable* to God; and, therefore, it is that all power is given unto him; *The Father loveth the Son, and hath put all things into his hand*, John iii. 35. He takes infinite delight in him, even as he is Mediator; *Behold my Servant whom I uphold, mine Elect in whom my ſoul delighteth.* And what can he withhold from his darling? Hence he glories in him as his righteous Servant; *By his knowledge ſhall my righteous Servant juſtify many*, Iſa. liii. 11.; and as his prudent Servant; *Behold my Servant ſhall deal prudently*, Iſa. lii. 13. O what a faithful and prudent ſteward is he, to diſtribute of this fulneſs that is in him to needy ſinners! — Again, as there is none ſo acceptable to God, ſo there is none ſo *acceſſible* by man, he being God-man; there is no ſufficient helper ſo nearly related to man, he being *bone of our bone, and fleſh of our fleſh*, to whom the right of redemption belongs, as the neareſt of kin; and we may go to him as a relation of our own: he is full of compaſſion toward mankind ſinners, and full of condeſcenſion. Never was a king ſo humble as he, *riding upon an aſs, upon a colt the ſole of an aſs*: although *he was rich, yet for our ſakes he became poor*; yea, poorer than the pooreſt, and lower than the loweſt; and *it behoved him, in all things, to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High-prieſt*, Heb. ii. 17. And, chap. iv. 15. *We have not, therefore, an High-prieſt that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without ſin.* Therefore, though he be upon the throne of power and glory, yet it is alſo a throne of grace and mercy to which we have acceſs: *Let us come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need*, Heb. iv. 19. Though he be now exalted to the higheſt, yet he ſtoops down to the loweſt; he that hath all power, hath all pity: and, O! is he not then the fitteſt perſon for receiving ſuch a gift? *All power in heaven and earth is given unto me.*

In a word, he hath *all right* to the univerſal government, and to all power: a right by *nature*, for he is *God over all bleſſed for ever*; a right by *purchaſe*, for he hath *bought the kingdom with his blood*; a right of *heritage*, being the *heir of all things*; a right of *primogeniture*, being the *firſtborn from the dead, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence.* Ought he not to have all power in heaven and earth, who, by *the blood of his croſs, hath reconciled all things in heaven and in earth?* Col. i. 20. —— So much ſhall ſuffice for the *reaſons* of the doctrine.

VI. The *ſixth* thing propoſed, was, To draw ſome *inferences* from the whole, for the *application.* A vaſt many uſes might be made of this great doctrine, but I ſhall confine myſelf within as narrow bounds as ſuch a ſubject can well allow. Is it ſo, *That all ſovereignty and ſupremacy of power is delegated to, and reſides in the perſon of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; or, *that all power in heaven and earth is thus given to him?* Then,

1. Hence we may ſee the *fountain of all miniſterial authority to preach this goſpel*, and *adminiſter the ſacraments of the New Teſtament*, and this of the ſacramental ſupper that we have in hand. Chriſt, having all authority himſelf, is the only

ly hand that can give authority to whom he will: therefore Christ opens up his own commission from the Father, and so gives commission to his servants; accordingly, says Christ, John xx. 21. *As my Father hath sent me, so send I you.* And as Christ had his commission from his Father to show and open, so they may preach most warrantably who can show their commission most clearly: *How shall we preach, except we be sent?* Gospel-ministers have need to keep their commission clear for their encouragement, because the world is ready to question their authority, and despise their message, as it was with Christ himself. Luther said once, "That to preach the gospel was to draw "the hatred of the whole world upon a man; "yea, the hatred of earth and hell;" for, as the gospel of the kingdom of Christ is opposite and destructive to the kingdom of Satan, so it is cross to the natural inclinations, corrupt humours, and legal bias of men and women in the world. However, every faithful minister, being confident that his cause is good, his crown better, and his captain best of all, may, notwithstanding whatever dirt of calumny, or dart of cruelty may be thrown at him, rejoice in his being treated as his glorious master was. Mean time, however weak and sinful the poor mortals are whom he employs, yet let the word and ordinances be entertained with due reverence and holy fear; because they are dispensed by us, in his name, who hath *all power in heaven and earth.*

2. Hence see on whom it is that the *virtue and efficacy of the gospel, and gospel ordinances, does depend;* not upon the *minister*, not upon the *ordinance itself,* but upon HIM who hath *all power in heaven and earth.* What can make a sermon and sacrament powerful and efficacious? Nothing but this powerful presence, according to his word here, *Lo, I am with you.* Heaven would be but darkness, if the Lamb were not the light of the place; and surely all ordinances on earth, without Christ, would be sapless, feeble, empty, insignificant, and ineffectual things. The scripture, without Christ, is but a dead letter, a letter of death; sermons, without Christ, are dead words and empty sounds; the sacrament here, without Christ, will be but a dead work, an empty table; yea, God himself, without Christ, is nothing but fire, and fury, and flames of wrath. Oh! powerless praying, powerless praising, powerless preaching, powerless hearing, powerless communicating, without Christ, who is the substance, the life, the soul, the all of his ordinances; yea, *All in all!* O Sirs, look for power from him, who is the store-house of all power.

3. Hence see the *glorious dignity* and *everlasting excellency* of our *Lord Jesus Christ*, the second Adam. The first Adam had a *natural* power given to him, and he lost it; but the second Adam hath *all power* given to him, and he keeps it for ever, and it is inamissible; it cannot be lost: *The gifts and callings of God are without repentance;* and surely the gift of *all power in heaven and earth,* that Christ hath received, is what God will never repent of; nay, *he hath sworn, and will not repent,* saying, *Thou art a Priest for ever:* and again, *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.* O what a well-qualified Saviour is Christ! having all power given him, and all power to give what is necessary to us, and all power to heal the most desperate diseases: none so qualified as he is for sinners to come to. If any of you were taken with a dangerous distemper, that were like to prove mortal, if there be a physician in all the country better qualified, or more able to help than another, you will have recourse to him: well, should not this be a spur to us, and a powerful argument to come unto Christ and employ him? Never any had such qualifications as he, even *all power in heaven and earth*, and that for our use and behoof, he having received this gift for men, even for the rebellious, to subdue them to him, that God the Lord might dwell among them: he is the magazine of all power; the repository of all divine fulness.

4. Hence see, how much the *salvation* of a company of *poor sinners* hath been upon the *heart of God and of Christ from all eternity*, and how much it appears in *time*, by the great work he hath wrought for that end, namely, in Christ's being humbled to the lowest, and then exalted to the highest pitch, and all for accomplishing this business. See the vast difference of times, in the condition of our Lord Jesus: for thirty years, or thereby, he was greatly humbled, wounded, bruised, lived such a poor life in this earth, that he had no place where to lay his head, nor a penny to pay his tribute, and then died a shameful and accursed death; but now exalted to the greatest honour, having all power in heaven and earth, and all gifts in his hand, to bestow upon poor needy creatures; and, the more honour and dignity he is advanced unto, the more advantage do sinners get by him, he being *exalted a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins.* He is not exalted to heaven, to neglect the earth, and leave us hopeless; nay, but, on the contrary, exalted to heaven, that he may send down heaven's blessings upon earth; and exalted to all power in heaven, that he may show the more pity on earth: therefore, *If I go,* says he, *I will send the Spirit.* The light of the sun is not designed for itself, but for the world: so the mediatorial fulness and power of Christ is not designed for himself, but for his church and people in all nations of the earth. O wonder at this contrivance, which the infinite wisdom of God spent an eternity upon. The shallow capacity of man, by studying twenty or thirty years, will fall upon great inventions; but, O Sirs, what must be the product of the heart of God! what must be the production of his infinitely wise mind from eternity! Behold, here it is, a CHRIST, in whom dwells all his fulness, all his power; his heart was set upon the great work of first giving Christ to us, and then giving all power to him for our behoof. O what encouragement to look for a day of power!

5. Hence see, that since all power is given to Christ, then *all honour* and *pre-eminence* should be given to him: *Thus should it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honour:* thus should it be done to the God-man whom the Father delighteth to honour; *For it pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell:* It pleased the glorious Trinity, that in him, as Mediator, all power in heaven and earth should reside. God's great design, all along, hath been to glorify and exalt Christ: all his *promises* were for exalting Christ; to him they were all made *before the world began,* Tit. i. 2.; and in him they were *all Yea and Amen.* — All his *dispensations* and remarkable *providences* were for exalting Christ:

Isaac

Isaac was not killed, why? because Christ was to come of him.—All his *commands* are for exalting Christ; they are all summed up in, and reduced to, a *looking* to Christ and a *believing* in him: *This is his commandment, that ye believe in the name of his Son.*—All his *ordinances* are for exalting Christ: what is the great subject of preaching? It is Christ; *We preach Christ crucified.* What is the matter of the sacrament? It is a crucified Christ.—All the *services* he requires of his church and people are esteemed only according as they have this engraven and written upon them, JEHOVAH-SHAMMAH, *The Lord is there.*—All the *work* of the church triumphant is to exalt Christ: the great task of heaven is to sing *everlasting Halelujahs to him that sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever.*—And, in a word, all God's *dispensations* towards Christ are still to set him on high, and put honour upon him. The Father puts Christ amongst all relations, offices, and conditions, and then brings him out with the most ample testimonial that ever was. He classes him amongst the number of *lords*, and then brings him out with this testimonial, LORD OF LORDS: He puts him amongst *kings*, and then brings him forth KING OF KINGS: He names him amongst *princes*, and then calls him, *The Prince of the kings of the earth:* He ranks him amongst *prophets* and *priests*, and then declares him to be the *great Prophet*, the *great High-priest:* He places him amongst *lights* and *luminaries*, such as the sun and the stars, and then he proclaims him to be the *Light of the world*, the *Sun of righteousness*, the *bright and morning Star:* He names him amongst *servants*, and then calls him his *faithful Servant*, his *righteous Servant:* He puts him amongst the *dead*, and then he is the *First-born from the dead*, who runs away with the *keys of hell and death*, and goes forth with this name, *The resurrection and the life.* But, what needs more to be said of the honour that God puts upon him than this, *All power in heaven and earth is given to him?* And should not we give all honour and pre-eminence to him? We should honour him in the divinity of his *person*, as the *Son* of God: in the divinity of his *office*, as he is the *Sent* of God: in the divinity of his *suffering*, for his blood is the *blood of God*, and his sufferings of infinite value: in the divinity of his *resurrection*, being declared to be the *Son of God with power, by his resurrection from the dead;* he laid down his life of himself, and took it up again, which none but a God could do: and in the divinity of his *power* and *strength*, as being *able to save to the uttermost*, and having *all power in heaven and in earth.* And in all this we may read the *necessity* and *excellency of faith*, by which alone we can put honour upon him whom the Father honours: being *strong in the faith*, we ought to *give glory to God*, and that by putting honour upon Christ; for, *he that honours not the Son, honours not the Father.* To pretend to honour God out of Christ, is to dishonour him, and destroy ourselves; but to put honour upon Christ is to put honour upon God in him; for, God is in him, and all the fulness of God is in him, and all the power of God is in him: *All power in heaven and earth is given unto me.*

6. Hence see, that the *followers of Christ* have no reason to be *ashamed of a crucified Christ*, that is now such a *glorified Christ*, having *all power in heaven and in earth.* How ought we to glory in his cross when we see him advanced to the crown? *God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world*, Gal. vi. 14. As Christ is well qualified to be the Judge of the world, having *all power in heaven and earth*; so they that are ashamed of him now, may expect he will be ashamed of them when he comes in the *clouds of heaven with power and great glory.* Oh! who would be ashamed of the very reproach of Christ, or the worst thing about him! *If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth on you.* Who would be ashamed of his truths, though called to bear witness thereunto, over the belly of cruel calumny and bitter opposition from earth and hell? Who would be ashamed of his cause and interest, though civil and ecclesiastical power were combined against him; though court, and council, and judicatories, were against him; though princes and parliaments were against him and his royal prerogative and headship over his church, as the only King in Zion? This was the cause that our worthy Forefathers and covenanted Reformers were not ashamed to own, even upon bloody scaffolds, and to seal it with their blood: Woe's us that any of their degenerate race are ashamed of that which was their glory! ashamed, I mean, of the glorious Reformation, as it was carried on by Solemn National Covenants from time to time. I shall not enlarge upon this; I know some are reproached for singularity on the one hand, when they make honourable mention of our Covenants; and for neutrality on the other, when they do it not; and so, if we should study to please men, we would neither speak nor hold our peace, which is impossible. But, as it is our duty to glorify Christ, and speak honourably of his cause; so I shall only say, on this subject, that if once he that is the glorious Head of the church, and King of Zion, who hath *all power in heaven and earth*, would exert and put forth that power, that took place in our reforming and covenanting days, that glorious work would be again revived to advantage, and these that oppose and impugn it would be ashamed. I speak not in resentment of any trivial calumny; it is below my present work: neither do I go aside from my purpose in hand, nor make an extraneous digression. Why should our natural solemn Covenants with God be reviled under this notion, among others, as if there could not be such a thing as a national church on earth, and as if the seat of our Lord's kingdom were in heaven only, and not upon the earth? But though *his kingdom be not of this world*, or an earthly kingdom; yet it is a kingdom in earth, as well as in heaven: *Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.* All power is given to him, not only in heaven, but in earth.

7. Hence see the *excellency* and *acceptableness* of that *everlasting righteousness of Christ*, which he hath brought in for our justification before God: for, why is *all power given to him*, but because *all righteousness was fulfilled by him?* Therefore, when he sent the Spirit, he says, *He shall convince the world of righteousness*; why? *because I ascend to my Father*, John xvi. 10. He had not been admitted to this supreme dignity, nor ascended to the throne of all power, if he had not fulfilled all righteousness, and finished his work, to the Father's infinite satisfaction. But now, when *all power in heaven and earth is given to him,*

him, we may be ſure that the *Lord is well-pleaſed for his righteouſneſs ſake*, that it is acceptable to God; and we may, with the utmoſt ſafety, and with the full aſſurance of faith, build our acceptance with God upon it. There are two conſiderations, by which our faith may be confirmed in this matter, namely, That the power given to Chriſt was partly in point of *qualification*, to fit for his work on earth, when he was fulfilling it; partly in point of *remuneration*, to reward them for it in heaven, when it was perfected.—In point of *qualification*, all power was given him to work out that righteouſneſs; he was upheld therein by the power of omnipotency: *Behold, my Servant, whom I uphold.* Hence, wonder not that God exacted ſo much of Chriſt, as both a perfect obedience to his law, and a condign ſatisfaction to his juſtice; why? he knew he was well-furniſhed and able for paying the debt that he had undertaken as our Surety to pay: he exacted of him all the debt of *active* obedience, that we owed to the precept of the law; and all the debt of *paſſive* obedience, that we owed to the threatening of the law: all the debt was required of him, becauſe all power was given to him.—And now, in point of *remuneration* and reward for his work, all power is given to him both in heaven and in earth: O then, what can a God do more to make the excellency and ſufficiency of Chriſt's righteouſneſs to appear? Is there any more ground left to doubt of its being ſatisfactory and acceptable to him? Yea, may not the divine glory of it fill us with ſweet amazement! Oh! what poor, low, periſhing things do we ſpend our contemplations upon! Were we to have no advantage by theſe things, yet the excellency thereof deſerves the flower of our enquiry, the vigour of our ſpirits, and the ſubſtance of our time; but when our life, peace, joy, and happy eternity, and all, ly herein, ſhall not the thoughts thereof always dwell in our hearts? And ſhall we not build upon this ſure foundation that God hath laid in Zion?—Alſo, let the world ſee here, our Lord Jeſus is the true Meſſias, and no impoſtor: Would God ſet a deceiver at his right-hand of power?

8. Hence ſee the *nature of Chriſt's kingdom*, together with the *nature of unbelief* that oppoſes it, and the *nature of faith* that advances it.

As to the *nature of Chriſt's kingdom*, you ſee, as the apoſtle ſays, 1 Cor. iv. 20. *It is not in word, but in power*: hence the efficacy of a preached goſpel lies not in the *inticing words of man's wiſdom*, but in the *demonſtration of the Spirit and of power*: this is what overcomes enemies. A member of the council of Nice encountered with a great philoſopher, and it was feared, becauſe he was but a poor ſimple kind of a man, leſt the cauſe ſhould ſuffer through his weakneſs; but he, being full of the Spirit of Chriſt, oppoſed ſo much power to what the philoſopher ſaid, that he profeſſed plainly, "While arguments, ſays he, were oppoſed a-"gainſt arguments, ſyllogiſm againſt ſyllo-"giſm, and reaſon againſt reaſon, I was hard "enough for them all; but here comes a man "that ſpeaks in the power of the Spirit of "Chriſt, and I am not able to reſiſt him." *The kingdom of Chriſt is not in word, but in power.*

As to the *nature of unbelief*, that oppoſes this kingdom of Chriſt, we ſee alſo from this doctrine what an evil thing it is, either in ſinners or ſaints, in regard, it will not truſt him whom God hath entruſted with all power in heaven and earth; it will not truſt God's *Truſtee*; it will not confide in the Father's *Confident*. O Sirs, *Take heed, leſt there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief*, when you are making a ſolemn profeſſion of faith in Chriſt: unbelief caſts the moſt ſolemn affront and indignity upon the Father and the Son; and, in effect, charges God with folly in putting this truſt in his hand; or rather, it charges the God of truth with a lye, and ſays, in effect, that Chriſt hath not received it, or that he is unfaithful to his truſt; that either he hath not *received gifts for men, even for the rebellious*, or that he *embezels* them, and keeps them to himſelf. Can there be a greater affront or indignity caſt upon a man of any candor or credit? Yet this is the treatment that the ſin of unbelief gives unto Chriſt. It ſays, in plain terms, though ſecretly, Either he hath not that ſaving power he is ſaid to have, or he hath not prudence to manage it, or pity to exert it in their behalf.

On the other hand, as to the *nature of faith*, this doctrine ſhows us, that as it is a fruit of this power, ſo it lies in our particular improvement thereof, by truſting him whom God hath intruſted, and crediting him whom God credits with all power for our help and ſalvation, according to his word, *I have laid help upon One that is mighty*: and there lies my help alſo, ſays faith; it is ſafe truſting to God's Truſtee, it is ſafe leaving the care of our ſalvation where God leaves it, and putting all our confidence in him to whom all power is given. Faith is a powerleſs ſinner's looking to a powerful Saviour, and ſaying, Though I have neither righteouſneſs nor ſtrength of my own, yet, *Surely in the Lord have I righteouſneſs and ſtrength.* There are two things concerning this faith that I would here notice. 1. That it is the *exceeding greatneſs of divine power* that is the cauſe of it; true faith is of God's operation. 2. *Chriſt*, in the word, is the *ground and object* of it: faith is no enthuſiaſtical notion of a powerful Chriſt, but it is a receiving of his teſtimony, or himſelf, in the teſtimony that he gives of himſelf in the word; as when he ſays here, *All power is given to me in heaven and in earth.*

Some in our day, to avoid the neceſſary doctrine of *particular perſuaſion of ſalvation*, through Chriſt, in the *nature of faith*, are like to turn the notion of faith into mere enthuſiaſm, as if it were a receiving of Chriſt, but not in a word of promiſe; whereas there is no receiving of Chriſt, or cloſing with the perſon of Chriſt, but as he is offered, or exhibited to us in a word of grace. To *receive and reſt upon Chriſt for ſalvation*, is not faith, if you take away the other part or branch of the definition, namely, *as he is offered to us in the goſpel*: Take away the goſpel-offer, or goſpel-promiſe, and to receive and reſt upon Chriſt without that, is mere fancy, mere deluſion, mere enthuſiaſm: You may ſee your picture or image, in a glaſs or mirror; but take away the glaſs, and you ſee no more of it: the goſpel is the glaſs wherein we behold the glory of the Lord, and ſee Chriſt the image of the inviſible God; but take away the goſpel, or the promiſe, and you will ſee no more, except it be an image of your own brain. If you ſay, Are we not to take Chriſt, and then we have all the promiſes in him? Very true, but how will you take Chriſt, if not as he lays himſelf out in the word? Will you *aſcend to heaven*,

to take him there? Though you could, it would not be faith, but vision; Or, will you *descend to the deep*, to seek him in the grave? that is a fancy; *he is not there, he is risen:* But, what says the Holy Ghost? *The word is near, even the word of faith which we preach*, Rom. x. 8.: there you may see him; there you may take hold of him. And to take him in his word, is to take him at his word; to receive his testimony by believing and being persuaded of it, and giving a cordial assent unto it, and so trusting in him that thus speaks in his word to you, and continuing to hope in his word.

But what is the glass, the word, the promise, wherein I may see, and eye, and receive Christ? Why, my text is as clear a glass as any: there is not only a promise in the context, *Lo, I am with you;* not only with you ministers, but with you for the sake of my people, that I may exert my power on them by you as my instruments: but there is more than a promise in the text, *All power is given to me in heaven and in earth.* If any thing can be better than a promise of God to build faith upon, here it is; for it is not a promise made to Christ, but all the promises fulfilled in him, that he may fulfil them on whom he will. God promised to Christ, that if once he had given himself a sacrifice for sin, then he would give him all power to save whom he pleased; and now the sacrifice is offered, and God's promise is performed; *All power is given to me in heaven and in earth.* Well, but what am I concerned? say you; and how does it yield a ground of faith to me, that God's promise to Christ is performed? Why, his promise to Christ includes all the promises; they are reductively all in this one, and the accomplishment of this is the radical accomplishment of all. Now, since there is a promise left for sinners to build their faith and hope upon, Heb. iv. 1. and a word of reconciliation for you to confide in, 2 Cor. v. 19; here is the surest ground for faith imaginable, that whatever promise of God you take hold upon, it is fulfilled already in Christ, by his having all power given him to fulfil it in you. And here you see, that all the promises are not only sealed by his precious blood, according to that word, that they are *Yea* and *Amen* in him; but they are all like so many sparkling jewels set upon his golden crown, according to this word, *All power in heaven and earth is given unto me.* He hath not only fulfilled the condition of them, by his obedience unto death; but received the accomplishment of them, by his receiving all power to make them out to whom he will: and when a man, by the power of his grace, takes hold of a promise, he may believe it to be as sure as the blood of Christ upon the cross, and the power of Christ upon the throne can make it. Now, all the promises that we are called to build our faith upon, are included in, and depend upon this promise that is already performed to Christ; so that here our faith may have a footing, not only upon a promise made, but a promise fulfilled in Christ; not only a promise sealed by his precious blood, as a Priest upon the cross, but a promise put in his powerful hand, as a Priest upon a throne; a promise that hath both the sign of the cross and the sign of the crown engraven upon it; that, looking to the cross, we may see and believe that the condition of it is fulfilled, and the price of it is paid; and, looking to the crown, we may see and believe that the effectual application and powerful accomplishment thereof is secured.

9. Hence see, if all power is delegated to, and resides in the person of Christ; here is matter of *terror* to the enemies, and *comfort* to the friends and followers of our Lord Jesus Christ. And,

(1.) On the one hand, what matter of TERROR *to his enemies*, and all these that oppose him! The power of Christ hath a black side full of amazement to all his enemies; he is the chief corner-stone to some, but to others a rock of offence.

QUEST. *Who are the enemies of Christ, to whom the doctrine may be terrible?*

Alas! how terrible may it be to all *ignorant* persons, that live content without the saving knowledge of God in Christ! For he that hath *all power in heaven and in earth*, is to be *revealed from heaven, in flaming fire, to take vengeance on them that know not God*, 2 Thess. i. 8.—How terrible may it be to all *profane* persons, that say, in effect, *they will not have this man*, this God-man, *to reign over them*; but, let us *break his bands asunder, and cast his cords from us!* For he will *break them in pieces as with a rod of iron, and dash them like a potter's vessel*, Psal. ii. 9.—How terrible may it be to all *hypocrites*, that *profess to know God*, and have a *form of godliness*, but *deny the power thereof!* The Lamb that is in the midst of the throne, is said to have *seven eyes and seven horns*: He hath omniscient eyes to find out all the corners of hypocritical hearts; yea, and he hath omnipotent horns to push and destroy them.—How terrible may it be to all *proud boasters* of their own power and strength, that boast of the power of nature; the power of free-will, and think to spin somewhat out of their own bowels to be a robe of righteousness to themselves! But, as all power is given to the Lord Jesus Christ, so *he will not give his glory to another.*—How terrible may it be to all the *despisers* of Christ, that with Herod, and his men of war, set him at nought, and pour contempt upon all his ordinances and institutions, by slighting and casting them behind their backs? Whom are you despising? even him that can grind you to pouder; for all power in heaven and earth is given to him: therefore, *behold, ye despisers, wonder and perish.* Whom do ye mock and revile? Hath he not power that will reach you? What will you do when he comes in the clouds, with power and great glory?—In a word, How terrible may it be to all *unbelievers* who sit under the gospel, and yet sit his call therein, and slight his invitations? How will he send forth his armies and destroy these murderers? The Son of God is said to *sit upon a red horse*, and that *there was given to him a great sword*, Rev. vi. 14. He rides on a terrible red horse, with the sword of power in his hand, to take vengeance on his enemies; for, *If he whet his glittering sword, and his right-hand take hold of judgment, he will render vengeance to his enemies, and a recompence to them that hate him*, Deut. xxxii. 41. Who but these that are clean distracted would remain in a state of enmity and rebellion against him that hath all power in heaven and earth? it was a good counsel that Gamaliel gave to his followers, *Take heed that ye be not fighters against God. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

(2.) On the other hand, what matter of COMFORT

FORT does this doctrine afford to the *friends and followers of the Lord Jesus Christ*, seeing he hath all power in heaven and earth given unto him? for, as they shall be kept by his power, through faith to salvation, so their enemies may fight with fury against them, but they shall never be able to prevail; for their Lord and Captain is said, Rev. vi. 2. to ride upon *a white horse, with a bow in his hand, and a crown upon his head*, and to *go forth conquering and to conquer*. We read of a *cup of consolation*, Jer. xvi. 7.; and this doctrine holds it to the mouth of all the friends and followers of Christ.—What comfort is here to the *broken-hearted* sinner that is under the pangs of the new birth, that the power of the Spirit rests upon Christ for healing of such? Luke iv. 18. *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor, and to heal the broken-hearted*. Yea, what comfort is here to these that complain they are *hard-hearted?* For he hath all power to take away the *heart of stone, and to give the heart of flesh*. But here I especially speak of these that are in a state of friendship with this glorious and powerful Lord; surely such may encourage themselves in the Lord their God.—Here is encouragement against the *want* and *weakness* of grace, that he, having all power, is able to *make all grace abound*, 2 Cor. ix. 8.; and to *make the feeble as David, and David as the angel of the Lord*, Zech. xii. 8.—Here is encouragement against *apostacy* and fear of falling away totally, in that he, who hath all power, hath said, *I will never leave thee nor forsake thee*, and is *able to make* us *stand*, Heb. xiii. 5.—Here is encouragement against *unbelief*, and doubting of the promise of God; for, having all power, we may be fully persuaded that *he that hath promised is able to perform*, Rom. iv. 21. To doubt of his promise, is to doubt of his power; to discredit his promise, is to deny that he hath *all power in heaven and earth*.—Here is encouragement against *enemies without* and *within*; the devil, the world, and the flesh: though thou art weak, and hast no power against them, yet he having all power, you may receive the comfort that Hezekiah gives to his subjects, 2 Chron. xxxii. 7, 8. *Be strong and courageous, be not afraid nor dismayed for the king of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that is with him; for there be more with us, than with him. With him is an arm of flesh, but with us is the Lord our God, to help us, and to fight our battles*. So here, 1 John iv. 4. *Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world*. Wicked men and devils, their will is larger than their power; their will is to do many things that they cannot do: but it is not so with Christ; his power is as large as his will, if not vastly larger in certain respects; for, though he will not do all that he can, yet he can do all that he will; for, *All power in heaven and earth is given unto him*. You see, believer, the might of your enemies; but see also that your Redeemer is the *mighty God*, as well as the *everlasting Father*, and the *Prince of peace*; and because he is the *God of peace*, he will *bruise Satan under your feet*, and destroy your enemies that disturb your peace.—Here is encouragement against the *danger* and *difficulties*, the *crosses* and *losses, reproaches* and *trials* you may meet with in following the Lord Jesus; he, having all power, can easily make up what you seem to loss in his service: hence *Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter*; and *chused rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season*. It is said, *He had respect unto the recompence of reward*. Therefore, whatever loss you sustain in the Lord's service, we may say to you, as the man of God said to Amaziah, 2 Chron. xxv. 9. *The Lord is able to give thee much more than this*. Is thy cleaving to his way seemingly prejudicial to thy credit, wealth, or gain? Yet fear not; for he whose name you profess hath all power in heaven and in earth.—Here is encouragement against the seeming *hardness* and *difficulty* of the duty or work the Lord may call you to; for he having all power, is there any thing too hard for him, who, at the same time promises, that *his grace shall be sufficient for thee, and his strength perfected in thy weakness*, and to *work in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure?* Therefore, says Paul, *I am able to do all things through Christ strengthening me*. How can I deny myself, take up my cross, and follow the Lord? Why, though *we are not sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves, yet our sufficiency is of God*.—Here is encouragement to *pray without ceasing*: if you prayed to one that had no power to give what you ask, you might have little courage, comfort, or confidence in prayer; but he, having *all power*, is *able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think, according to the power that works in us*, Eph. iii. 20. The conclusion of what we call, *The Lord's prayer*, teaches us to pray in the faith of his power; for, after we have prayed for these things contained there, the conclusion is, *For thine is the kingdom and the power*: hereupon we ground our assurance to be heard, that he who hath the *kingdom*, hath also *all power in heaven and in earth*.—Here is encouragement against all the *confusions* and *commotions* in the church of Christ upon earth, when the *floods lift up their waves*; and when floods of division and defection, floods of profanity and impiety, and floods of error and heresy are like to overflow the church of Christ; yet he who hath *all power in heaven and earth*, as Head of his church, and King of Zion, hath the command of the floods, and is *mightier than the noise of many waters*; therefore, *Upon all the glory there shall be a defence; the gates of hell shall not prevail*. It is not in the power of all the devils in hell, and wicked men on earth, to thrust our Lord out of the earth; for, he hath *all power in heaven and in earth*; and when he exerts his power, a covenant-reformation will revive, in spite of earth and hell: *When the Lord shall build up Zion, he will appear in his glory*.—Here is encouragement against *powerful lusts, powerful corruptions, powerful temptations*, that you may be harrassed with: he that hath all power hath said, *I will subdue your iniquities*, and that *sin shall not have dominion*. He it is who *once suffered, being tempted, that he might be able to succour them that are tempted*, Heb. ii. 18.; where you see his ability, as Mediator, to succour the tempted, is founded on his *once suffering, being tempted*; which bespeaks power, joined with pity and sympathy.—Here is the encouragement against the most *desperate case*: when soul-matters are at the lowest pass with you, and when you are brought to the utmost distress, to the utmost confusion, to the utmost perplexity, and, as it were, to the *belly of hell*, with Jonah; yet here is a present relief, *All power in heaven and in earth is given unto him*, whereby he is *able to save to the uttermost*: his power reaches from the lowest hell to the highest heaven.—Here is encouragement against the *fears of death*: he that hath all

power

hath ſaid, *O death, I will be thy plague; O grave, I will be thy deſtruction: for I am he that lives, and was dead; and, behold, I live for evermore; I have the keys of hell and death.* When death begins to ſtare you in the face, believer, you may ſay, *O death, where is thy ſting?* Where is thy power to hurt or harm me? All power is taken from you, and all power is given to Chriſt, the power of the keys is in his hand; and though death may tumble my body into the grave, and crumble my fleſh and bones into duſt, yet you have no power over a pile of my duſt, nor ſhall one pickle of it be detained in the earth any longer than he pleaſes; for he that hath all power in earth, as well as in heaven, will command the *earth* and the *ſea to give up their dead*, Rev. xx. 13. He that is *declared to be the Son of God with power, by his own reſurrection from the dead*, will raiſe the dead, with the ſame power by which he made the world out of nothing, and raiſed himſelf out of the grave: *For the Lord himſelf will deſcend from heaven with a ſhout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Chriſt ſhall riſe firſt*, 1 Theſ. iv. 16. Therefore, O death, may the believer ſay, Let *Sadducees* and *Atheiſts* doubt and debate the reſurrection of the body as they will, *Not knowing the ſcriptures, nor the power of God*, nor believing that all power in heaven and earth is given unto Chriſt; yet, as for me, *I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he ſhall ſtand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my ſkin worms deſtroy this body, yet in my fleſh ſhall I ſee God: whom I ſhall ſee for myſelf, and mine eyes ſhall behold, and not another, though my reins be conſumed within me*, Job xix. 25, 26, 27.—Finally, here is encouragement O believer, againſt the *fears of ſafe landing in heaven:* when your body is to be laid in the duſt for a while, fear not but your ſoul ſhall be led ſafely to heaven; for he hath all power in heaven, as well as in earth; he hath the keys of heaven and life, as well as the keys of hell and death; he hath all the keys of his Father's houſe, and many a million of chambers are there; *In my Father's houſe are many manſions, and I go to prepare a place for you*, John xiv. 2. Immediately after Chriſt had ſpoken the words of this text to his diſciples, ſaying, *All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth*, he aſcended up into heaven in their view, as they were all gazing up after him; and ſo he took them to witneſs that he had the keys of heaven in his hand, by which he opened the gate, and ſat down with his Father upon his throne: and by the ſame key of omnipotency will he open the way to the heavenly manſion for you, believer, that *where he is there you may be alſo.* There is no power in heaven to oppoſe him, and there is no power in heaven but what is given to him: the King of glory hath power to ſet the crown of glory upon your head; he hath ſuch power in heaven, that it will coſt him no more to bring you there, but to ſay, *Father, I will*, and it ſhall be done; *Father, I will, that theſe whom thou haſt given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou haſt given me: for thou lovedſt me before the foundation of the world*, John xvii. 14. ——Take home then to you all the encouragement that this great truth imports. If you live in the faith of this power that is given to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, you may live in the joy of the Lord as your ſtrength, and enjoy all theſe encouragements that his power carries in the boſom of it.

10. Hence ſee, in the laſt place, the *duty of all that hear this goſpel.* If all power in heaven and earth be given to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, then ſurely it is the duty of all that hear me, 1. To *try* what *intereſt* they have in this power, that is delegated to, and reſides in the perſon of Chriſt. 2. To *truſt* him with their ſouls and their eternal ſalvation, as their powerful Saviour and Redeemer, to whom all power in heaven and earth belongs. Let me, therefore, exhort you to both theſe duties.

[1.] Let me exhort you to *try* and *examine* what *intereſt* you have in this power, or rather in this crucified Jeſus, as he is the *power of God*, as well as the *wiſdom of God*: I mean not here that *common* intereſt in him that all the baptized members of the viſible church have in Chriſt, whereby they have a ſealed warrant to come to him, and take poſſeſſion of him and his ſaving power as their ſanctuary; but I mean that *ſpecial* intereſt in him, whereby they are actually, as believers in Chriſt, poſſeſſed of that power in your begun ſalvation. How ſhall that be known? Say you. I ſhall, for gaining of time, only ſay, There is a twofold mark by which it will appear whether you have an intereſt in this power, namely, his laying out his power for you, and your laying out your power for him: for if you have an intereſt in his power, then it is betwixt Chriſt and you, in ſome reſpect, as it is betwixt God and Chriſt as Mediator; God lays up all his power in Chriſt, and then Chriſt lays out all his power for God, and for his Father's glory: ſo they that are ſpecially intereſted in this powerful Saviour, he exerts his power, and lays it out for them and their happineſs; and they exert their power, and lays it out for him and for his honour. Try then by theſe two things:

(1.) Hath he exerted his power *for you*, and exerciſed his power *in you?* Hath the *goſpel come to you, not in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghoſt, and in much aſſurance?* 1 Theſ. i. 5. I might here, if time allowed, ſpeak particularly of the *convincing* power of the Spirit of Chriſt upon the conſcience, giving the ſoul to ſee the natural power of death and darkneſs it is under; his *enlightening* power upon the mind and underſtanding, how the *God, who commanded light to ſhine out of darkneſs, ſhineth into the heart, to give the light of the knowledge of his glory in the face of Chriſt;* his *reigning* power upon the will, by making the ſoul willing in the day of his power; and thereby his *drawing* power, and *converting* power upon the whole ſoul, in perſuading and enabling to embrace this powerful Jeſus, as he is offered to it in the goſpel. What power did he ever give you to believe in him? You that ſay you believe in Chriſt, and yet never got power from Chriſt to believe in him, you may ſcore out your name from the number of believers; for your faith is a powerleſs faith, it cannot ſave you; nay, it hath power to hurt you, but no power to help you. Faith that never had power to keep you from ſin, will never have power to keep you from hell; the faith that had never power to lead you to duty, will never have power to land you in glory; the faith that never had power to bring you from ſelf to Chriſt, will never have power to bring you from earth to heaven: that which makes true faith powerful, is, that it hath a powerful original; the power and acts of true believing are from God, Phil. ii. 13.

All the activity of the will, before the conversion, lies in an oppoſition to the work of grace; till the power of God be put forth, no man is made willing to believe or receive Chriſt; the power that raiſes the ſoul to faith, is the ſame power that raiſed Chriſt from the dead, Eph. i. 19.; yet it is the act of the believer, in the day of power, as well as it is the work of the Spirit: it is an act of the ſoul put forth contrary to, and above the natural ability of the ſoul; and yet, in the mean time, this power, in making a man believe, is exerted ſo wonderfully, by the Spirit of faith, that the man ſees nothing but weakneſs, inability, and utter inſufficiency in himſelf; and, perhaps, hath no ſenſe or feeling of power at all, but, in the ſenſe of weakneſs, looks greedily and gladly to him that hath all power. It is the powerleſs ſinner rolling itſelf ever upon a powerful Saviour, ſaying, Surely in me there is no righteouſneſs nor ſtrength; I have no righteouſneſs in me, but the righteouſneſs of guilt, which is the righteous demerit of eternal death; I have no ſtrength in me, but the ſtrength of ſin, which is like to pull me down to hell; and yet I am venturing to ſay, *Surely in the Lord have I righteouſneſs and ſtrength*, Iſa. xlv. 24. There I ſee it, there I ſeek it, there I ſettle my guilty ſoul upon it; and though I have it not in myſelf, yet I reſt myſelf content that I have it there, and am well-pleaſed that God hath put it in ſuch a good hand. I aſk then, Have ye ever thus got power to believe in him that hath all power? Was you ever, by the power of Chriſt, raiſed up from the *place of dragons*, when you was *ſore broken and covered with the ſhadow of death?* Pſal. xliv. 19. Was you ever brought, by this means, from blindneſs to ſight, from darkneſs to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, from bondage to liberty, and from death to life; that is, in ſhort, from a graceleſs to a gracious ſtate, and from legal fetters to goſpel-freedom? In a word, let me here aſk, if ye would know that his power hath been exerciſed in you, Whether or not he that hath all power in heaven and earth given to him, hath communicate and given to you, at any time, ſome power both in heaven and in earth?

1. Hath he ever given you any power *in heaven*, or influence there, by virtue of his own power and interceſſion at the right-hand of God? It is ſaid of Jacob, Hoſ. xii. 4. That *he had power over the Angel, and prevailed, while he wept and made ſupplication to him:* it was that Angel of the covenant, CHRIST, who hath *all power in heaven and in earth.* Now, tell me, got you ever any power with the angel in wreſtling with him? Got you ever, as it were, ſuch a grip of him in your arms, as to ſay to him, Now, Lord, ſince I have got hold of thee, I will not let thee go, no; *I will not let thee go, except thou bleſs me?* And, perhaps, he indeed bleſſed you with ſuch a glad heart, that, with Hannah, your *countenance was no more ſad*, your heart was no more heavy, you could then fly on the wings of love to do him ſervice. What, man! it ſeems you got ſome power in heaven, and power with the God of heaven: what other thing could it be than power in heaven, when you got power with him that hath *all power in heaven?*

2. Have you ever got any power *in earth* given to you from him that hath *all power in heaven and earth given to him?* Surely, if you have got any power in heaven, you have alſo got ſome power in earth; I mean, power to *overcome the world* by faith in him that hath all power in heaven and earth, 1 John v. 4. Got you ever power to triumph over the devil, the *god of this world*, ſaying, O bleſſed be God that ever Chriſt bruiſed the head of the ſerpent? Got you ever power to triumph and tread upon your luſts and corruptions, in the faith of his power that hath ſaid, *Sin ſhall not have dominion;* and in the faith of complete victory through him, whoſe name is JESUS, *becauſe he ſaves his people from their ſins?* And have you not ſome time a day got power over all things on earth, ſo as you could tread upon all the glory and grandeur of this world, and trample upon all the crowns and diadems, thrones and ſceptres, in the earth, with a holy, humble, generous contempt and diſdain, ſaying, Behold, *I count all theſe but loſs and dung for the excellency of the knowledge of Chriſt?* And have you not got power to tread ſelf to the ground, and to trample upon your own credit, your own name, your own righteouſneſs, your own ſtrength, while you have apprehended the glory of Chriſt as the Lord your righteouſneſs and ſtrength; and got power to become nothing, and a thouſand times leſs and worſe than nothing, in your own ſight, while he, that hath *all power in heaven and earth*, was *all in all* to you? *No man can call Jeſus Lord, but by the Spirit of God.* Can you ſay, I got power to call Jeſus LORD, and to call myſelf a devil? I got power to ſay, *Truth, Lord, I am a dog*, and yet to creep below his table for a crumb: yea, the time hath been, when I got power to purſue all my enemies with ſword in hand; yea, to drown them in the Red-ſea of the blood of Jeſus, and to overcome by the blood of the Lamb; I was more than a conqueror through him that loved me. Why, here is power in earth; what know you of that? Can you ſay, Whatever I be at preſent, yet, I think, you are telling me what I have known; I mind the time, I mind the place, I mind the occaſion, when I got ſuch power as you ſpeak of? Why, then, it ſeems he hath been exerting his power towards you, and exerciſing it in you; he that hath all power in heaven and in earth, hath given you ſome ſhare of his power in heaven, and of his power in earth both; this evidenceth you have an intereſt in his power. But then, as they that are intereſted in his power are perſons in whom he exerts his power, and lays it out for them and their happineſs: So likewiſe,

(2.) They exert their power, and lay it out *for him*, and for his honour: if they have any power on earth, they deſire and endeavour, through grace, to lay out their power for his glory who hath all power in heaven and in earth, even as he lays out his power for his Father's glory and honour. What power have you? none, indeed, but what he gives you, either in a way of common or ſpecial bounty. There is a *natural* power of eating and drinking; if you have intereſt in Chriſt's power, you will not dare to ſquander away that power, by eating to gluttony, or drinking to drunkenneſs; but, *whether ye eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God and Chriſt:* this will be your habitual deſire, even in ſitting down to your meals, to ſet the Lord before you, and to eat and drink that you may be fitted for the work wherein he calls you to ſerve him. There

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is an *acquired* power that you have leſs or more of; the Lord hath beſtowed upon you ſome gifts, ſome parts, ſome talents, of which he ſays, *Occupy till I come.* Some have a *ſecular* power and authority in the ſtate, as rulers, magiſtrates, judges, juſtices: ſome a *ſpiritual* power in the church, as miniſters, elders, and other officers in the houſe of God: ſome have, though not a *magiſtratical*, yet a *magiſterial* power, as maſters of ſchools, over children; maſters of houſes and lands, over tenants and cottars; maſters of families, over their children and ſervants: ſome have a *providential* power and ſuperiority over their neighbours, by God's putting them in a more eminent ſtation in reſpect of outward wealth and honour. Whatever power you have, if you be intereſted in Chriſt's power, or a true ſubject of his who hath all power in heaven and earth, you will endeavour to employ that power of yours for his honour and glory, and to advance his kingdom and intereſt. I know none but have ſome power or other, if they had a heart to employ it for the Lord. If you have no power of authority over your friends and neighbours, becauſe of your inferior ſtation; yet, have you no power of influences? May be you have had power to harm them by your ill words, your ill ways, your ill example; and, Oh! if the channel of your power and influence were turned to another airth, you might have power to do good to others, inſtead of doing them ill; and power to commend Chriſt to them by your good advice and good example. O Sirs, what ſhould you do with that little power of yours, but improve it for advancing the great power of our Lord Jeſus, for glorifying him, raiſing his honour and dignity, and ſtudying to bring in ſome revenue to his crown? Your power muſt be employed either for or againſt him; if againſt him, then wo to you that will fight againſt him that hath all power in heaven and earth! But if you have any intereſt in his power, you will employ your power for him, ſaying, *As for me and my houſe, we will ſerve the Lord. I know Abraham,* ſays God, *that he will command his children to fear me.* If a true ſubject of Chriſt could command a thouſand to come to Chriſt, and ſubmit to his government, he would do it. No doubt the beſt believer here will be conſcious to himſelf of a multitude of failures in this reſpect; yet, ſure I am, according to the meaſure of power he receives from Chriſt, his heart will be engaged to employ all the power he hath for his honour.

[2.] Let me *exhort* you to come to this great and glorious Lord, who hath *all power in heaven and in earth*, and to *truſt* him with your ſouls, and your eternal ſalvation. You that never truſted him before, it is time to begin now; *now is the accepted time:* and you that have truly done it formerly, it is a fit time for renewed acts of faith upon him before you go to a communion-table. If you would have power to communicate worthily, then come to, and truſt in him that hath all power in heaven and earth given to him, and given to him for the behoof of weak, powerleſs, needy, guilty ſinners. Here is a mighty Saviour, a complete Redeemer: there is none like him in heaven or earth; for he hath all power of authority, and power of ability, both in heaven and earth, for the ſalvation of ſinners: *It pleaſed the Father that in him ſhould all fulneſs dwell*, and that to him ſhould all power be given; and, therefore, there can be nothing more pleaſing to God, than that we give all truſt and obedience to him. What can be more acceptable to God, than that we give all honour, all reverence, all love, all truſt, all confidence, all ſubmiſſion to him, to whom he gives all power in heaven and earth? Yea, this is his commandment, that we believe in him; and he himſelf cries from heaven to the earth, ſaying, *Look to me, all the ends of the earth, and be ſaved; for I am God, and there is none elſe;* inſomuch, that it is treaſon, rebellion, and diſloyalty, to diſobey him that hath all power and authority in heaven and in earth. By virtue of his ſupreme power and authority, he hath given us ground to hope that our miniſterial adminiſtrations in his name ſhall not be altogether in vain, and without fruit or ſucceſs. We might be hopeleſs, conſidering the holineſs of the God of heaven, and the ſinfulneſs of men on earth, if it were not that he who hath all power both in heaven and earth is here ſaying, *Go ye therefore, and teach all nations; and, lo, I am with you to the end of the world:* giving us to know, that by this goſpel-miniſtry of his appointment, he will gather in his people from the four winds. Come then, let us ſow in hope, in hope of a ſeed-time and harveſt, in hope of a ſeed to ſerve our glorious Lord; for his Father's promiſe to him ſhall be accompliſhed, namely, that *he ſhall ſee his ſeed* to his ſatisfaction: and who knows but it may be a ſeed-time in Dunfermline, or a ſeed to be created at this occaſion? Let me then, in his glorious name, that hath all power in heaven and earth, who can put a creating power in his own ordinances, intreat and invite all the ſinners within theſe walls to come to this powerful Saviour, and to believe in him, as ſuch, for your own ſalvation: and this I do, by virtue of the commiſſion that here he gives, *Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations.* And what leſſon means he ſhall we teach? Why, the ſum of all is in his own commiſſion, and there is nothing more neceſſary for us to teach, or you to believe, than this, That *all power is given to him in heaven and in earth.* In this word the powerful Saviour offers himſelf to you, man, to you, woman; to you that are before me, and you that are behind me, and round about me: and if all the nations of the earth were within hearing of me, I would have allowance to teach them the ſame, and to call them to come to this powerful Jeſus, by believing, that he hath all power in heaven and earth, whereby he is able to ſave them.

To *come to Chriſt*, is to *believe in him*, and to *receive his teſtimony*; and the teſtimony he here gives of himſelf in this word is, That he, as Mediator, hath *all power in heaven and earth:* and his call and command to each of you in particular is, that you believe in his name, by believing that he hath all power to ſave you in particular. Why, may you ſay, I do not doubt of his power, but I doubt of his commiſſion to ſave me; for his power is moſt extenſive, but I find his commiſſion from the Father is limited to a certain number, John xvii. 2. *Thou haſt given him power over all fleſh, that he may give eternal life to as many as thou haſt given him;* and it may be I was not given to him among the elect; and therefore, though I believe his ability, yet I doubt of his commiſſion to ſave me in particular. In order to remove this block

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out of your way, over which there is no occasion for you to stumble; consider, that in *the volume of the book*, wherein Christ's commission is written and recorded, there are two remarkable golden leaves, a folded leaf and an open leaf; and of both these you read in that one text, John vi. 39., *All that the Father hath given me shall come unto me*; there is a folded leaf: but then it follows, *Him that cometh, I will in nowise cast out*; there is the open leaf: and in this open leaf it is written, *Whosoever will let him come*, Rev. xxii. 17.

Now, if the question be, *Who are they that are written within the folded leaf?*

I must say, It is presumption for you to enquire into that; what God hath folded, no man, no angel, no devil, no creature can unfold, till God himself do it. If an angel in heaven should come to you, before you come to Christ, and say, You are an elect; you ought not to believe him; for it is a lie to tell you what he does not know. If the devil from hell should come and tell you that you are no elect, you ought as little to credit him, but tell him he is a liar for telling you what he does not know; for that is the folded leaf, that no creature can unfold. It is like the book you read of, Rev. v. 1. 5.; and it is not lawful for you to pry within the folded leaf. It is not the first object of your faith, to believe your election; *Secret things belong unto God, but to us the things that are revealed*; the things that are written within the open leaf: and, till you read and subscribe what is written there, it is not possible for you to know if your name be written within the folded leaf, nor are you concerned to know. If it were possible for you to know your election before you come to Christ, it would do you no service, but real hurt; it would make you secure in your natural state: and therefore it is, in infinite wisdom and mercy both, that it is hid from your eyes. Some are hardened with the very fancy of it, saying, If I be elected, I will win to heaven; and so neglect God's call: but now the open leaf of Christ's commission is before your eyes.

But, is my name there? say you: Yes; if you be a sinner, your name is there, 1 Tim. i. 15. *Jesus Christ came to save sinners:* he hath a commission to save sinners: and all sinners in every corner of the earth are called to look and read here, and then salvation will follow; *Look to me, and be saved, all the ends of the earth; for* as *I am God, and there is none else*, Isa. xlv. 22.; so all power in heaven and earth is given to me as Mediator. And therefore, in this open leaf of Christ's vast commission, write you down your name as a poor sinner, beside his name as a powerful Saviour, and that by believing: set down your name, I say, by believing, not what he hath folded, but what he hath unfolded to you, namely, that *he hath all power in heaven and in earth*; and then you are safe and secure: you are won gear if you believe what he hath revealed; your salvation lies in believing of this, that he hath all power in heaven and earth given to him. It is our believing of this, that makes us preach to you with any hope of success; and it is your believing this, with application, that will bring in life to your souls. The matter comes to this therefore, Do you believe that he, as Mediator, hath all power to save you? Why, may you say, since I dare not pry within the folded leaf, but only am required to believe what is revealed to me in the open leaf of Christ's commission, that extends to all the ends of the earth; and if this be all that I am to believe, that he hath all power in heaven and earth to save whom he will; really, Sir, say you, I believe that he is able to save all the world. Nay, but, man, woman, the Lord is now dealing with you in particular, for it is not his *absolute* power, as God, that is the object of saving faith; but his *relative œconomical* power, as Mediator: therefore I ask again, Do you believe that he, as Mediator, hath power to save you in particular?

OBJECT. *Why*, say you, *I think that is not my difficulty; I believe he hath a* POWER, *but I doubt if he hath a* WILL *to save me?*

ANSW. Here is a grand objection of unbelief which I must endeavour to remove; and, in order thereto, I must tell you, that where faith is lively acted upon the *power* of Christ, the soul will have little doubt of his *will:* if you savingly believe his power to save you, you will certainly credit his will to save you; if you doubt of his will to save you, it is because you question his power to save you. We read, Num. xi. 18, 19, 20. God promised Israel *flesh in the wilderness for a whole month:* What, says Moses, ver. 21. *The people among whom I am, are six hundred thousand footmen; and thou hast said, I will give them flesh that they may eat a whole month.* Where we may gather, that Moses doubts if God had power to perform this. He doubted whether God had not out-promised his own power: and therefore the Lord says to him, ver. 23. *Is the Lord's hand waxed short?* See also, Psal. lxxviii. 19, 20. If it be not a doubting of God's power, why do we believe most when there is least danger, and believe least when there is most danger, that God is willing to help? Why, we believe his will least when the danger is greatest, because then greater power is required; so that the great obstacle is at the power of God, though his will is pretended. When Abraham overcame this difficulty, that God was able, nothing stood in his way; *He considered not his own dead body, nor the deadness of Sarah's womb, but was fully persuaded, that he that had promised was able to perform*, Rom. iv. 20. It is not said, that he was *fully persuaded* that God was *willing* to perfom what he had promised; but, so soon as he believed the *power* of a promising God, his faith had no more stop. And if we search our hearts to the bottom, we will find our doubting reflects most upon the power of Christ: we shorten his hand, though we commonly say we are uncertain of his will. Though we cannot directly affirm, that God will do a thing, because he hath power to do it; yet here is a mighty argument to help faith, when we are assured that he can: when power is at an end, faith is at an end; but, seeing the power of Christ is never at an end, our faith needs never be at an end, nor at a loss. Yea, in the matter of salvation, God hath expressed himself in scripture as much; nay, more for his willingness, than for his power: Our God *says* in his word, that he hath *all power;* but we have not only his word, but his *oath* concerning his *willingness;* Ezek. xxxiii. 11. *As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked.* Yea, I may say, God hath manifested his will to help and save people, when his power hath not concurred; *O Jerusalem, how oft would I have gathered thee!* But he never manifested

nifeſted his power, where his will did not concur.

The queſtion therefore is ſtill this, *Do you believe that he hath power to ſave you?* Or, are you willing to believe that, and to be ſaved accordingly? Chriſt's willingneſs prevents our willingneſs; none are *truly willing* till a *day of his power*, which is the day of his grace and good-will. And therefore, in the very nature of the thing itſelf, if you be willing to be ſaved by his power from ſin and wrath, and to believe that he hath power to ſave you, and to take hold of it for that end, his good-will hath prevented you. Say not then, you doubt of his will, but not of his power: but, do you believe he hath all power to ſave you? O Sirs, it is a great faith, and the fruit of his great power, if you can believe that *he hath all power in heaven and earth given him* for your eternal ſalvation: and this is the faith I call you to in his name. O that power would come from him, whohath power to give the Spirit of power, to cauſe you lay hold on this power of his!

Behold, O ſinner, he that hath power to damn you for ever, as you juſtly deſerve, is offering his power to ſave you for ever: and if you can believe his Mediatorial power to ſave you, your ſalvation is begun: *Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?* Here is the arm of the Lord revealed to you, even Chriſt, and all power in heaven and earth in him: but, is he ſo revealed to you, that you believe this report of him; yea, this report and teſtimony that he gives of himſelf, *All power is given unto me?* A *cordial aſſent* to this divine teſtimony, with *particular application* to yourſelf, is a *true ſaving faith*, ſuch as no devil in hell, nor hypocrite on earth ever had: this is the very ſoul of "receiving and "reſting on Chriſt, for ſalvation, as offered to "us in the goſpel." The goſpel-offer and revelation is the ground of faith; and Chriſt is received and reſted on no other ways but by believing his teſtimony, and taking and truſting him at his word.

But, Oh! what hinders your coming to this powerful Saviour by this faith of his power? What power on earth can withſtand his power who hath *all power in heaven and earth given unto him?*—Tell me, is it a power of *darkneſs* and *ſpiritual blindneſs* that you are under? Behold, here is a powerful *Prophet*, that is able to open your blind eyes with the eye-ſalve of the Spirit's efficacious teaching and illumination; and this he is concerned to do by virtue of his prophetical office. Let me, therefore, aſk you, in the words of this glorious Prophet, who is the *light of the world*, his words to the two blind men that came crying to him, ſaying, *Thou Son of David have mercy on us*, Mat. ix. 28. Chriſt ſays to them, *Believe ye that I am able to do this? Yea, Lord*, ſay they: *Then Jeſus, touching their eyes, ſaid, According to your faith, ſo be it unto you; and their eyes were opened.* Well, ſinner, though this were the very hour and power of darkneſs with you; yet, do you believe that he hath power to give you light and ſight? do you believe that he is able to do this? do you believe that *all power in heaven and earth is given to him?* When Chriſt is ſaying to you, *Do you believe that I am able?* Can you anſwer, *Yea, Lord?* Then, I hope, he is *touching your eyes*; and, *according to your faith, ſo be it unto you.*

Is there a power of *guilt* that you are under? Is the guilt of great ſins, and the fear of God's great wrath lying like a heavy mountain upon your conſcience? Behold, here is a powerful *Prieſt*, that was *able, on earth, to forgive ſins*, and now he is exalted to heaven? Do you believe that he is able to forgive your ſins, by virtue of his prieſtly office? If you have the faith of his power; yea, but a *grain* of it, *like a grain of muſtard-ſeed*, you may ſay to this *great mountain* of guilt, *Be thou removed*, and be thou caſt into the ſea of the Lamb's blood: *Who art thou, O great mountain, before Zerubabel? Thou ſhalt become a plain.* Have you the particular faith of his prieſtly power? Do you believe that he is able to forgive *thy* ſin, man; *thy* ſin, woman? Then, *Son, daughter, be of good chear, thy ſins are forgiven thee.* What mountain can ſtand before him that hath all power in heaven and earth? The particular faith of his prieſtly office is true juſtifying faith; for it lays the ſtreſs of remiſſion of ſin upon the power of his blood, the power of his righteouſneſs, and ſo gives it the glory and honour of its divinity, as it is the blood of God, and the righteouſneſs of God: therefore, if you could ſay in his ſtrength, you believe he is able to forgive your ſin; then I could ſay, in his name, *Your ſins are forgiven you.*

Is there a power of *rebellious luſts* and *corruptions* that you are under, that hath been conquering, and captivating you all your days? Behold, here is a powerful *King* and *Captain of ſalvation*, that hath *all power in heaven and earth:* and believe that he hath power to ſubdue the enmity of your nature, and the rebellion of your nature, and the rebellion of your luſts; and that this he is able to do, by virtue of his royal kingly office. To act faith the more ſucceſsfully here, you are to deal with your rebellious luſts, as the man was to deal with his rebellious ſon under the law, Deut. xxi. 18,—21. He was to bring him out before the *magiſtrate of the place*, ſaying, *This our ſon is ſtubborn and rebellious;—he is a drunkard and a glutton;* and then orders were given to *ſtone him with ſtones that he die:* ſo, bring forth your rebellious luſts before the ſupreme Magiſtrate of heaven and earth, that hath all power and authority both above and below, ſaying, Lord, it is a ſtubborn luſt, a rebellious luſt; whatever baſe kind of luſt it be, it is a rebel I cannot get maſtered or commanded; yea, it is a rebel againſt thy crown and government: Behold, this great Magiſtrate, this glorious King, will give orders to ſtone it to death; yea, he will order ſo many words of power, at this occaſion, and perhaps ſo many words and exertions of power at another occaſion, like ſo many mighty ſtones thrown by his powerful arm at the rebel, till at laſt it be ſtoned to death. O Sirs, are you coming to this powerful King, by believing that he hath power to cruſh all your rebellious luſts? If you be truly believing his power, ſurely the power of ſin will fall before the faith of his power, like Dagon before the ark; for no Dagon luſt can ſtand before the ark of his ſtrength. The more you believe his power, the leſs power will ſin have; and little power may it have this day.

Are you under the power of *pollution* and *filthineſs*; heart or hand-pollution, and filthineſs of the fleſh or of the ſpirit, and can hardly believe his will to ſave and cleanſe you? yet, is there any grain of faith in you with reſpect to his power, ſaying with the leper, Matth. viii. 2. *Lord, if thou wilt, thou canſt make me clean: Jeſus anſwered,* I

WILL, *be thou clean:* q. d. If you truly believe my power, you have no reaſon to doubt of my will: I had never given you grace to believe that I have power to make you clean, if I had no will to make you clean: therefore, doſt thou believe my power? then you poſſeſs my good-will; *I will, be thou clean.* Let your faith, then, act more ſtrongly than to ſay, *If he will, he can:* but if you believe he can, you may be ſure he will cleanſe you; for, though he will not do all that he can do, yet he will do all that he enables you to believe he can do unto your ſoul, when your faith is founded upon his promiſe, ſuch as that, Ezek. xxxvi. 25. *I will ſprinkle you with clean water; from all your filthineſs, and from all your idols will I cleanſe you.* Are you ſaying, *Lord, I believe, help my unbelief;* I believe thou caſt make me clean, even ME? According to that promiſe, then he is ſaying, *I will, be thou clean,* even THOU. There is a particular ME in faith's actings towards a powerful Jeſus; and a particular THOU in God's dealing with that ſoul. It comes to cloſs reaſoning betwixt the poor ſinner and the powerful Saviour, as if there were none but theſe two ſpeaking together face to face, and mouth to mouth; yea, and heart to heart; *thou* and *me.* It comes to cloſs reaſoning; and this ME in faith makes it the hardeſt thing in the world, and yet the ſweeteſt thing in the world, to believe that Chriſt hath *all power in heaven and earth,* and that for *me,* for *me,* for *me,* and *my* everlaſting ſalvation; for juſtifying, ſanctifying, and cleanſing of *me.* Do you believe that he hath power to ſave and cleanſe *you* in particular? Why, man, *according to your faith, ſo ſhall it be unto you.*

What ſhall I ſay, O ſinner, O enemy, O rebel! will you ſubmit to him, by believing that he hath *all power in heaven and earth?* Who can harden himſelf againſt God, and proſper? As it is a dangerous thing to ſtand out againſt ſuch a powerful prince; ſo, I am ſure, you could not ſtand out a moment longer, if you cordially believed that he hath *all power in heaven and earth given unto him.* O Sirs, if you believed this doctrine, with application, namely, "That all power is delegated to, and reſides in "the perſon of Chriſt," and that ſo as he hath power to ſave THEE in particular, then ſalvation were begun. O then, put honour upon this powerful King of kings, and Prince of princes, by believing his power for your good and benefit.—Art thou under the power of *heart-hardneſs* and *ſtupidity?* Yet, O will you put honour upon his power, by believing that he can *break the rock in pieces,* by taking away the *heart of ſtone,* and giving the *heart of fleſh* to THEE, to THEE in particular, and it ſhall be done?—Art thou under the power of a *backſliding* heart, that turns aſide like a deceitful bow, and makes you guilty of many fearful apoſtaſies from him? Yet, O will you come to him, and put honour upon his power, by believing that he hath power to heal thy backſliding, even THINE, and it ſhall be done?—Art thou under the power of innumerable *heart-plagues,* inſomuch, that none in the world hath ſuch a plagued heart, and that no power under heaven can heal you? O will you come to this powerful One, and put honour upon his power, by believing that he is an able phyſician, to heal you, and YOU in particular. If there be any faith here preſent, to glorify his power, then, I can aſſure you, the *power of the Lord is preſent to heal.*—Art thou under the power of the *devil,* and his temptations and fiery darts? What is the matter? Here is relief; only look to a powerful Lord, that came to bruiſe the head of the ſerpent, and deſtroy the works of the devil. Put honour upon his power, by believing that he is able to *ſuccour them that are tempted,* and to ſuccour YOU, and you are ſafe; for, the *God of peace,* and the God of power, *will bruiſe Satan under your feet ſhortly.*—Are you under the power of *unbelief* and *impenitency,* and the want of all grace and good? O come to him, and glorify his power, by believing that he is able to make you believe; by believing that he is the powerful *author of faith,* and that *he is exalted, by the right-hand of God, to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance unto Iſrael, and remiſſion of ſins;* and that when he *aſcended up on high, he received gifts for men, even for the rebellious, that God the Lord might dwell among them:* gifts for men, even for you, and YOU in particular. If *thou couldſt believe, thou ſhouldſt ſee the glory of God;* and if you believe his power, you ſee his *power and glory in the ſanctuary.*—Are you under the power of *inability* to believe his power, and inability to help yourſelf, and credit his power with application to yourſelf? Yet ſtill, however ſtrange the call may ſeem, it is not *I* but HE who hath *all power in heaven and earth,* that calls and commands you to believe in his name, and to glorify his power, by believing that *God hath laid help upon One that is mighty.* Though the hand of faith be not only weak, but withered; yet it is he that hath all power that ſays, *Stretch forth the withered hand,* and take hold of his ſtrength: for his power and ſtrength is laid to your hand in the promiſe; *My grace ſhall be ſufficient for thee; and my ſtrength ſhall be made perfect in thy weakneſs.* His power is laid to your hand in this *word of faith that we preach;* ſo that you need not *aſcend to heaven* for it, or *deſcend to the deep;* nay, the *word is nigh,* and Chriſt in the word: there his power is offered to your faith.—Again, Are you under the power of *unwillingneſs* to believe his power for your ſalvation, under the power of enmity and unwillingneſs to be ſaved by his power? Let me aſk you, Whether this power of unwillingneſs and enmity be *eaſy* or *uneaſy* and weighty to you? If you be *eaſy,* and living eaſily under the power of enmity againſt Chriſt, then it ſeems you are eaſy and content though he put forth his power in your everlaſting ruin: for one of the two muſt take place, the power of Chriſt is to be put forth either in the converſion and ſalvation, or in the everlaſting deſtruction and confuſion of every one that hears this goſpel. Why, ſay you, If he be ſo powerful, able, and willing to ſave, then let him exert his power; I am eaſy whatever he do. What! are you content to want this powerful Jeſus to ſave you from ſin now, and from hell hereafter! Then I take witneſs againſt you, that if he put not forth his ſaving power upon you before you go into eternity, you ſhall be inexcuſable at the great day, when you ſtand before his awful tribunal: he will be juſt in pronouncing that dreadful doom againſt you, *Depart from me, ye curſed!* and you ſhall have nothing to ſay for your defence, but that your ruin is of yourſelf; and his damning power ſhall be juſt and righteouſly exerted againſt you, becauſe you did not care for his ſaving power. But, if your enmity and unwilline ſs to believe his ſaving

power,

power, and lay hold upon it, be *uneasy* and weighty to you, then *there is hope in Israel concerning you;* for his power to destroy the power of enmity, is put in a promise for you to believe and grip unto; *Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power*, Psal. cx. 3. Therefore, O glorify his power, by believing that he hath power to bow your will, and break your enmity; and if you believe this with any pleasure and contentment, I can tell you, the day of power is partly come already, the day of believing is the day of power. — In a word, are you under the power of *death*, dead *really*, under the power of spiritual death; dead *legally*, under the power of the condemning sentence of God's law, that binds you over to eternal death? Yet, so long as you have yet a natural life, a life of common sense and reason, though you cannot believe by the power of natural reason, no more than Lazarus could come forth out of the grave by his own natural power, when he was dead and stinking there; yet, because the power of God works upon the natural faculties, in the day of power, therefore, may I speak to the dead, in the name of him that hath all power in heaven and earth, over the dead and the living both, and who says, *The hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live:* O dead sinner, hear and believe what he says, John xi. 25. *I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.* O sinner, though you be dead, not only in a dead frame, but in a dead state, say not, What need you enjoin me to believe? what can I do, who am dead? Why the question is not what *you can do*, but what *he can do* that calls you; and it is not *I* that call you to believe, but *he* that hath all power in heaven and earth, and that can make you believe. Therefore, though you be dead and rotten in the grave of sin and security, yet he that is the resurrection and the life says, *Lazarus, come forth*, come forth; *Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light*, Eph. v. 14. Oh! is there none here who are hearing the voice of the Son of God? The voice of a mortal man hath no quickening power to make you believe, but if the voice of the Son of God be heard, faith comes by hearing of it: hearing him, and believing in him, go together; *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that hears my words, and believes on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not enter into condemnation*, John v. 24. If you have heard his voice, then you believe his power; and if you truly believe that all power is delegated to, and resides in the person of Chirst, and that as Mediator he hath power to save you, then your salvation is begun: *He that believeth shall be saved.*

Now, my friends, a powerful Prince and Saviour hath been offered to you in the word, to be received by believing; hath there been no power here to make you believe his power? Where there is no power, there is no faith. People may fancy they believe that Christ is able to save them; the preaching of the word may work a strong imagination that way: but, hath the power of the Spirit, accompanying the word, made you believe that Christ is sealed and authorized of the Father, so as all power of ability and authority is given to him, and that with reference to your salvation, so as you have put your everlasting salvation over upon that power that resides in the person of Christ, as Mediator, and made you to rest and rely upon this powerful Prince and mighty Saviour for eternal life? Now, that you may not be mistaken about the faith of his power, you may try it further by these following particulars.

1. If you have believed his power unto salvation, then the faith of his power and ability to save you hath been acted in the sense of *utter weakness* and *inability* to save or help yourselves; in the sense of inability to believe, inability to do, inability to think; *Not that we are sufficient of ourselves, to think any thing as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God*, 1 Cor. iii. 5. All power was lost in the first Adam, insomuch, that we are by nature *without strength*, and only under the *strength of sin, which is the law*, 1 Cor. xv. 56. Therefore the faith of the gospel, and of strength in Christ, the second Adam, by virtue of the covenant of grace, presupposes the faith of the law, and of our being without strength of grace, and under the strength of sin.

2. If you have believed Christ's power unto salvation, then the faith of his power to save you hath *begotten hope*, 1 Pet. i. 3.; insomuch that *you are begotten again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Christ from the dead;* that is, by the faith of his rising and reigning in heaven. If he had not risen and received the crown, and been set down upon the throne, the right-hand of power, we had been left hopeless, 1 Cor. xv. 17. But his resurrection and exaltation is the ground of hope, 1 Pet. i. 12. Have you been begotten to a lively hope by this means, even to a hope of life, a hope of salvation, a hope of rising and reigning in heaven with him?

3. If you have believed, unto salvation, this power of Christ to save you, then the faith of his power, whereby he is able to save your soul, will be found *standing upon his Priesthood*, whereby he was able to satisfy God's justice. As Christ is a King upon the throne, because he was a Priest upon the cross, and able to save to the uttermost, because he was able to satisfy to the uttermost, or because *he ever lives to make intercession*, upon the ground of the attonement and satisfaction he made; so the true faith of his strength to save, stands upon his righteousness, whereby he was able to fulfil God's law, and satisfy God's justice. The faith of his ability then to save you, is well-founded, if it be built upon the faith of his ability to please God, and pacify his wrath on your behalf.

4. If you have believed unto salvation this saving power of Christ, then the faith of this power hath made you *weak in yourself*, emptied you of all strength and righteousness of your own, and made you see all your strength, as well as righteousness, to be only in the Lord, and to close with him as the Lord your strength, because he is the Lord your righteousness. *Surely, shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength;* first righteousness, and then strength. It is remarkable, that, according to the tenor of the new covenant, Christ's being our righteousness, is the very reason of his being our strength; Heb. viii. 10, 11, 12. *For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people. And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every*

every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. Why will he give all these blessings? *For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness*, namely, through the righteousness of Christ. Hence the faith of Christ's power and strength, founded upon his righteousness, makes a man truly weak and empty in himself; for he sees his stock lies only in Christ's hand. And hence,

5. If you have believed Christ's power unto salvation, then your faith of his power hath made you *strong*; *Strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might*; or, in the POWER OF HIS POWER, Eph. vi. 10. And hence, when you are weak, then you are strong; the faith of his power brings in power to the soul, and strengthens the heart. Hence says the psalmist, Psal. xxvii. 13, 14. *I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living*; and it follows, *Wait on the Lord, and be of good courage, and he will strengthen thy heart; wait, I say, on the Lord.* According to the measure of faith in the power of Christ, such will be the measure of spiritual strength, power, and courage. And hence,

6. If you have believed his power unto salvation, then the faith of his power hath begotten *joy in the Lord*, and spiritual consolation; or, at least, some real relief from heart-trouble; *Let not your hearts be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me*, John xiv. 1.; intimating, that the more faith, the more freedom there is from heart-fears and fetters: and surely the faith of Christ's power, as Mediator, must, according to its measure, free the heart from all fears of hurt or harm, either from heaven above, or from earth beneath, because *all power in heaven and earth is given unto him.*

SERMON LII.

The FEMALE PREACHER; or, the Woman of Samaria's Sermon to the Men of the City: or, the *Self-humbling and Christ-exalting Influences of Divine Discoveries.* *

JOHN iv. 29. *Come see a man which told me all things that ever I did; Is not this the Christ?*

IF our glorious Lord Jesus has been here present this day, conversing with us as he did with the woman of Samaria, discovering us to ourselves, and discovering himself to us; if he hath been telling us what vile sinners we are, and what a glorious Saviour he is, so as *the entrance of his word hath given light to us*, to see our blackness on the one side, and his beauty on the other: surely it cannot but lead us to some such self-condemnation and Christ commending exercise, as here this woman is employed in: *Come see a man that told me all things that ever I did; is not this the Christ?*

In the preceeding part of this chapter, there stands recorded a very notable conversation betwixt Christ and this woman, the particulars whereof are too many to be considered at this time, though some of them may fall in our way when we speak of the circumstances of her conversion: only, in the general, our Lord Jesus, as a wearied traveller sitting down by Jacob's well, and this woman coming to draw water, he seeks a drink from her, both to quench his thirst, and to take occasion of conferring with her, with a design of mercy to her soul. She apprehending him to be a Jew, refuses to give him a drink, upon an old quarrel that was between the Jews and the Samaritans; whereupon Christ shews her how she mistook her own mercy, and that he had better water to give her than that which she refused to give him, ver. 10.; and that if she knew what a valuable mercy were at her hand, she would have turned a supplicant to him, and not suffer him to be so to her. But she still reasoning against his offer, he points out further the excellency of what he offered, ver. 13, 14.; this raised some natural desire in her: but our Lord resolving to take hold of her heart, and knowing that the richest offer of his grace in the world, will work no desire in the heart of sinners, further than what is natural and carnal, unless he effectively convince them of their sin and misery, and savingly manifest himself to them; therefore he takes this method with her.

1*st*, He *convinces* her of her sin and misery, and lets her understand that he knew all the lewdness and wickedness she was guilty of, by shewing her how many adulteries she was chargeable with, ver. 18. Whereupon she begins to conceive some high opinion of him as a Prophet, and to seek further light from him with reference to the right way of worshipping God, there being controversies about religious matters, and particularly about the place of public worship, betwixt the Jews and the Samaritans: and, indeed, the woman's discourse here shews, that though she was a profane Samaritan, yet she was no *Ignoramus*. She had knowledge of the controversy of the day she lived in, and the grounds thereof; and knew that the Messias was to come: yet her knowledge was no sanctified knowledge. But now her conscience being awakened with a sense of sin, she is solicitous to have her mind informed; and accordingly is instructed at large by our blessed Lord Jesus, both concerning the *place* and the *right manner* of worshipping God. And thus from one thing to another, he leads her on, until,

2*dly*, He *manifests* himself to her, ver. 26. Christ's discourse about the change of religion

* This subject was handled in one sermon, preached July 13th, 1729. immediately after the celebration of the sacrament of the Lord's supper at Dunfermline. It hath undergone four editions.

that

that was to take place, brought the woman to mind of the Meſſias's coming; *I know*, ſays ſhe, *that Meſſias cometh, which is called Chriſt; when he is come, he will tell us all things.* And while ſhe is expreſſing her high eſtimation of, and great deſire after this coming Meſſias, Jeſus ſaith unto her, *I that ſpeak unto thee, am he.* Chriſt may be preſent with people, and ſpeaking to them, and yet they cannot know, or take him up till he reveals himſelf, as here he did to this woman; *I that ſpeak unto thee, am he.*

No ſooner did Chriſt thus kindly diſcover himſelf to her, than immediately this ſweet conference is broken up, by the return of the diſciples, who had *gone to the city to buy meat*, ver. 8. The ſweeteſt fellowſhip with Chriſt on earth is but of ſhort duration; and the moſt pleaſant manifeſtations may meet with very ſudden interruptions; and poor ſinners may have ſuch a ſweet time in Chriſt's company, that even the company of diſciples may be an interruption to it.

But now, how ſhe was affected with this diſcovery is evident from two things.

1. She *forgets her errand* that ſhe came upon; *She left her water-pot, and went her way:* having got a taſte of the excellency of Chriſt, and a drink of the living water which he gave her, ſhe minds no other water now; nay, ſhe forgets all other things that before were in great eſteem with her.

2. She *ſpreads the name* and *fame of Chriſt* in the place where ſhe dwelt; *Come ſee a man*, ſays ſhe, *that told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Chriſt?* Wherein we may notice,

(1.) An *invitation; Come ſee a man*: having got a taſte of his goodneſs, ſhe would have the men in the city to taſte and ſee with her.

(2.) A *commendation*; a man *that told me* ALL THINGS *that ever I did*; a man that hath diſcovered himſelf to be God as well as man, in that he hath ript up and ranſacked my heart and life. He had diſcovered her lewdneſs to her, and thereby repreſented all other things to her as ſeen by him. There is here implied a humble ſenſe ſhe had of her ſinfulneſs, which Chriſt had given her a diſcovery and conviction of; and by his ſearching word ſhe underſtood that he was the ſearcher of hearts, and ſo commends him as *a man that told her all things that ever ſhe did.*

(3.) A *concluſion*, by way of interrogation and expoſtulation, *Is not this the Chriſt?* importing no manner of doubt about it in her own breaſt, but a ſtrong affirmation, pointing at him unto them. He had told her what ſhe was, and in this glaſs ſhe ſaw her own vileneſs; and he had told her what he was, and in this glaſs ſhe ſaw his glory: and by both theſe means he diſcovered himſelf to be the true Meſſias, the God-man, the promiſed *Immanuel, God with us*; and her heart being full of Chriſt, and overflowing with the living water of the Spirit that he had given her, it vented itſelf and ran over in his praiſe and commendation unto others; *Come ſee a man that told me all things that ever I did; is not this the Chriſt?*—— I ſhall endeavour ſome further explication of this text, upon a note of doctrine, paſſing over many others. What I mainly fix upon is,

OBSERV. *That thoſe ſaving diſcoveries of Chriſt, that make perſons to condemn and abaſe themſelves to the loweſt, lead them, at the ſame time, to commend and exalt Chriſt to the higheſt.*

Self-ſearching, ſoul-humbling, and ſin-diſcovering manifeſtations, iſſue in Chriſt-exalting commendations. I think it is remarkable in this woman, that kindly humiliation did not take place in her, till after that Chriſt had clearly manifeſted himſelf to her, ſaying, *I that ſpeak unto thee am he.* It is true, when Chriſt firſt diſcovered her wickedneſs and lewdneſs to her, ſhe appeared to be ſelf-condemned and convicted, ſaying, *I perceive that thou art a Prophet;* and a true Prophet indeed, that can tell me how many acts of lewdneſs I have been guilty of: her conſcience flying in her face, and ſubſcribing to the truth of what he had told her; but yet, as her firſt conviction appeared to be very partial and weak, in that, as ſome think, ſhe ſeemed to ſhift any diſcourſe about her own vileneſs, and ſtarted a queſtion relative to a national difference betwixt the Jews and the Samaritans, to divert that ſubject concerning her baſeneſs; ſo, I think, we may conclude, that her convictions before were very legal, driving her rather to her works and duties than to Chriſt; for, inſtantly ſhe falls a queſtioning him about the means of worſhipping God, as if when now ſhe was convinced of her ſin againſt God, her only way of obtaining his favour, was by endeavouring to pleaſe him by her duties of worſhip, whom ſhe had diſpleaſed by her wickedneſs and lewdneſs. And, indeed, the firſt airth that an awakened conſcience looks to, is the law, *the firſt Husband.* But now, when once Chriſt diſcovers and manifeſts himſelf to her, ſhe is kindly humbled under a ſenſe of her vileneſs; yea, and of all her heart and life-wickedneſs repreſented to her under that; and in the light wherein Chriſt diſcovered himſelf, ſhe ſaw all her abominations; *He told me all things that ever I did.* She is now humbled and abaſed to the loweſt; why? her ſenſe of ſin is not now partial, but full; *He told me all things that ever I did.* Neither is it now legal but evangelical; for it was now in the glaſs of a ſaving manifeſtation, in the glaſs wherein Chriſt diſcovered his glory and excellency that ſhe ſaw all her own filthineſs and deformity.—And while ſhe is thus debaſed and humbled by the diſcovery of Chriſt, how does ſhe commend and exalt him to the higheſt? She commends him to her neighbour-citizens, and puts the greateſt honour upon him, both as he is the true God incarnate, that by his omniſcient eye could ſee, and ſo declare to her, *All that ever ſhe did;* and as he is the true Meſſias, the anointed of God; *Is not this the Chriſt?*

The truth of this doctrine might be cleared from many ſcripture paſſages, *That ſaving diſcoveries of Chriſt tend to make perſons condemn and debaſe themſelves, and to commend and exalt Chriſt*, as it was with Job, chap. xl. ver. 4. 5. God having manifeſted his glory, he cried out, *Behold I am vile; what ſhall I anſwer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth;* as being unworthy to ſpeak in the preſence of ſuch a great and glorious one; therefore he adds, *Once have I ſpoken, but I will not anſwer: yea, twice, but I will proceed no further.* And chap xlii. 5, 6. *I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eyes ſeeth thee: wherefore, I abhor myſelf, and repent in duſt and aſhes.* See how the diſcovery of Chriſt makes the prophet Iſaiah to condemn and abaſe himſelf to the loweſt, and to commend and exalt Chriſt to the higheſt, chap. vi. 1, 5. He *ſaw the Lord ſitting upon a throne high and lifted up, and his*

train filling the temple; then says he, *Wo is me, for I am undone! because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.* To this purpose we may see Isa. xlv. 22,—25. *Look to me and be saved, all ye ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else.* Well, what will issue upon that saving sight of Christ? Both the abasing of himself, ver. 23. *To him every knee shall bow;* and the high commendation and exaltation of Christ, *Surely shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength: in him shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory,* ver. 24, 25.—— But passing many other proofs, I suppose it will be found evident in the experience of all the saints, that every manifestation and discovery of Christ tends to work both these effects at the same time, even to make them condemn and debase themselves to the lowest, and to commend and exalt Christ to the highest.

This subject is very large, but I design, for shortening the work, to confine myself especially to the circumstances and effects of the discovery that Christ here gives of himself to the woman of Samaria, in the following method.

I. I shall show what we are to understand by Christ *manifesting* or *discovering* himself to a person.

II. What are these *sin-discovering* and *soul-debasing* effects of Christ manifesting himself; or, when may one be in case to say, that Christ hath *told him all things that ever he did?*

III. What are these *Christ-exalting commendations,* wherein such discoveries of Christ vent themselves; and so notice the particular *import* in what the woman here says, *Come see a man that told me all things that ever I did; Is not this the Christ?*

IV. I will shew the *reasons* of the doctrine, whence it is that saving discoveries of Christ have such a self-debasing and Christ-exalting influence. And then,

V. Make *application* of the whole.

I. I will speak a little of *Christ's discovering* and *manifesting* himself to sinners. And here I would confine myself to the circumstances of the discovery that he makes of himself to this woman, which wrought this effect in her, and which, in most particulars, will be found to agree with all the saving manifestations that our Lord makes of himself to his people, either at first conversion, or any renewed visit he makes to them. And here we may notice, 1. Some things relating to the *means* of the discovery that Christ makes of himself to this woman. 2. Some things relating the *manner* of it.

1st, There are some things in the context relating to the *means* of this discovery.

1. One of the more *remote* means was his taking occasion to *come to a place where she was also to come,* and so casting himself in her way, as it were. This is noticed very remarkably, ver. 4th of this chapter, where it is said, *He must needs go through Samaria:* Whatever other reasons there were for his going this way, here was a special one; he must needs meet this woman, and with those Samaritans, whom, on this occasion, he converted to the faith. If there be but one soul that Christ hath an errand to, the world will not keep him away from the place where that soul is. He must needs go through that place: there is a sweet necessity he lies under; he must needs bring a gospel-ministry there; he must needs bring gospel-ordinances where he has any souls to meet with, and discover himself savingly unto. They to whom Christ hath discovered himself will find a merciful providence exercised about them, in his ordering their lot so, that either they are brought to the place where Christ and his ordinances are, or Christ and his ordinances come to the place where they are.

2. A *second* more remote means of this discovery is our Lord ordering matters so as her *secular errand* is made the occasion of her *spiritual good* and advantage, ver. 7. *There comes this woman of Samaria to draw water.* Providence may be intending much mercy to those who are both very unworthy of it, and very unconcerned about it. Little was this sinful woman minding any other thing but to draw water; yet a happy providence made her to meet with the Saviour of sinners. Some have come to ordinances, as this woman did to Jacob's well, with no other view, save upon some secular and carnal errand; may be to draw the water of damnation to themselves, or to draw in some applause to themselves amongst their neighbours, or merely from custom and curiosity, little minding any saving good, which yet the Lord hath prevented them with.

3. A *third* mean of this discovery is, Christ falls a *discoursing with her,* and upon occasion of his seeking, and her refusing him a drink of water, he shews his pity and compassion on her, as an ignorant and unsensible sinner, having no knowledge of her real want and necessity, with respect to that *better water which he had to give;* and particularly he lets her know, that the *well of living water* was in his hand to dispense as he pleased; and that as he offers his grace before we ask it, so he will not refuse it to them who ask it upon his offer and promise: *If thou hadst known, thou wouldst have asked, and I would have given thee living water.* And besides, in his discourse, he commends his wares to her, ver. 14.; his gifts, his graces, his Spirit, as a well above all wells, *a well of water springing up to everlasting life;* and all to be freely dispensed by way of gift and donation. And this is the way he deals still with sinners in the free dispensation of the gospel.

4. A *fourth* mean of this discovery, is his working a *work of conviction* upon her conscience, by shewing her transgressions to her, and setting her sin in order before her, ver. 18.; and thereby discovering his prophetical office to her, and raising some esteem of him as a *Prophet,* ver. 19. The freest offers do not prevail with sinners, till they be convinced of their sinfulness and misery. Indeed, it is not every sight of sin that will convince the sinner; but Christ must set it home upon the conscience, and discover sin to them marked by his all-seeing eye, his all-searching eye; for the woman knew pretty well, how matters were with her, and yet, without any due sense, till he ript up and laid open her bosom, and made her see and understand that all her sins were *naked and open unto the eye of him with whom she had* now *to do;* and though she did not know him to be the Christ, yet she begins to have some high thought of him as a Prophet that had the mind of God, and by whom God was discovering her sinfulness to her. But it does not appear, as yet, that she

ſhe perceived any thing in him above ordinary prophets; ſo gradually, by little and little, did he manifeſt himſelf to her. Only it is evident here, that in God's order and method of working effectually on the hearts of ſinners, as there is a diſcovery of ſin that goes before a diſcovery of Chriſt, without which perſons do not ſee their need of Chriſt; ſo the more that Chriſt diſcovers ſin, and touches the ſinner's heart therewith, it breeds the more reſpect and eſtimation of him, though it may be very weak and low at firſt.

5. A *fifth* mean of this diſcovery, is his opening up to her the nature of *true ſpiritual* and *acceptable worſhip*, ver. 21,—24. Here he gives her ſuch inſtruction as might tend to let her ſee that he was a Prophet above all prophets, that knew what changes were quickly to fall out with reference to the place of religious worſhip, and what ſort of worſhip God would have, what a Spirit he is, and what ſervice he requires. As *faith comes by hearing*, ſo diſcoveries of Chriſt, the glorious object of faith, come by the means of inſtruction and divine teaching, ſuch as the Lord Jeſus here gives this woman. And this paves way to

6. A *ſixth* mean of this diſcovery, namely, his working in her heart a *kindly rememberance* of and *high eſteem for the Meſſias*, ver. 25. The longer ſhe converſed with Chriſt, ſhe is the more enamoured with him. Though he diſclaimed the Samaritan worſhip, and declared they had no warrant for their religion; yet having, at the ſame time ſhewed that the Jewiſh worſhip was warrantable by the word of God, though yet their *temporary way* of *worſhip* was what his coming to the *world* was to give a burial to, and to aboliſh, upon which a more *excellent way* of worſhipping God was to ſucceed; I ſay, the more ſhe hears him ſpeak, the more ſhe is enamoured with his diſcourſe, and filled with great reſpect and regard to the Meſſias, from whom ſhe expected ſuch inſtruction as that, *I know that Meſſias comes, which is called Chriſt: when he is come, he will tell us all things;* not knowing as yet that ſhe was ſpeaking to him. She is ſpeaking with a very high eſtimation of him, as the great Teacher of his church, that would fully reveal the counſel of God concerning his ſervice and means of ſalvation. And now the woman, by theſe means, being brought to have precious thoughts of Chriſt, and to give ſuch a notable evidence of her faith concerning him, then he diſcovered himſelf, ſaying, *I that ſpeak unto thee, am he.* When people are brought to ſublime thoughts of Chriſt, then it is certain Chriſt is not far off from them.——Thus ye have the *means*. We ſhall,

2*dly*, Notice the *manner* of the diſcovery that Chriſt makes of himſelf, *I that ſpeak unto thee, am he.* Here is a clear manifeſtation and revelation that Chriſt himſelf gives of himſelf, *I that ſpeak unto thee, am he.* It is not ordinary for Chriſt to give ſuch teſtimony of himſelf; there muſt be ſome rare thing here: for, when John's diſciples came to aſk him, *Art thou he that ſhould come, or may we look for another?* He does not ſay, *I that ſpeak unto thee am he;* nay, but, *Go tell John what ye hear and ſee; the blind receive their ſight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleanſed, the deaf hear, the dead are raiſed up, and the poor have the goſpel preached to them*, Mat. xi. 5.; let him draw the concluſion from theſe premiſes whether I am he or not: but here he gives as clear a diſcovery of himſelf as in all the book of God, out of his own mouth. We know Peter gave a clear teſtimony, *Thou art Chriſt, the Son of the living God;* the Father gave a great teſtimony to him, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleaſed:* but that Chriſt gave as clear a teſtimony of himſelf, is rarely to be found in all the New Teſtament: yea, this diſcovery of himſelf is the more remarkable, becauſe he forbad his diſciples, at that time, to tell expreſly who he was; and when Pilate and Herod, and others, aſk him, *Who art thou?* he either gave them a very dark anſwer, or none at all. Chriſt is not laviſh of his commendations in this manner; therefore, there is ſome ſpeciality here: and yet there is ſomething in the manner of Chriſt manifeſting himſelf to her that is common to all the children of God, to whom he ſavingly manifeſts himſelf.

1. It was in a *word*, a home word ſpoken to her heart, that he diſcovered himſelf; *I that ſpeak unto thee, am he.* It was by ſpeaking to her that he manifeſted himſelf; ſo it is in the word that he diſcovers himſelf to his own; that word that comes into the ear of others, comes into their heart. The joyful ſound goes through the very ſoul of the man, in a ſecret indiſcernible manner: this is plain in the caſe of this woman, both with reſpect to the word that he ſpake for her conviction, to diſcover her ſin; and in the word that he ſpake for her conſolation, diſcovering himſelf as the Saviour. In the former he had ſaid, *I know this is not thy husband that thou haſt;* the word went to her heart; that is a true word ſays ſhe, ſpoken by a true prophet, for I am living in whoredom. Thus God, in dealing with ſinners by his word externally, makes it have an internal ſound in the heart; he whiſpers in the ear of a ſinner, and makes him think, Alas! that is very true; I am juſt guilty of that ſin; I cannot reclaim againſt what the miniſter ſays; all is true; I muſt take with the charge of God's word. So with reſpect to the latter, when he diſcovers himſelf ſavingly, it is in the word of grace; it comes into the ear, but the finger of God ſets it down to the heart; *The God that commanded light to ſhine out of darkneſs ſhines into the heart:* and it is in the glaſs of the word that this light ſhines; *beholding as in a glaſs the glory of the Lord.*

2. It was a *particular* diſcovery; *I that ſpeak unto thee, am he;* to THEE: ſo when God, in Chriſt, diſcovers himſelf, it is a particular diſcovery; he *calls his own ſheep by name*, John x. 3. As the word of conviction is particular, ſo the word of grace is particular, as if God were dealing with none other but that perſon. O! has he ſpoken to thee, man; to thee, woman; in particular, by his word, and ſet it home upon thy heart?

3. It was an *immediate* diſcovery he himſelf made of himſelf. This indeed is not to be expected in the manner that the woman here was privileged with: but though it is not now in an immediate, but in a mediate way; yet where he ſavingly manifeſts himſelf, he takes the means in his own hand, and makes the ſoul find that it is none other but himſelf that is dealing with it; it is not the voice of men or miniſters, but the voice of God that it hears, 1 Theſ. ii. 13. The word comes with ſuch light, life, and majeſty, that the ſoul finds it is, indeed, *the word of God;* it has a heavenly eccho with it. And hence,

4. It

4. It was a *clear* and *demonſtrative* diſcovery; *I am* HE, ſays Chriſt to the woman. Saving diſcoveries are by way of *demonſtration*, as the word imports, John xvi. 9. Thus he manifeſts himſelf to his people, as he does not manifeſt himſelf to the world, who remain incompaſſed and inveloped with the clouds and miſts of groſs darkneſs and ignorance, amidſt all the literal knowledge they enjoyed.

5. It was a *gradual* diſcovery, by little and little, from one ſtep to another, till he made all his glory paſs before this woman: even ſo, where he manifeſts himſelf ſavingly, he does it gradually; *His goings forth are prepared as the morning*. The work that is very ſudden, ſeldom proves very ſound. It is obſerved of the bad ground, that the ſeed ſown did *ſuddenly* ſpring up; God's ordinary way of manifeſting himſelf is gradual; *The path of the juſt ſhines more and more unto the perfect day*. Then,

6. It was a *ſenſible* diſcovery that he gave of himſelf to this woman; her *time was a time of love*. After he had let her ſee that ſhe was lying in her blood, and in the puddle of pollution, and after he had filled her heart with precious thoughts of the Meſſias, the Deliverer, he would no longer hide himſelf from her. O how ſweetly and ſenſibly does he manifeſt himſelf to his people, when they are apt to think he is far from them! As this woman was ſpeaking of the Meſſias, as the glorious perſon whom ſhe knew not if ever ſhe would have the happineſs to ſee, *Behold*, ſays Chriſt, *I that ſpeak unto thee, am he*. O! ſays the ſoul, will I ever get a ſight of Chriſt? I know not if ever I will be ſo happy; why, then uſually he lets them know he is not far off.

7. It was a *wonderful* diſcovery he made of himſelf to this woman; there were many wonders in it: and, indeed, whenever Chriſt manifeſts himſelf to any ſoul, it will ſee ſome ſuch like wonders as ſhe ſaw. O wonderful, might ſhe ſay! is he ſpeaking to me, ſuch a poor woman as I am, and ſuch a baſe woman as I have been! Why, as there was no fibneſs, or relation, betwixt him and her, but on the contrary a ſtated enmity and alienation; for, *the Jews had no dealing with the Samaritans*; yea, but he muſt deal with her, though ſhe was no good woman; nay, a common whore, lying in whoredom. O wonderful! Though ye were never ſuch a great ſinner, yet Chriſt is content to ſpeak with you, for your everlaſting good; and it is an ill tale that may not be heard. Will ye allow Chriſt to ſpeak to you? Was it not wonderful that Chriſt ſhould ſpeak to this woman, in ſuch a manner as he did? How kindly does he ſpeak to her that he might gain her heart with his love, and kill her with kindneſs? One might have thought he would call her a baſe filthy devil, as it was ſaid to himſelf moſt blaſphemouſly; *Say we not well, thou art a Samaritan, and haſt a devil?* it was true of this woman of Samaria, ſhe was a Samaritan that had a filthy devil; yea, the Jews took all the Samaritans for incarnate devils. But does Chriſt call her ſo? Nay; and it adds to the wonder of his diſcovering himſelf to her, that ſhe was a ſlighter of Chriſt, he was undervalued by her; *Art thou greater than our father Jacob?* ſays ſhe, ver. 12.; yea, ſhe refuſed him a drink of cold water; yet he bears with all theſe affronts, and manifeſts himſelf to her, even to her: O wonderful! Do not ſeveral ſuch wonders take place, when the Lord comes to ſpeak and manifeſt himſelf to you, O believers, O ſinners? Are there not wonders enough to be obſerved concerning this glorious perſon ſhewing himſelf? He might dwell in heaven to all eternity, as he dwelt in heaven from all eternity, and be for ever happy: the Father was good company to him, and he needed none of your company; he had infinite delight in himſelf more than in all his creatures, yet for all this, that he ſhould ſpeak and ſhew himſelf to you. How wonderful is it? His diſcoveries are wonderful, in that he ſeeks nothing of us: it is true, he made the faſhion of ſeeking a drink of water from this woman, but that was only by the bye; he got meat and drink enough when he got the woman to himſelf; the great thing he was ſeeking was to get the woman divorced from all her baſe huſbands, and married to himſelf; yea, betrothed to him for ever: yea, Chriſt's viſits to ſome may be wonderful, not only to the ſinner, that gets them; but to the ſaints and diſciples, that ſee or hear tell of them. We are told here, ver. 27. that *the diſciples, when they came, marvelled that he talked with that woman*: though they durſt not challenge him, yet it was matter of offence to them that he ſo freely converſed with her. Chriſt can demit himſelf, and ſtoop ſo low to a poor ſinner as is marvellous to fleſh and blood: there is more kindneſs and humility in him alone, than in all his friends; they being advanced, by grace, are apt to forget themſelves, and to become ſo proud as to deſpiſe others, though they themſelves were once lifted out of the dungeon, and choſen out of the duſt. But then,

8. It was a *powerful* diſcovery that he made of himſelf to this woman, as appears by the gracious *effects* thereof. Now, her heart goes off all things elſe, ſhe *forgets her water-pot*; her mind is ſet upon ſome greater things; ſhe ran away to the city, that ſhe might invite others to follow him, who had ſo wonderfully manifeſted himſelf to her; and, indeed, all ſaving manifeſtations have a power attending them. The goſpel comes not in *word only, but in power*: Chriſt's word has a drawing power. He draws with loving-kindneſs, while grace and love is poured from his lips. This word, wherein he viſits the ſoul, has a gaining power, that wins the heart from all things, and makes Chriſt *all in all*. And his manifeſtations have a ſanctifying, transforming power; *beholding his glory, we are changed into the ſame image*; and eſpecially they lead to a ſelf-debaſing and Chriſt-exalting exerciſe. Which brings me to

II. The *ſecond* general head propoſed, namely, What are theſe *ſin-diſcovering* and *ſoul-debaſing effects* of Chriſt's manifeſting himſelf? or, when may one be in caſe to ſay, *He told me all things that ever I did?* It is true, this is a part of what the woman ſpake to Chriſt's commendation, as an all-knowing God; as well as to her own condemnation, as a vile ſinner, brought under a kindly ſelf-abaſement, by the diſcovery ſhe had of Chriſt, both as a kindly reprover, and a merciful Redeemer, a Chriſt, a Saviour.—To give light to this particular, I ſhall only touch at this, how *all things are told*, when only *ſome things ſeem to be told?* How can this woman ſay, *He told me* ALL THINGS *that ever I did*, when yet it was only her *whoredom* and *adultery* that he

he discovered? Or, when may the discovery that Christ makes of himself be so humbling and abasing, that when but a *small part* is mentioned, yet ALL *that ever we did* is discovered?

I answer; 1. It may be said *consequentially; He told me all things that ever I did*; that is, by plain consequence. As we may see what the conclusion is, when the premisses are related; what the root is, when the fruit is discovered; and what the fountain is, when the streams are discovered: even so, when Christ tells a person what evil fruit he hath brought forth, that person may easily infer, that he hath told him that he is an evil tree; and by the streams of wickedness in the life, he leads people thus to the fountain of wickedness in the heart and nature. When he tells one of the black smoke that comes out of the chimney of his heart; he tells also, by plain consequence, that there is a fire of corruption within; and then is one abased to self-abhorrence, when, by the discovery of one sin, in the light of a gracious manifestation, he is led, in a spiritually argumentive way, to infer his total deprivation, both in nature and practice; he may say, consequentially, at least, *He told me all things that ever I did.*

2. It may be said *inclusively* and *virtually; He told me all things that ever I did.* As *he that offends in one point of the law, is guilty of all*, James ii. 10. in counteracting the authority that enjoins all; so he that is humbled deeply for any one sin, may see therein, that he hath broken all the commands of God, and may be said, in a part, to have seen the whole. In transgressing of one command he may see his being a transgressor of all the commands of God, and a continual transgressor thereof in thought, word, and deed; because, as *every imagination of the heart is evil, and only evil continually*; so, *out of the heart*, as out of a bitter fountain, *proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witnessing, blasphemy*, and all other pollutions beside. All the sins of people are included, inclosed, connected together as links in a chain; so that when one link is seen, the whole chain may be said to be seen. Suppose a chain whereof some links are above the ground, and all the rest of it hanging down into a dark and deep pit; when the upper links are seen, in their connexion with the whole, then one may be said to have seen all, because all are included and inclosed in what he saw.

3. It may be said *potentially, He told me all things that ever I did*; because, by that one instance he gave a proof of his ability so to do. He that could tell me this, could tell me all; he that could observe this, hath observed all that ever I did, and can as easily tell me all as tell me a part; for none but the *Searcher of hearts*, that sees all my goings, could have told me this. He that can save to the utmost, can see to the uttermost.

4. It may be said *representatively, He told me all things that ever I did*; for this discovery represented all other things, all my other sins. This representation is like that which is made in a mirror; if one set a looking-glass before you to see a spot in your face, when you see that, at the same time you see all the spots there: so, when Christ sets the glass of his word before you to see such a particular spot and blot; in the same glass you have a view and representation of all the spots, and all the blemishes of your heart and way. For, we may conceive this representation like that which is made in a map; if one shew you, for example, a particular city in the map of the world, why, at the same time, he presents to you all the terraqueous globe; the whole world at one glance: so here, when, in the light of the Spirit, Christ discovers to you one sin, in the same map you see the whole world of wickedness, a world of atheism, enmity, unbelief, pride, self, and other plagues innumerable.

Thus in the day of gracious manifestation, wherein Christ, the Sun of righteousness, discovers himself, the sinner, that is privileged with it, cannot but see a black sight of himself, which makes him say, in effect, *He told me all* the ills *that ever I did:* he told me what I have been, and what I have done; that I have been a sinner in Adam, and a transgressor from the womb; that I have done evil as I could; and given innumerable instances of a *carnal mind*, which is *enmity against God;* and of an *unbelieving heart*, which is *enmity against Christ;* and of *resistance to the motions of heaven*, which is *enmity against the Holy Ghost.* When the sun shines into a dark house, by a small window, the beams discover innumerable motes and hovering particles of dust in that part of the house where the light is shining, by which we are made to see and understand that the whole house is full of motes and dust: even so here, when Christ, the Sun of righteousness, appears and shines in upon the dark dungeon of a sinner's heart, and discovers any motes and blots that are there, then it appears that the whole house, the whole heart and nature is full of the dust and smoke of hell; which makes the soul cry out with Job, *Behold I am vile:* and hence the more precious that Christ appears in any man's eye, the more vile does he appear in his own eye, and debase himself to the lowest; he thinks himself the most lothsome sinner that ever was seen, when Christ tells him all that ever he did.——So much shall suffice concerning the soul-debasing effects of Christ's manifesting himself, imported in that expression, *He told me all things that ever I did:* at one glance he gave me a view of all my sins that ever I was guilty of.

III. The *third* general head proposed, was, To shew, What are these *Christ-exalting commendations* wherein such discoveries of Christ vent themselves, and which are imported in the words of the woman here, *Come see a man that told me all things that ever I did; is not this the Christ?* Here, confining myself to the *matter* and the *manner* of the commendation in the text, notice,

1*st*, The *matter* of the commendation, or in what *respects* she commends Christ to her neighbours; and it is particularly in two respects which are very comprehensive. 1. She commends him in his *natures*. 2. In his *offices*.

1. In his *natures*, as the Man-God, or the God-man, that *told me all things that ever I did.* Here is his human nature; but, O she saw his divinity through the vail of his humanity; *He told me all things that ever I did*, and gave me thus an infallible proof of his being the supreme God. She was neither an Arian nor a Socinian; neither will any be so that gets such a discovery of Christ as she got. And surely the blasphemous Arians of our

our day † bewray their ignorance, and want of true learning and ſpiritual knowledge, ſuch as this poor woman had. O but a little glance of Chriſt's glory can make a poor illiterate woman wiſer than the learned Rabbies, that were never taught of God, and yet think themſelves the only wits of the world. Thoſe to whom Chriſt diſcovers himſelf, as they will ſee, ſo they will commend him to others as God in *our nature; God manifeſted in the fleſh.* Whoever queſtioned but the Searcher of hearts, who knows all things, is the true and ſupreme God, that can give laws to bind the heart and conſciences of men, and then diſcloſe their hearts to them, and tell them all theſe things wherein they have violate and broken that law, in heart or way? Yet Chriſt is here declared to be ſuch an one; *He told me all things that ever I did.* Why, this can be no more denied, than it can be queſtioned whether it was the great God, the true and ſupreme God, that gave out the law upon mount Sinai? No-body doubts that, ſay you; why then, it is declared in ſcripture that it was this ſame Jeſus that did ſo; Pſal. lxviii. 17, 18. *The Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place. Thou haſt aſcended on high; thou haſt led captivity captive; thou haſt received gifts for men, even for the rebellious, that the Lord God might dwell amongſt them:* And of whom all this is ſpoken the apoſtle ſhews, Eph. iv. 8.; and every believer knows: *He told me all things that ever I did;* he told me all my ſins and tranſgreſſions of his law which he gave forth at mount Sinai. By a ſanctified ſight of ſome ſins he opened my eyes to ſee more and more; yea, to ſee all my ſins, and that I was nothing but a maſs of ſin, enmity, and pollution. And thus I ſaw the Revealer to be the true and ſupreme God, even the eternal Son of God, clothed with human nature; *A man that told me all things that ever I did;* a man that told me what none but God can do; a man that proved himſelf to be God, by an argument of power upon my heart and conſcience; an argument drawn from his omniſcient eye, and driven in upon my heart by his omnipotent hand.

2. In his *offices* he is here commended and exalted; *Is not this the Chriſt?* that is, Is not this the true Meſſias promiſed, propheſied of in the Old Teſtament? This is her Εὕρηκα, like that, John i. 45. *We have found him, of whom Moſes in the law and the prophets did write:* even ſo I have found him, might ſhe ſay; he hath been with me, and I have been with him. He hath ſpoken to me, and I have ſpoken to him. He hath not only told me what I am, and what I have been, and what I have done, but told me what he is; and I have found him to be God as well as man. And who is he then, but the promiſed IMMANUEL, *God with us.—Is not this the Chriſt?* that is, the *Anointed of God,* to the ſaving offices of Prophet, Prieſt, and King; this the word *Chriſt* eſpecially imports, and has a particular reference to. He is *anointed,* as a Prophet, to declare the mind of God; *anointed,* as a Prieſt, to make reconciliation with God; and *anointed,* as a King, to ſubdue ſinners to God; and make them friends that are enemies to God: *He is anointed with the Spirit above meaſure;* John iii. 34. To render him a fit Prophet, he hath the *Spirit of wiſdom and underſtanding* above meaſure; to make him a fit Prieſt, he hath the Spirit of love and compaſſion above meaſure; and that he may be a fit King, he hath the Spirit of power and of government.—*Is not this the Chriſt?* that is, *the Sealed and Sent of God,* clothed with a commiſſion from God to ſeek and ſave loſt ſinners, John vi. 27. *Him hath God the Father ſealed;* that is, authorized unto this work, according as himſelf declares, Iſa. lxi. 1. compared with Luke iv. 18. *Is not this the Chriſt?* namely, he that is anointed that he may anoint; *anointed with the oil of gladneſs above his fellows.* Believers are ſaid to *receive the anointing:* but there is a vaſt odds betwixt the anointing of Chriſt, and the anointing of believers; for, Chriſt is the fountain, from whom all the ſtreams flow; the ſun, from whom all the beams of grace ſhine: grace, in believers, is like water in a brook; but grace, in Chriſt, is like water in the ocean: grace, in the believer, is like broken beams; but, in Chriſt, it is like the bright centre of all light. He received the Spirit of all grace, for this very end to be beſtowed upon others. The firſt Adam brought an emptineſs on the whole creation; but the ſecond Adam came to fill all things and perſons, to fill Jew and Gentile, that *of his fulneſs we might receive grace for grace.* The oil of grace and gladneſs was poured out upon our IMMANUEL, of purpoſe that he might pour it down upon the barren mountains.——Thus we ſee in what reſpects he is here recommended, or the matter of the commendation. Let us view,

2*dly*, The *manner* of the commendation; or in what way ſhe does it. We may read, in the boſom of the text, ſeveral *properties* of this exerciſe of commending and exalting Chriſt, which ſaving diſcoveries of him lead unto. And,

1. It is an *open* and *public* commendation of Chriſt; for, ſhe went away to the *city*, and ſays, O people, *Come ſee a man that told me all things that ever I did; Is not this the Chriſt?* She being formerly a lewd woman, had given open offence, and open ſcandal to the *citizens*, and now, upon the diſcovery of her ſin, and the diſcovery of the Saviour, ſhe gave as open and ready evidence of her repentance and converſion, by inviting them all to *come and ſee* him that had given her a *conviction* of her ſin and vileneſs, and a manifeſtation of his glory and grace. Saving diſcoveries of Chriſt will lead people as openly to glorify and honour him, as they have before diſhonoured him.

2. It is an *experimental* commendation of him; ſhe commends him from her own experience and feeling; *Come ſee a man that told me all things that ever I did:* I have ſeen his face, and heard his voice, and felt his power; he has convinced and converted me; therefore, from my own feeling and experience, I commend his grace unto you. It is like that, 1 John i. 3. *That which we have ſeen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye may have fellowſhip with us.* It was ſomething like that of David, Pſal. lxvi. 16. *Come and hear all ye that fear God, and I will tell what he hath done for my ſoul.* Yea, he commends Chriſt not only to believers, but to others, as you ſee his reſolution is, Pſal. li. 13. Upon his getting a new viſit, and the Lord's reſtoring to him the joy of his ſalvation, and upholding him with his free Spirit, *Then,* ſays he, *will I teach tranſgreſſors thy ways, and ſinners ſhall be converted unto thee.* Thus Paul ſet forth the abundant grace of God from his own experience, *I*

† That Arianiſm was much upon the increaſe, about this time, both in Scotland and England, was formerly noticed, p. 322, 454.

was

was a blaſphemer, a perſecutor, and injurious; but I obtained mercy,—and the grace of God was exceeding abundant, &c. 1 Tim. i. 13, 14. They that have experience of the things of Chriſt themſelves, will be moſt zealous in manifeſting the things of Chriſt to others, and in preſſing them to come to Chriſt, as having proof and experience of his grace; and, indeed, they can beſt ſpeak of Chriſt, to whom Chriſt hath ſpoken, and *who believe, and therefore ſpeak.*

3. It is a *charitative* commendation of Chriſt; ſhe is now filled with ſuch Chriſtian love to others, and particularly to thoſe ſhe was moſt concerned with, and intereſted in, that ſhe would have them all drawn to Chriſt. She ſaid to the men, *Come ſee a man that told me all things that ever I did.* Perhaps there were ſome of them ſhe had tempted to ſin and wickedneſs before, ſhe now would have them turned to Chriſt; a great change. They that have ſeen Chriſt cannot but deſire that others may ſee him too, they would have all to come and ſee. O that all the world would come and ſee, come and wonder, come and admire him: as Abraham commanded his children and ſervants *to ſeek and ſerve the Lord*; ſo if one that had got the diſcovery of Chriſt could do it, it would command thouſands to come and ſee him, and ſerve him. When Chriſt diſcovers himſelf, and ſpeaks into the heart of a man, it makes the man ſpeak good of Chriſt.—Again, a ſight of Chriſt's face ſmites the ſoul with a likeneſs to him in love; and hence the ſinner, immediately upon the revelation of Chriſt, is filled with a ſtrange love; a love of complacence to the ſaints, and a love of benevolence to the ſouls of others.

4. It is a *judicious* commendation of Chriſt, that iſſues from the diſcovery of Chriſt. And here ſeveral things point out the judgment and wiſdom by which ſhe commends Chriſt unto them. It is evident from the *method* ſhe takes, or would have them to take; ſhe is not content that they reſt upon her report only, but would have them *taſte* and *ſee* themſelves: ſhe knew that their love would not terminate ſavingly upon her teſtimony; and therefore would have them coming to Chriſt himſelf.—Again, it is evident how judicious it was, from her endeavour to draw them to Chriſt, with the very ſame *hook* that catched herſelf. Chriſt ſpake many good words to her; but the firſt thing that took hold of her heart, and catched her was this, *He told me all things that ever I did.* His heart-ſearching and diſcovering word was the means of her converſion; and ſhe would have them drawn to Chriſt by the ſame means: *Come ſee a man that told me all things that ever I did; Is not this the Chriſt?*—It is evident alſo how judicious it was by the *gradation* of her words, or the gradually riſing ſteps of her commendation: ſhe begins ſomewhat low, *Come ſee a man*; ſhe goes on to a higher note, *He told me all things that ever I did*; and ſhe concludes with the higheſt commendation of him, *Is not this the Chriſt?* Not only God, but God appearing in all his glorious robes of grace, even IMMANUEL, *God with us.*—In a word, it is evident how judicious it is from the *manner* of her arguing: ſhe argues from his telling part of her ſecret wickedneſs, *That he told her all*; q. d. He could as eaſily have told me all things that ever I ſaid, and all things that ever I deſigned, and all things that ever I thought, as he told me what I did: yea, I got ſuch a broad look of all my ſins in that one glaſs of a diſcovery that he gave me, that I cannot but own he *told me all things that ever I did.*—Again, ſhe argues from the *dignity* that ſhe ſaw joined with his *humanity*, that he was the true Meſſias; and hence judiciouſly infers, *Is not this the Chriſt?* She was never at a college to learn, how to frame an argument; but having been at Chriſt's ſchool for a little pleaſant while, ſhe there learned ſome heavenly logic; can ſuch a man as this be any other but the Chriſt? The more clear diſcovery that any gets of Chriſt, the more ſkilful and expert they will be in commending him to others; as we ſee in our apoſtle Paul, after Chriſt was revealed in him, what clear diſcoveries did he make of Chriſt to others, as appears in the Acts of the apoſtles, and in all his epiſtles.

5. It is a *pathetic* commendation of Chriſt that iſſues from the diſcoveries of him. Her heart is full of Chriſt, and full of deſire to praiſe, and exalt, and commend him to others; and her heart vents itſelf in ſeveral pathetical expreſſions: hence ſhe ſpake firſt in a *hortatory* manner, *Come and ſee*, ſays ſhe; O citizens, ſlip not this opportunity, when ſuch a glorious ſight is to be ſeen.—Next ſhe ſpake in an *aſſertory* manner; ſhe aſſerts ſome ſtrange things concerning him, he is a man *that told me all things that ever I did*; he is a ſeer and revealer of the ſecrets of men, and therefore muſt be a Prophet, and more than a prophet, a revealer of the counſel of God.—And finally, ſhe ſpake in a *queſtionary* and expoſtulary manner, *Is not this the Chriſt?* He can be none elſe but the Meſſias, the Chriſt of God. She is not content to commend him in one particular, but ſhe muſt go on and inſiſt in his praiſe and commendation, and cannot think ſhe can commend him enough; *Is not this the Chriſt?* She makes no queſtion of it herſelf. And the deſign of her interrogation is to put it out of doubt with them. Who can this be but the Chriſt? How can it be any other but the Chriſt? They that have met with Chriſt, and got the heart touched by his grace, it is in a hearty cordial way they ſpeak of him, and commend him to others. The ſinner that hath met with a Saviour, O how gladly would he trumpet forth his praiſe if he could.—There is ſomething further here that points out the pathetic manner of the commendation, and that is an *appeal* to them as it were in the boſom of this queſtion, *Is not this the Chriſt?* I appeal to you, might ſhe ſay, if it be not ſo, that he is CHRIST, the *Anointed of God.* I cannot think but you muſt judge of him as I do; and, who will not think highly of him as I do? Indeed, the enlightened ſoul is ready to think all the world ſhould be of his mind, the light and evidence is ſo clear to him. And hence, they that have got a diſcovery of Chriſt, wonder that any would eſteem otherwiſe of Chriſt than they. O be aſtoniſhed that all the world is not wondering at his glory. Oh! what can blind them! What can bewitch them at this rate, that they are not of the ſame mind concerning Chriſt, and that they are not admirers of him as well as I am! Surely there is nothing appears with ſuch evidence and demonſtration as this glory and excellency of a God-man. Who can be ſo ſtupid and ſenſeleſs as to reckon otherwiſe? *Is not this the Chriſt?* The proof is ſo plain to me, ſays the ſoul, and the light

light and power so great by which Christ is discovered to me, that it is truly irresistable, and who, in all the world, can possible resist the evidence of it? *Is not this the Christ?* — O how pathetic is the commendation!

6. It is a *practical* commendation that issues from a saving discovery of Christ, and such is that of the woman of Samaria here; and hence, she says not, *Go see* him; but, *Come see* him. They that truly invite others to come to Christ, will not be content to send them to him, but they would share themselves of more and more of Christ. Their language is not, *Go, see*; but, *Come, see*. It would have argued no great esteem of Christ, nor high commendation of him, should the woman have said, I have seen him already, go ye and see him next; they might have thought she had enough of him: but, *Come see* him, says she; q. d. Come along with me, and I will go upon your head, like a captain, and lead the van myself. I have seen him to my heart's content, and am desirous to get another sight, a new sight of him; and I would have all the people in Samaria, the whole town to go along with me. I have been an ill woman, a base woman, that have led some of you to sin; and may I now be the happy instrument of bringing you to a Saviour. I have led some of you to the gates of hell; O let me now lead you to the gate of heaven! if I have tempted any of you to wickedness, O let me now be instrumental in turning you to righteousness; yea, to the Lord my righteousness, whom I have got a saving sight of; and, therefore, let me give you a good example, for all the ill example I have given you. Here was a change indeed, and a practical commendation. Surely they commend Christ most effectually, who do it not only by their profession, but by their practice; not merely by their counsel, but by their example; and who can say not only, *Go see;* but, *Come see a man that told me all things that ever I did.* It is a *come see* that makes others to go also; Zech. viii. 21. *Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of hosts, I will go also;* there is one: ver. 23. you find more following, *We will go with you; for we have heard that God is with you.* Thus it was the church's not only commending of Christ, but diligetnly seeking after him whom she commended, that made the daughters of Jerusalem say, Song vi. 1. *Whither is my beloved gone, that we may seek him with thee?* And we see how effectual this practical commendation of Christ was, that the woman gave to the Samaritans, as your may read verses 30, 39, 40, 41, 42. She was the blessed instrument of drawing many there to the Lord Jesus.

IV. The *fourth* general head proposed, was, To give the *reasons* of the doctrine, whence it is that *saving discoveries of Christ* makes persons to *condemn* and *debase themselves* to the lowest, and to *commend* and exalt Christ to the highest; or, what influence a saving discovery of Christ hath upon this self-debasing and Christ-exalting exercise? I shall consider the reasons of this twofold effect jointly because they necessarily go together, and are influenced by the same means: they are like the two scales of a balance, that which makes the one scale fall and go down, makes the other rise and go up; so that discovery of Christ which brings down self to the dust, does at the same time set up Christ upon the throne. When the *haughtiness of man is brought low, then the Lord alone is exalted*, Isa. ii. 11.

1. The *first* reason then, why the saving discoveries of Christ do humble self to the lowest, and exalt Christ to the highest, is from the *special light* wherein Christ is seen. They that see the glory of Christ with the one eye, they see, at the same time, their own unworthiness with the other. The same light that discovers the holiness of God, discovers the vileness of the man. The same light that discovers the fulness of Christ discovers the emptiness of the creature. That light that discovers his infinite merit, discovers the infinite guilt and demerit of sin. When the righteousness of Christ is seen, the unrighteousness of the sinner is seen at the same time, and in the same light; and hence, no wonder then, while the poor soul is astonished with the view of God's glory in the face of Christ, he is also astonished with the view and apprehension of his own baseness and brutishness; and has the meanest thoughts of himself when he has the highest thoughts of Christ. The more a man converses with Christ, the more he converses with himself; and the light that discovers Christ, discovers the soul to itself: and therefore the discoveries of Christ cannot but tend to debase self, and exalt Christ.

2. When Christ is discovered, then the *love of God* to the soul is discovered, and this fills it with humble wonder. O! how astonishing a thing is it, that God's love is manifested to one so full of sin and wickedness! This debases the soul, in its own sight, because it knows itself to be so unworthy of his love; this works humility: but yet unworthy as it is, the love of God is manifested to it; this quickens love in the soul, and love excites praise. O! how shall I manifest love to him that hath manifested love to the like of me! Thus the love of Christ constrains both to the debasing of self and exalting of Christ.

3. The *third* reason is, from the *special work of the Spirit:* there is a speciality in the work of the Spirit upon the soul to whom Christ is savingly discovered; *Lord*, says Judas, not Iscariot, *how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself to us, and not to the world?* John xiv. 22. God manifests his love to the world, in outward respects; but to his own, in his privy-chamber. It is the work and office of the Spirit to set home the love of God upon the hearts of his people; and to every one of them alone, as it were: he takes them aside, that they may have some private conversation with Christ; such as this woman had, when Christ was the only preacher, and she was the only hearer. O but the view of this distinguished grace raises in the soul both David's note, *What am I, and what is my father's house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?* And Mary's note of the same time, *My soul doth magnify the Lord.*

4. The influence that the discovery of Christ hath upon the self-debasing and Christ-exalting exercise, flows from the *spiritual end* and *design* of these saving discoveries and manifestations of Christ; this is God's great end in discovering Christ, 1 Cor. i. 29, 30, 31. *Of God, he is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.* For what end? *That no flesh should glory in his sight; but that he that glorieth might glory in the Lord:* that is, that self may be condemned and debased, and Christ alone may be commended and exalted. And this is the great end of

of the Spirit's work: when he comes to teſtify of Chriſt, what is his deſign? Why, ſays Chriſt, John xvi. 9, 14. *He will convince the world of ſin, and he ſhall glorify me;* that is, he will humble the ſinner, on the one hand, and exalt the Saviour, on the other; and ſo lead the ſinner to condemn himſelf and to commend Chriſt.

5. It ariſes from the *ſpecial power* and *efficacy* that is in ſaving diſcoveries of Chriſt, for working all ſaving effects; why, *beholding his glory, we are changed into the ſame image*, 2 Cor. iii. 18.; and changed, as in other reſpects, ſo in this particularly, that ſelf is pulled down, and Chriſt ſet up: we are changed from pride, to humility; from ſelf-love, to ſelf-loathing; from ſelf-indulgence, to ſelf-abhorrence; and from ſelf-ſeeking and ſelf-exalting, to a Chriſt-exalting diſpoſition and exerciſe. All the graces of the Spirit iſſue from a ſaving diſcovery of Chriſt, and come in that way to a lively exerciſe; *We beholding his glory, as the glory of the only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth: of his fulneſs have we all received, and grace for grace*, John i. 14, 16. We cannot ſee his fulneſs, without ſharing of his fulneſs; yea, to ſee his fulneſs is to ſhare of it: this is the ſtrength of that *for* which we have in John iii. 2. *We ſhall be like him,* FOR *we ſhall ſee him as he is;* ſo here, *beholding his glory, his fulneſs of grace and truth*, we *receive out of his fulneſs.* Now, the more of Chriſt's fulneſs and Spirit that one hath, the more will he have of Chriſt's ends before him; which is a debaſing of the creature, and a glorifying of God, that he may be *all in all.*

6. This exerciſe doth ariſe from the *divine ſplendor* of the diſcovery; for, when Chriſt diſcovers his face, then the *glory of God, in the face of Jeſus Chriſt*, is diſcovered, 2 Cor. iv. 6. When Chriſt is ſeen, then the glory of God's perfections, and the ſplendor of his attributes, is ſeen. Now, every thing in God daſhes the ſinful man that ſees it, and makes him nothing in his own eyes; and, at the ſame time, makes Chriſt, in whom that divine glory ſhines, to be *all in all* to the man; ſo that he cannot but ſet him above all, and give him, *in all things, the pre-eminence.*——Thus you ſee the reaſons whence it is, that ſaving diſcoveries of Chriſt make the ſubjects thereof to condemn and debaſe themſelves to the loweſt, and to commend and exalt Chriſt to the higheſt, as the woman of Samaria here does; *Come ſee a man that told me all things that ever I did; Is not this the Chriſt?*

V. The *fifth* thing propoſed, was, To make ſome *application* of the whole. And this we ſhall eſſay in an uſe of information, examination, and exhortation.

1ſt, We ſhall improve this ſubject in an uſe of *information*, by deducing the following *inferences.* Is it ſo then, that *ſaving diſcoveries of Chriſt* have this effect, to make one, at the ſame time, to *condemn and debaſe himſelf*, and to *commend and exalt Chriſt*, ſaying, *Come ſee a man that told me all things that ever I did; Is not this the Chriſt?* From this text and doctrine we may ſee and learn the following leſſons.

1. Hence ſee why *pride* and *ſelf-conceit, ſelf-righteouſneſs* and *ſelf-juſtification* prevail ſo much in the world, and in the viſible church; and what makes people, notwithſtanding all that ever they did, yet to be vainly puft up, inſtead of condemning and debaſing themſelves: why, becauſe they have never got a *ſaving diſcovery of Chriſt;* Chriſt hath never touched their heart, and told them all that ever they did: they are ſtrangers to the power of the word. It is very ſtrange how wicked men will juſtify themſelves, as thoſe, John viii. 48. *Say we not well, that thou art a Samaritan, and haſt a devil?* Here was the greateſt blaſphemy imaginable, to ſay this of Chriſt; yet they juſtify it, *Say we not well in this?* Chriſtleſs men will juſtify their ill words, and baſe works, and evil actions.—What ſay you, *Sabbath-breaker?* Why, was it not well done, ſay you? it is but a work of neceſſity, a needful buſineſs.—What ſay you, *drunkard?* Why, it was but a hearty bottle with my friends; and was it not well done?—What ſay you, *whoremonger?* Why, it was but a trick of youth; and what is the matter of that?—What ſay you, *ſwearer?* Why, it was neither banning nor ſwearing that I intended; it was but a ſingle word, and a word in paſſion.—What ſay you, *ſcold* and *railer?* Why, ſay you, I think they deſerved all that I ſaid to them; I am ſure I looſed my tongue upon ſuch a man, and gave him his holy-day's name; and was it not well done, and well ſad?—— Indeed, you will hardly get a ſinner at all; if you will take every perſon's excuſe, and every body's judgment of themſelves, they will juſtify all that ever they did; or, at leaſt, make it but a matter of moon-ſhine. A common ſtrumpet, ſuch as this woman was formerly, may think nothing of all her baſe and lewd behaviour. The moſt notorious ſinner goes lightly under the burden of his ſin, without any ſelf-condemnation or ſelf-debaſement, till Chriſt and they meet together; and until he ſhow them, by one glance, all things that ever they did.

2. Hence ſee, the *greateſt of ſinners* may conceive *hope of mercy* at the hand of our merciful Lord Jeſus, from ſuch inſtances as this; yet, let not wicked ſinners indulge themſelves in ſin, and preſume that God will not notice their lewdneſs, and ſecret as well as open wickedneſs; for the time is coming, wherein Chriſt will, either in a way of mercy or judgment, *tell you all things that ever you did.* Pſal. l. 21. *Thoſe things thou haſt done, and I kept ſilence: thou thoughtſt that I was altogether ſuch an one as thyſelf; but I will reprove thee, and ſet them in order before thine eyes. Conſider this, ye that forget God, leſt he tear you in pieces, when there is none to deliver.* If this remarkable inſtance of grace, to ſuch a baſe woman, be abuſed by you to licentiouſneſs, and your opening a door of preſumption to yourſelf, expecting mercy in a continued courſe of wickedneſs, you are under a terrible deluſion; for, *God will wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy ſcalp of him that goes on in his treſpaſſes.* But, if you would enter in at the door of hope that is opened to you, in ſuch examples as this, O ſeek, that, in a merciful way, he may diſcover your ſins to you, ſo as to make you know, at the ſame time, that he is *the Chriſt*, the *anointed of God*, to ſave you from your ſin.

3. Hence ſee, that the *word preached* doth then only do ſaving good, when it comes *cloſe home to the heart*, and when *Chriſt is ſeen* there; for here, ſee how the word of Chriſt came home with power upon this woman's heart, *He told me; he told me all things that ever I did.* The word was the ſearcher and diſcerner of the thoughts and intent of the heart: and the ſearching

word was the ſtrong hook that catched her; and ſhe ſaw Chriſt therein: *Is not this the Chriſt?* Then the word is effectual, and prevails when Chriſt himſelf is ſeen: Chriſt is the beſt preacher himſelf; the only powerful preacher, who, by his word, can open the eyes; and by a ſanctified ſight of one ſin, diſcovers all to the man; and in that diſcovery ſhews himſelf to be the Chriſt.

4. Hence ſee, that *ſaving illumination* is the *beſt antidote againſt Arianiſm.* Here the enlightened woman profeſſes her faith of Chriſt's Deity, and thereupon of his being the CHRIST: ſhe ſees him to be the true God, *who told her all things that ever ſhe did;* and thence declares him to be the true Meſſias: *Is not this the Chriſt?* If Chriſt were not the true God, he could not be the true Meſſias; and conſequently, they who deny his ſupreme Deity, deny that he is the Chriſt. And thus blaſphemous Arians are guilty of *denying the Lord that bought them:* and they that thus deny him were never enlightened by him. A ſaving diſcovery of Chriſt will afford a poor illiterate perſon an argument from experience, and ſpiritual feeling, more ſtrong and powerful, for proving the ſupreme Deity of Chriſt, than all the learned and logical arguments in the world, which a man may be fraughted with, and yet remain an Atheiſt: and, indeed, Arians are Atheiſts, whatever they profeſs; for, *he that denies the Son, denies the Father alſo:* becauſe, to deny the *neceſſary exiſtence* of the Son, is to reject the *neceſſary paternity* of the Father, who yet is as neceſſarily Father, as he is God; and to deny both the Father and the Son, is to contemn the *neceſſary proceſſion* of the Holy Ghoſt from both: ſo that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt is denied, when the ſupreme Deity of Chriſt is impugned. Alas! Sirs, this atheiſtical world needs ſuch a turn and meaſure of enlightening grace as this poor woman got.

5. Hence ſee, that *perſuaſion*, with *application*, is in the *nature of ſaving faith*, both objective and ſubjective. Perſuaſion *objective*, aſſuring the man that this is *the Chriſt;* and *ſubjective* alſo, aſſuring the man that as he is the Chriſt, the anointed; ſo he is anointed for *my behalf;* anointed, as the woman here ſuggeſts, as a Prophet for me, to tell *me all things that ever I did:* and, at the ſame time, that he told me all my ſins, he told me that he was the Chriſt, anointed to ſave me; and hence ſhe glories in him as *the Chriſt.* Whenever he manifeſts himſelf, faith brings in holy triumph in the Lord, even under a ſight of the greateſt ſinfulneſs. Indeed, ſuch a ſight as this woman got, namely, of the guilt of all the evils that ever ſhe did, would have cauſed trembling, inſtead of triumphing, if faith's view of Chriſt diſcovered to her, had not carried, in the boſom of it, a *fiducial perſuaſion* of his being a Chriſt for her; which, whenever ſhe ſaw, then ſhe was kindly humbled: which leads me to another inference.

6. Hence ſee, that *true goſpel humiliation* and *evangelical repentance* goes not BEFORE, but is a *fruit of faith*, and of Chriſt manifeſting himſelf to the ſoul; for then, and not till then, does ſhe cry out, O! he hath *told me all things that ever I did.* Now ſhe ſees all her ſins in the brighteſt light. By the light of the ſtars we may ſee ſome things; by the light of the moon we ſee more; but by the light of the ſun, we ſee moſt of all. By the light of nature, people may ſee ſome ſins; by the light of the law more, much more; for, *by the law is the knowledge of ſin;* but, by the light of the Sun of righteouſneſs, moſt of all is diſcovered: but with this difference, that the moon-light of the law ſhews the diſeaſe, and no more, leaving the ſinner to die in that diſeaſe, and periſh; but the ſun-light of the goſpel diſcovers the remedy, *The Sun of righteouſneſs ariſing with healing under his wings.* And when no leſs than the blood and righteouſneſs of God is ſeen to be the healing medicine, then the diſeaſe appears to be infinitely great; and yet the ſight is infinitely ſweet, becauſe it is a ſight of that wonderful healing, under theſe wings and rays of the Sun of righteouſneſs: this makes kindly and pleaſant humiliation.

7. Hence ſee, that *ſaving diſcoveries* of Chriſt are *very rare in our day;* for, very few are thus exerciſed, either in condemning and debaſing themſelves, under a ſenſe of all that ever they did; or in commending and exalting Chriſt, and dealing with others to come and ſee him. Oh! how few humble walkers, and hearty commenders of Chriſt are to be obſerved! Few taking kindly with their ſin, and few breaking forth into the praiſing commendations of Chriſt! When this woman got a diſcovery of Chriſt, ſhe kindly takes with her whoredoms, and all her ſins that ever ſhe did, and zealouſly breaks forth into the praiſes and commendation of Chriſt. But whence is it, that the land we live in, the church of Scotland, is not taking with, and kindly acknowledging all that ever ſhe did, and taking with all her whoredoms and adulteries, and treacherous breaking covenant with her God to whom ſhe ſolemnly gave her hand? Whence is it that there is ſo little zeal in commending and exalting Chriſt in his ſupreme Deity, in a day wherein Arian * blaſphemers open their mouth againſt him? Whence is there ſo little zeal for the reviving of our broken covenants, national and ſolemn league, even in a day wherein the obligation thereof is denied? Why are we neither humbly condemning ourſelves, and taking with our national ſins, nor highly commending Chriſt, and exalting him in his injured honours, truths, and prerogatives, but rather conniving with, and winking at all the diſhonours done to him? Why, what is the matter? The reaſon is, *ſaving diſcoveries of Chriſt*, which ſhould work the contrary effect, are *very rare.* When the Lord hath a mind to build up Zion, *he appears in his glory,* as he did in the days of our Reformation: but now he hath juſtly hid himſelf from the God-provoking, Chriſt-deſpiſing, goſpel-ſlighting generation. But, O Sirs, if he would yet appear and diſcover his glory in the ſanctuary, then we might expect Reformation times: but, as matters ſtand, we look as if a ſtroke and judgment, that hath been ſo long threatened, were ſuddenly to fall upon us with a terrible vengeance. There were little hazard of the preſent rumour of war †, if the Lord, who is a man of war, were not againſt us; and if the Lord carry on his controverſy, it will be little wonder, though

* That Arianiſm was gaining ground in Scotland, at this time, was formerly noticed, p. 322, 454. And the proceſs, before the ſupreme eccleſiaſtical court, relative to this affair, was this year terminated, with no very adequate ſentence againſt the propagator of it.

† About this time the nation was mightily alarmed with a rupture with Spain; who, as was affirmed, had entered into a formidable alliance with different powers, in order to recover Gibraltar and Portmahon, and place the Pretender on the throne of Britain.

we ſhould ſee the land turned into a field of blood and deſolation, before we ſee another communion-ſolemnity here. God hath born long with us, but how much longer he will do ſo, who can tell? Forty years peace in the church is a wonder, *&c.* But,

8. Hence ſee, that a *meeting with Chriſt*, makes a *marvellous change* upon a perſon or people that are ſo privileged. Before this woman met with Chriſt, or rather before he met with her, ſhe was nothing but a common ſtrumpet; but now ſhe is humbled to the duſt for the ſins ſhe had formerly indulged herſelf in, and commends and exalts that Lord whom ſhe had diſhonoured. She is brought *from darkneſs to light, and from the power of Satan unto God*; from being exerciſed in corrupting and debauching her neighbours, to a kindly concern for their ſoul's everlaſting welfare, to get them brought to Chriſt. Saving illumination and acquaintance with Chriſt creates, in the heart, a ſympathy with the caſe of poor Chriſtleſs ſinners: *Come ſee a man that told me all things that ever I did; is not this the Chriſt?* This leads me to

Uſe 2. Namely, an uſe of *trial* and *examination*, whether you have met with Chriſt, and got a ſaving diſcovery of him at this occaſion or formerly. O, how ſhall I know, ſay you, if I have met with Chriſt, and if he hath diſcovered himſelf to me? Why, if you have, then this diſcovery has led you to theſe two things. 1. A humiliation of *ſelf* to the loweſt. 2. An exalting of *Chriſt* to the higheſt.

1*ſt*, What *ſelf-humbling diſpoſition* and *abaſement* hath been wrought in you? Are you laid low in the duſt, and made vile in your own eyes, by Chriſt diſcovering you to yourſelf? Have you got a diſcovery of your own ſinfulneſs, ugline ſs, and unworthineſs? Hath Chriſt fallen a diſcourſing with you, and *told you all things that ever I did?* Hath he told you of your ill life, your wicked heart, your depraved nature? Hath he told you of your unbelief? For when the Spirit comes, he *reproves the world of ſin; becauſe they believe not in him.* Hath he told you of your ſecret ſins, and diſcovered to you what none but himſelf could tell you? And, have you taken it from himſelf, without ſaying, who has gone and told the miniſters this and that of me? Hath he told you of your wicked thoughts and intentions, and made the word the diſcerner of the thoughts and intents of your heart! Hath he told you your ſpiritual wickedneſs, your atheiſm, ignorance, enmity, carnality, pride, ſelf, and hypocriſy, and made you to know the plagues of your own heart? Hath he told you of the fig-leaves you have been covering yourſelf with, and the falſe refuges you have been running to, and chaſed you out of your refuges of lies? Hath he told you your ſecret, as well as open ſins, and ſo told you ſome things, as that thereby he hath diſcovered the reſt to you; and you have been led by the ſtreams to the fountain of ſin within? And, has he given you, by one glance upon the map of your corrupt nature, a view of your total depravation? Hath he told you your proper name by calling you a *dog*, and by making you take with your name, ſaying, *Truth, Lord, I am a dog*, a devil, a monſter? *Behold I am vile!* Why, it is a glorious internal light that diſcovers this internal vileneſs. What makes you, with Job, to *abhor yourſelf?* Why, it ſays, *Now your eyes ſee him*, Job xlii. 5, 6. What makes you, with Paul, look upon yourſelf as *leſs than the leaſt of all ſaints*; yea, as the *chief of* all *ſinners*, the worſt of all ſinners, the vileſt of all ſinners? Why, it ſays, *He hath revealed his Son in you.* It is not natural for proud man to think ſo baſely of himſelf; it is the Spirit of Chriſt that hath told you what you are. But here, to prevent any miſtake, it may be aſked,

QUEST. *May not one who hath not the Spirit of God, nor a renewed conſcience, be able to diſcern his own vileneſs?*

ANSW. There is a double knowledge or underſtanding that men may have of themſelves, *viz.* ſpeculative and practical. As to the general *ſpeculative* knowledge, a man may have this; common ſenſe and reaſon may tell him his ſin, and he may know himſelf to be a ſinner, as being guilty of groſs ſins, ſuch as, drunkenneſs, whoredom, ſwearing, and the like. But there is a particular *practical* knowledge and underſtanding, which is twofold, *viz.* either from the Spirit of God without us, or from the Spirit of God within us. That practical underſtanding which is from the Spirit of God *without* us, is what alſo the unregenerate may have. The Spirit of God, not yet received, but without a man, may come and make ſuch diſcoveries of his ſin, and guilt, and wickedneſs as may make him cry out, That he is *undone, undone.* Such a knowledge had Nebuchadnezzar of the God of Shadrach, Meſech, and Abednego. Such a knowledge alſo, it ſeems, Cain and Judas had. But the Spirit of God *within* us gives ſpiritual light and ſenſe upon the conſcience, and rectifies the judgment; whereas the Spirit of God, *without* a man, diſcovers ſin mainly in order to hell and wrath, making him ſay, *undone, undone.* The Spirit of God within a man makes him ſee the vileneſs of ſin, and lament and mourn for that, ſaying, *Unclean, unclean. O wretched man that I am! Behold I am vile!* This affects him more than the wrath of God; yea, even when he ſees the wrath of God is turned away, and that the ſhower is over his head, and hath lighted on the head of the Cautioner, even then he abhors himſelf for his own wickedneſs more than ever. This is from the Spirit of God within, and a goſpel-light. The Spirit of God *without* a man, and the Spirit of God within him differ as much as day-light differs from lightening. A flaſh of lightening from Sinai, or the fiery law, terrifies and aſtoniſhes the man, and makes him tremble and quake under a ſenſe of ſin; but the day-light of a ſaving diſcovery of Chriſt makes one ſee himſelf the chief of ſinners, and yet fills him with holy triumph in the Lord the Saviour. A lightening confounds and ſurprizes; but the day-light gives a clear, diſtinct, and ſedate view of things as they are, with quiet and compoſure. — Now, try if you have got a humbling view and diſcovery of Chriſt, or a word from him that hath filled you with ſelf-abaſement, ſo as you reckon you cannot have vile enough thoughts of yourſelf, becauſe he hath, in effect, *told you all things that ever you did.*

2*dly*, Try what *Chriſt-exalting* and *commending exerciſe* you have been brought under; or what diſpoſition is wrought in you to commend and exalt Chriſt to the higheſt. If Chriſt and you have met together, as he did with this woman of Samaria, then the meeting hath wrought in you

you the same effect, the same disposition to commend and exalt Christ; which you may try by these particulars.

1. If you have met with Christ in this manner, then you have seen him to be the CHRIST indeed, the *God-man*, the *Anointed* of the Father, the true *Messias*. Hath he told you, in effect, *I that speak unto thee, am he?* I that speak unto you by this gospel am he? Hath he born home this upon your heart with convincing light and evidence, so as you have been brought to the apostle's faith, John vi. 69. *We believe and are sure, that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God?* The faith of this is of such importance, that Christ hath said, *If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.* Now, hath he so spoken to you, as you were made, in effect, to think and say, I believe and am sure, that he that spoke unto me was he. It was not the minister only that I heard, but the word came with such light, life, and power, that, I think, no minister on earth, nor angel in heaven, could make the word to go through my heart as it did. It was like the sound of the voice of the Son of God.

2. If you have met with Christ in this manner, then he hath made such a *gradual approach* and *discovery of himself* to you as to raise in you gradually more and more a *high esteem* of him as a Prophet, sent of God to teach you, and to *tell you all things*, as it was with this woman: and though he himself, and all his words are precious to you, yet there are some particular words, among many, that have taken more impression, and stick more fast than others. Though Christ spake many good words to this woman for her instruction, yet the word that made the first and deepest impression, is what she especially kept in heart, *He told me all things that ever I did:* and what she saw in this more clearly at first, she saw more clearly after Christ gave her a clearer manifestation of himself. If the saving discovery of Christ commenced and began when he gave her the first discovery of her lewdness and whoredom, and conveyed light, at the same time, into her mind to perceive that he was a prophet, yet she was much in the dark, and took not up all that was intended by this discovery, till after he clearly discovered himself; and then the former lesson is clearly taken up in all the parts of it. Therefore now, says she, *He told me all things that ever I did.* Some may have such obscure and cloudy discoveries of Christ at first, that though they raise a high esteem of Christ, yet the soul may be at a great loss to know, what the full meaning of such a word is that Christ spake to their soul, till after they get a brighter discovery of him; and then they may come to be more perfectly instructed in the same lesson, which, at first, they did not so well apprehend: and in this his dealing with them may be like that, John xiii. 7. *What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.*

3. If you have met with Christ in this manner, then your mind is set *above the world*, and you have left it behind you, as the woman here left her water-pot and ran to the city. O Sirs, when Christ appears to a man, he thinks no more of the world than a potsherd; he counts all *but loss and dung for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ;* yea, the most valuable things in the world are undervalued when Christ is discovered. As naturalists tell us, the loadstone will not draw in the presence of the diamond; neither does the world in all its glory and gallantry draw the heart of any to it in the presence of Christ. The reason of this is, the Sun of righteousness darkens all the stars of creature-enjoyments, and makes them disappear and evanish. A drink out of the fountain of living waters makes all worldly comforts to be nothing but *broken cisterns that can hold no water.* They whose hearts were never weaned from the world, never met with Christ. Again,

4. If you have met with Christ, then your hearts will be set upon the work of *commending him to others*, and particularly to your *neighbours and friends*, that they may be come to acquaint with him also. Thus the discovery of Christ vents itself in the woman here, *Come see a man that told me all things that ever I did; Is not this the Christ?* A manifestation of Christ gives men such a fill of the fulness of God, that they must have a vent: and as, in every saving manifestation, there is something of the nature of Christ communicate, who loves to communicate of his fulness; so they to whom Christ dispenses of his grace and fulness, love to communicate also of what they have: not that the saints are to make a blaze of their religion to every one they meet with, or to cast pearls before swine; but the love of Christ discovered to them fills them with such ardent love to him, as obliges them, in all proper ways, to trumpet forth his glory and honour. They see such a glory in him, that they think all should wonder at him, and own him; *Is not this the Christ?* They reckon none so obliged to free grace as they, and therefore they think it well becomes them to spread the savour of his name. They know also, by remembring what they themselves were before they met with Christ, they know what a sad state they are into who want acquaintance with Christ; therefore, both out of love and regard to the glory and honour of Christ, and out of love, pity, and compassion to the perishing souls of others, they desire and endeavour to commend Christ to them both by their words and actions; both by their talk and walk, as the woman of Samaria did. What heart then and disposition have you got to commend Christ to your neighbours and friends, to your children and servants? If you have no heart nor disposition to such exercise as this, surely you cannot make it out that you have met with Christ.

5. If you have met with Christ, then it will be your hearty desire not only to commend Christ, and speak of him to others, making him the great subject of your conversation, but also to have them *taste* what you have tasted, and *see* what you have seen, without resting merely on your report; *Come see a man that told me all things that ever I did; Is not this the Christ?* Rest not on my report, might she say; but, O come and see him! My friends, spiritual converse about Christ is much out of fashion in our degenerate age; yea, to enter on spiritual discourse in some companies, would be to expose a man to scorn and ridicule; a sad instance of estrangement from Christ and religion. But are there not some professors, whose speech of Christ, and of the things of God, betrays them and bewrays them; for, either it is but the outside of religion they talk of; for example, How well such a man preached, and how long such a man preached, and how many tables,

or

how many ſtrangers were at ſuch a communion, and all ſuch little worth queſtions, no better than idleneſs; treating of the ſhell and not the kernel of ordinances: or, if they enter upon any ſubſtantial converſation, either they ſoon weary of that, or give evidence of ſuch a ſelfiſh ſpirit, as beſpeaks an inclination to commend themſelves rather than to commend Chriſt. The import of their language is rather, come and hear me, than come and ſee Chriſt. But, O Sirs, a meeting with Chriſt will fill the ſoul with a deſire that others may ſhare of what they ſhare, and ſee what they have ſeen, with a deſire to take the moſt effectual method that may be for drawing them to Chriſt. Hence, as this woman ſpeaks out her very heart, ſo ſhe attempts to draw them to Chriſt with the very ſame hook with which ſhe was drawn aſhore herſelf: *He told me all things that ever I did; Is not this the Chriſt?* Therefore, come ſee him.

6. If you have met with Chriſt, and converſed with him, you will think long for *another meeting of him*, another ſight of him; for this was the woman's diſpoſition here; *Come ſee the man:* ſhe ſpake as if ſhe deſired to be the foremoſt in returning again to ſee him. If you think you have got enough of Chriſt, it is a ſign you have got nothing of him ſavingly. If you have got a ſaving ſight of him, then you will deſire more and more, and more, till you ſee him face to face in Immanuel's land. The diſpoſition of theſe that have attained to a ſight of Chriſt, and apprehended him by faith, is examplified by the apoſtle Paul, Phil. iii. 12, 13, 14. It is ſtrange, as if they had attained nothing, apprehended nothing, in compariſon of what they aſpired after and would be at: *Not as though I had already attained; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which I am apprehended of Chriſt.* And again, *I count not myſelf to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting thoſe things that are behind, and reaching forth to thoſe things that are before, I preſs toward the mark of the high calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus.* It is poſſible, that unſound profeſſors may fancy they have attained much, and yet have attained nothing; and reſting on their attainments, they reſt upon nothing but a ſhadow. It is poſſible that ſound believers may judge they have attained nothing, though yet they have attained much; and hence neglecting their attainments, they preſs after more and more of Chriſt. As Paul here, *I count not myſelf to have attained; I count not myſelf to have apprehended.* What count you of your attainments, man, when the great apoſtle Paul counts nothing of his, though he was one of the moſt clearly enlightened, and highly privileged men in the world? Happy is that ſoul who has attained the knowlege of Chriſt, and yet is as far from thinking that he knows, or has attained as much as may ſuffice him, that he rather counts as if he knew nothing, or had attained nothing, and therefore preſſes after more of Chriſt. O for the other ſight of him! O for the other meeting with him! O for another communion! another blink of his beauty and glance of his glory. Thus the happy woman counts not herſelf to have ſeen or attained enough of Chriſt, but longs for another ſight. It is an excellent mark of a meeting with Chriſt, to be longing for more and more of Chriſt here, and for full viſion of him in the higher houſe, and to be in a caſe practically to diſcover this in an examplary commendation of Chriſt to others; while it is not only the matter of your religious talk, ſignifying only *go ſee him*, but the import of your examplary walk; *Come ſee a man that told me all things that ever I did; Is not this the Chriſt?*

Uſe 3. Another *uſe* ſhould be by way of *exhortation.* And our exhortation ſhall be tendered, 1. To *believers*, who have got a diſcovery of Chriſt. 2. To *unbelievers*, who are yet ſtrangers to him.

1ſt, To you, *believers*, who have got a *ſaving diſcovery* of Chriſt working theſe effects upon you, leading you to condemn and debaſe yourſelves to the loweſt, and to commend and exalt Chriſt to the higheſt. O let me exhort you to a walk ſuitable to ſuch a meeting with Chriſt; that is, 1. To a *humble* walk, like one to whom Chriſt hath told all things that ever you did. 2. To a *holy* walk, like one that would commend and exalt a holy Jeſus, ſaying, *Come ſee a man* that hath ſo and ſo ſpoken to me; *Is not this the Chriſt?*

[1.] I would exhort you to a *humble*-walk. O believer, hath he given you a ſight of yourſelf, and of your own vileneſs and baſeneſs, *Walk humbly with thy God:* and, in order to this, ſtill keep the glaſs before your eye, wherein he hath diſcovered you to yourſelf. There are ſeveral glaſſes wherein the ſaints behold themſelves which makes them have low thoughts of themſelves.

1. The looking-glaſs of the *law of God*, which diſcovers to them the vileneſs of their nature, thoughts, deſires, and affections; *When the law comes, ſin revives.* The law is a light by which *all things are reproved and made manifeſt*, Eph. v. 13. Keep this glaſs before your eye, even you that are wholly delivered from the law as a covenant of works, yet make conſtant uſe of it as a light; both a light to your head, to inform and convince you of your ſin and wickedneſs; and a light to your feet, to direct you in the paths of righteouſneſs.

2. There is the glaſs of a *renewed underſtanding* and a *rectified judgment* that the ſaints ſee their vileneſs in; when they have an impartial rule, and eye-ſalve with it, then they ſee themſelves as they are. If a man be blind, he cannot ſee himſelf, though he have never ſo clear a glaſs before him; *Take heed that the light that is in you be not darkneſs*, Luke xi. 35. Wherever ſpiritual light and wiſdom is, there is a clear ſight people have of themſelves.

3. There is the glaſs of *conſcience*, ſprinkled with the blood of Chriſt; this every true believer carries about with him. Whatever the underſtanding ſees, the conſcience comes and lays it at his door; and the conſcience being renewed and reconciled to God, it is then God's meſſenger to inform, to rouſe, to arraign, and condemn. Conſcience brings in all our unworthineſs and charges us with it; and then, what baſe and low thoughts have we of ourſelves! Oh! I deſerve to be in hell, ſays the ſoul! I deſerve no mercy at the hand of God!

4. There is the glaſs of *experience*, in which every ſaint looks on himſelf, and beholds he is vile. Why, the ſad experience he hath of a treacherous backſliding heart, notwithſtanding of all the love of God and Chriſt manifeſted in him; the ſad experience of the *law of the members, warring againſt the law of the mind, and bring-*

ing him into captivity to the law of sin and death, and making him cry many times, *O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of sin and death?* The sad experiences of many inward lustings, fightings, and reigning corruptions, and desperate departings from the Lord. Alas! how vile does the saint see himself in this glass.

5. There is the glass of the *holiness* of God, the glass of his infinite pure *glory*; Rev. iv. 8, 10. *When they cried, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God almighty, which was, and is, and is to come; then the twenty-four elders fell down before the throne.* What made Isaiah cry out of his uncleanness, but a view of this holy and infinitely pure glory of God. It was a view of the glorious holiness of Christ that made John the Baptist say, *O! I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose the latchets of his shoes;* and yet he hath Christ's testimony, that there was not a greater prophet than he. Oh! how vile is a man in his own eyes when he looks to himself in this glass.

6. There is the glass of the *love* of God, and of his *grace* and *mercy* in Christ: we may appeal to you that have experience of it, if any thing in the world hath a greater power to humble the soul, and lay it in the dust, than this, even the consideration of the infinite love of God; *I was a blasphemer, and a persecutor; yet I obtained mercy.* O such a monster of sin and wickedness as I am, and yet I have obtained mercy! O such a dog, such a devil, and yet I obtained mercy! O Sirs, when a child of God sees the grace of God in the glass of a manifestation, O how low does he sink in his own esteem! All the storms and blustering winds will not melt a rock of ice; but when the sun-beams arise upon it, how is it then melted and thawed? Thus nothing in the world melts and thaws the hard heart so much, as the hope and sense of divine love. When a child of God sees the grace of God in the glass of a commendation, as when Christ says to the soul a word like that, Song iv. 7. *Thou art all fair, my love, there is no spot in thee.* What! O what is this that a God is saying to the like of me, the blackest, the basest of all sinners! O! how low does self sink before the love and grace of God!

7. There is the glass of the *Spirit* of God shining upon the word of God into the understanding and the conscience, and giving light to see into these other glasses. As he is the *Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ*, and giving the knowledge of the law of God, the holiness of God, the love and grace of God in Christ; for the clearest eye, and the clearest glass both, will show nothing without light; so it is the Spirit of light that sets all these things home upon the soul, and makes it apply all to itself, and so it becomes *yet more vile* in its own eyes. I shall add,

8. There is the glass of the *example* of God, of God's humility, his stupendous humility and condescension. God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, humbling themselves for our good. —See how God the *Father* humbles himself, Psal. cxiii. 5, 6. *Who is like the Lord our God that dwells on high, who humbles himself to behold the things that are in heaven, and in the earth?* It is a step of great condescension, that he should apply himself in his providence to our wants and necessities; and especially, that he should concern himself so far with sinners, as to send the Son of his love out of his bosom to redeem them. —See how God the *Son* humbled himself when he stept out of his Father's bosom, out of the ivory palaces, where he was made glad from eternity; yea, though *he was in the form of God, and thought it no robbery to be equal with God, yet he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.* The glass of his suffering and humiliation, wherein he stept as far down as hell to quench the flames of infinite wrath, is a glass, indeed, wherein we may see sin to be infinitely evil, and ourselves to be ineffably vile. —See also how the *Holy Ghost* humbles himself; what a vast condescension is it for God, the Holy Ghost, to undertake to teach such indocible creatures as we, to wash such lepers as we, to purge such polluted souls, and to dwell in our hearts and bosoms, so full of unsavoury stems of hell? —— Hath a God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, given us such examples of humility, and shall not this move us to step a little down the hill? O proud sinner, does God humble himself in your sight, and will not you humble yourself before him? Can a man look into the glass of God's humility, and yet be proud?

O believers, keep these glasses in your eye, and walk humbly before him, who hath set the glass before you, wherein you have seen your vileness, and hath *told you all things that ever you did.* O maintain a deep and humble sense of your own vileness and baseness; and the rather, that such a fountain of sin and wickedness remains yet within you, as endangers you of doing all the same evils again that ever you did, even after he hath *told you of all that ever you did.* The body of sin and death that remains in you, will incline you to sins of all sorts and sizes: surely, then, you cannot walk too humbly and circumspectly. I know no extreme of self abasement you can run into, but will deserve the name of pride, rather than humility. —It will be pride, and not humility, in you to *deny any thing* that God hath done for you in the way of grace, because you are so vile in yourself; that smells as if you were not pleased that God should get all the glory, but incline that you should have had some of it. O proud blasphemer, come down from your altitude, and be content frankly to own and acknowledge that grace hath done much even for you. —Again, It will be pride, and not humility, for you to deny and refuse to *take Christ* by the hand, when you are down in the dust; or to take what help he offers you, even when you are lying in the mire. It was Peter's pride to say, *Lord, thou shalt never wash my feet;* and yet no doubt he took it for humility. —Again, it is pride, and not humility to refuse the *consolations* of the Spirit, because you are conscious of your own vileness and abomination: do not lay upon yourself a load of self-censuring more than God himself does; *I said in my haste,* says David, *I am cast off from before thine eyes,* Psal. xxxi. 22. David was in haste when he said it, and so may you say, Will God allow any favour or comfort to such as I am. It is pride and arrogancy to measure God by your thoughts, and to limit his mercy. —Again, it is pride, and not humility, for you to deny him the *praise* and *commendation* due to him from you, least you be not a fit hand for doing of it. Why, says one, I think I would desire to commend Christ to others, and speak to his praise, but I am afraid I prove a hypocrite, and prove a scandal to religion. Why, man, woman, whatever

come

come of you, let not Christ want his due, and it shall not fare the worse with you; therefore, *Walk humbly with thy God*; or, as the word may be read, *Humble thyself to walk with thy God.* It is best humility to be found in the *way* of *duty*; and it is pride to withdraw from it, upon any consideration of self-unworthiness.

[2.] I would exhort you to a *holy* walk, and thereby to commend and exalt Christ, as the woman of Samaria here did, saying, both with your lip and life, *Come see a man that told me all things that ever I did; is not this the Christ?* Where she both takes shame to herself, and gives glory to God in Christ: and as our chief happiness lies in the enjoyment of God, and our holiness lies in glorifying him, which is our chief end; so the way to glorify him, is to commend and exalt Christ with our heart, lips, and lives. The text leads me to direct you particularly to this part of holiness, namely, to commend him to all that you have opportunity to converse with, and to exalt him before the world. Hath he met with you as he did with this woman? O then commend him, and preach forth his excellency. Here is a way how every private Christian may be a preacher of Christ. This belongs not to ministers only, but even you who are followers of Christ, among the female sex, that cannot regularly be preachers of Christ in a ministerial way; yet, O poor woman, it is comfortable that you may be a successful teacher and preacher of Christ in a Christian charitative way, by your spiritual communion and conversation. O *woman*, commend Christ to your *husband:* O *man*, commend Christ to your *wife.* O *parents* and *masters*, commend him to your *children* and *servants.* O *believer*, commend Christ to your *neighbours* and *friends*, and all that you have regular access to.

1. Commend him *humbly* as this woman did; he *told me all things that ever I did:* she kept her eye upon her own baseness, and vileness, and unworthiness, which he had discovered to her. Saints have a double eye, *viz.* a carnal eye, and a spiritual eye; or the eye of sense, and the eye of faith. When they look upon themselves with the carnal eye of sense, then they forget all that ever they did, and what Christ told them and convinced them of, and are apt to gaze upon their own parts and gifts; and then self creeps in and spoils their pleasant exercise. But when they look upon themselves with the spiritual eye of faith, then they loath themselves, and commend Christ to purpose, and set him up to the highest, when self is sinking to the lowest in rememberance of all that ever they did, as he told them.

2. Commend him *highly* also, as this woman did commend him as the great God the searcher of hearts, the glorious JEHOVAH; when Arians and Atheists at this day are pulling him down from his throne, if it were possible. O set you him up, and commend him from your own experience, as the God-man that *told you all things that ever you did.* Commend him in *his offices*, saying, *Is not this the Christ*, the sealed and consecrated of the Father to be the Prophet, Priest, and King of Zion? Is not this JEHOVAH-TSIDKENU, *The Lord our righteousness?* Is not this JEHOVAH-ROPHI, *The Lord our physician?* Is not this JEHOVAH-SHAMMA, the IMMANUEL, *God with us?* Is not this the promised MESSIAS, in whom all the promises of God are *Yea* and *Amen?* Is not this the only Saviour, in whom all our salvation lies, being made of God *to us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption?* O there is more to say to his commendation, than the tongues of angels can trumpet forth to eternity. Again,

3. Commend him *zealously* as this woman did. *Come and see* HIM; it is not come and hear what I have to say of him; but, *Come see himself.* Let these whom you commend him to understand, that what you would be at, is, that they should never rest till they *see*, and *taste*, and *handle this word of life*; and know, to their experience, what you know. And thus also,

4. Commend him *feelingly* as this woman did, *Come see a man that told me all things that ever I did.* You should let strangers to Christ, know that what you speak of Christ, you have felt and experienced. If you know *the terrors of the Lord*, you will *persuade men*, with an aking heart, and with holy fear and trembling; and if you know the consolations of God, you will speak of them with holy triumph, and as if your heart were leaping within you. Experience is the mother of affection; commend him feelingly and affectionately. And yet,

5. Commend him *cautiously*, as you also find this woman did. I think it is also remarkable, in this short account that she gives of her converse with Christ, that she hid, in her own bosom, that special part of Christ's discourse to her that made most for her own consolation, particularly, that glorious word, wherein he clearly manifested himself to her, saying, *I that speak unto thee, am he.* No, she relates nothing of this; but tells them of that part of the conference which made most to her shame, as well as to his honour: *He told me all things that ever I did.* As if she was content, that Christ should be exalted on the ruins of her reputation; to let her name be debased, that his name might be exalted. Indeed, it tends most to her praise, that she commends Christ to them in that particular that made most to her shame; and she tells them no more of what he said. Here is wisdom and caution; and, indeed, there are some precious things that Christ speaks to his people when they are alone, that is not fit to be blazed abroad to every one, especially to these that are yet strangers to Christ. but, in commending Christ to them, it is safest to treat of these particulars that make most for the debasing of ourselves, and for the exalting of Christ.

6. And *lastly*, O commend him *practically*, as you see this woman did, while she says not, *Go see;* but, COME *see a man that told me all things that ever I did.* O believer, after a communion, if you have met with Christ, either now, or formerly, commend him, not only verbally, with your mouth; but practically, with your life, saying, in effect, *Come see him.* The life of commendation, is the commendation of the life; not of the lip, that says, *Go see;* but of the life, that says, *Come see:* your *Go see* will not convince any that you are in earnest; but a *Come see* may make them follow your example. When you say, Go, and pray; go, and praise; go, and worship; go, and do this and that excellent service; they only hear you: but when you go before them, and say, Come, and praise; come, and worship; come, and let us seek after Christ; then they both hear and see you; and are the more apt to come and see with you.

O believer, give evidence that you have met with Chriſt, by living *to* him as your end, and *on* him as your all; he *died that you ſhould not live to yourſelf, but to him*; and now he lives, that you may live upon him: *Becauſe I live*, ſays he, *ye ſhall live alſo.* O Sirs, let it be ſeen that you are three ſtory high; and that there is a new addition made to your ſpiritual ſtature by the light of a new diſcovery of Chriſt. The light of reaſon may make people good moral men; the light of gifts, good ſcholars; but the light of grace and experience, good and holy Chriſtians. O believer, beware of ſuch a practice and converſation, as will give occaſion to the world to ſay, Take up your *communicants*; they can tipple and drink, ſwear and debauch, as well as their neighbours. Oh! will you give occaſion to Chriſt to ſay, *He that ſat at table with me, and ate of my bread, hath lift up his heel againſt me. Theſe are the wounds I have got in the houſe of my friends.* O ſee that your converſation be a practical ſaying, *Come and ſee the man that hath told me all things that ever I did; Is not this the Chriſt?* And let the leading part of your practice ly in this, a going again to ſee Chriſt, and attending and depending upon him, in all the duties of religion, in order to your getting more and more acquaintance with him. For, as it is a ſaving diſcovery of Chriſt that works this ſelf-debaſing, Chriſt-exalting effect; ſo the more of this you get, it will fit you ſtill the more for commending of him humbly and practically.

Let your walk then appear to be a goſpel-walk, a walking in Chriſt, and a going ſtill again and again to ſeek him and ſee him, that you may be the more like unto him; and that *beholding as in a glaſs his glory*, you may be *changed into the ſame image from glory to glory.* It is but a dunghill on which the ſun ſhines, and yet reflects no beams; but the ſun ſhining on a ball of ſilver, or upon a bright glaſs, or a ſtill water, it will make another ſun by reflecting the beams of it. Thus the broken beams of the glory of God, ſhining on Moſes in the mount, made him come down full of glory. And, O Sirs, the more of the glory of Chriſt you ſee, the more of the glory of God's holineſs will appear about you, and the more of heaven; of which it is ſaid, they ſhall *be like him, for they ſhall ſee him as he is.* The more frequently you return to ſee Chriſt, the more fit will you be for reſiſting the ſnares and temptations you meet with; for your heart is a magazine of hell where corruption lies, like a barrel of gun-pouder, ready to take fire with the leaſt ſpark of a temptation, and to blow you up in the flames; but the more you come to ſee and converſe with Chriſt, the more you will get of the *living water*, which Chriſt gave to this woman; *the Spirit as a well of water, ſpringing up to everlaſting life:* and if you can get that barrel of pouder ſunk into the bottom of this well, or the flood of the Spirit to drown and overflow it, will you not then be more proof againſt all the ſparks of hell, and fiery darts of the devil? O believer, is not the Spirit promiſed as *floods upon the dry ground*, to drench the dry pouder? And does not your profeſſion oblige you to this attendance and dependance upon Chriſt for more and more of the Spirit? For what mean you when you ſay, *Is not this the Chriſt?* Do you not mean, is not this the Anointed of God; anointed with the Spirit, to give the Spirit: therefore let your conſtant recourſe be to him on this errand, taking as many along with you as you can, by the influence of your advice and example, ſaying, *Come ſee a man that told me all things that ever I did; Is not this the Chriſt?*

2*dly*, I would cloſe with a word to theſe that are yet *ſtrangers* to Chriſt, that never met with him, nor got ſuch a diſcovery of him as leads to this ſelf-abaſing and Chriſt-exalting exerciſe. And may I be allowed by you, O you that are believers in Chriſt in this houſe, to perſonate you in a few words, and ſpeak to theſe that are ſtrangers to Chriſt in your name. O Chriſtleſs ſinner, *Come ſee a man that hath told us all things that ever we did; Is not this the Chriſt?* The hearts of all that are acquaint with Chriſt, join with me in ſaying to you, Come ſee him, come ſee him: *That which we have heard and ſeen, declare we unto you, that you may have fellowſhip with us, in our fellowſhip with the Father and the Son, by the Spirit.* There are ſome here that can ſay, we have heard his voice telling us all things that ever we did; and we have ſeen his glory as the glory of the *only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth*; and, *is not this the Chriſt?* — Come ſee a man that hath *opened our eyes*, and ſometimes diſpelled all our clouds and darkneſs; *Is not this the Chriſt?* anointed to be a *Prophet* to teach and inſtruct the like of you. — Come ſee a man that hath *pardoned all our ſins*, and waſhed us in his blood; *Is not this the Chriſt?* anointed to be a *Prieſt* to juſtify guilty ſinners like you. — Come ſee a man that hath *ſubdued all our iniquities*, and ſometimes given a daſh to the power of ſin and Satan in us; *Is not this the Chriſt?* anointed to be a *King* to ranſom ſlaves of the devil like you. — O come ſee a man, of whom we can ſometimes ſay, he hath *healed all our diſeaſes*; *Is not this the Chriſt?* anointed to be a *Phyſician* for healing ſuch deſperate diſeaſes as yours are. — Come ſee a man that hath *convinced us of all our ſins* and vileneſs of heart and way, and drawn out our hearts to him as the God-man; *Is not this the Chriſt*; IMMANUEL, *God with us?* —— You need not ſay, where ſhall we ſee him? you have neither a journey to go down to hell, nor up to heaven; *the word is nigh*: and in the glaſs of this word he is to be ſeen. All the believers here can ſay, we never ſaw him any where but in this word of the goſpel, and in theſe public and private ordinances; and there he lies as open to your view as to ours. The word is the immediate object of our faith, wherein we ſee him; and when we hear him ſpeaking to us in his word, and hear with ſpiritual underſtanding, then we ſee him. To hear and know his voice, is all one with ſeeing him; it is in his word that we hear him telling how polluted and filthy we are, and thus all that ever we did; and hear him telling how fair and lovely he is, and thus ſhewing us that he is the *Chriſt*: ſo that we ſee him in what he tells us in his *word*; and as we have ſeen him there, ſo you may ſee him there; you have the ſame glaſs, the ſame Bible, the ſame word, the ſame promiſe, the ſame goſpel-mirror, to ſee him into that ever any ſaint on earth ſaw him in ſince he aſcended to heaven: *The word is nigh, even in thy heart, and in thy mouth.* O then, reſt not on our report of him only; for, what he hath told us concerning ourſelves, and concerning himſelf, will not profit you, if you do not come and ſee that our

our report is true. Come and see him your self, by believing and taking it on his own word, that he is the Christ, anointed for your behoof.

But what is this I am doing, speaking to you only in the name of believers? Here, (however base a worm I am) my office warrants me to speak to you in a greater name than theirs or ours; yea, in his name, the *latchet of whose shoes we are not worthy to unloose:* In his name, then, who is the glorious JEHOVAH, the God-man, that can tell you all things that ever you did, and thereby give you convincing evidence that he is the Christ, I call you to come and see him. He can tell you some things about you, O sinner, that the world does not know, and cannot tell you. And may I presume in his name to tell you something, perhaps, yet a secret, which if he would bless, you might therein hear him, telling you all things that ever you did. Let me allude to what past between Christ and this woman in the context, upon their first meeting; and, perhaps, there is more than an allusion in it.

Christ hath been at this occasion, offering you the living water; and if you be saying with this woman, whether in jest or earnest, *Sir, give me this water that I thirst not;* Christ is in effect, saying, *Go call your husband and come hither;* bring whatever husband you are in league with, that so your league and covenant with death, and your marriage with hell may be disannulled. If you be saying with this woman, *I have no husband;* why, then ye may hear Christ saying, in effect to you, *Thou hast well said, I have no husband;* for as long as you are not married to Christ you have no head, no husband, that can do you any service. But, *behold, you have had five husbands;* you have had many husbands; and *whom you are now married to is not your husband,* your true and lawful husband. O harlot sinner, you have been married unto many a black husband all your days; you have been married to the law, the first husband; married to your own righteousness and self-conceit; you have been married to the world; married to your lusts; yea, and married to the devil; your heart hath been joined to idols: and now, by this, he is telling you all that ever you did. He is telling you what you have been, and what you have done. Have you been a common strumpet, a common whoremonger, a common drunkard, a common swearer, a common Sabbath-breaker, a neglecter of prayer in secret, and in your family? Yea, you have been a hypocrite, an atheist, a blasphemer, a persecuter, a murderer, an injurious person, unjust, unfaithful to God and man, unmerciful, unbelieving, impenitent. He is telling you your secret faults, not only what you did in such a company, but what was that you did in such a private place. *When thou wast under the fig-tree I saw thee,* says Christ to Nathanael, in another case; so says Christ to you, when thou was under the dark shade, hiding thyself from the eyes of men, my eye was upon thee; under the cloud of night I saw thee; and, *can any hide himself in secret places that I cannot see? do not I fill heaven and earth, says the Lord?* Yea, I say, all that ever you thought, or did, or designed to do; and I saw into thy heart and wicked nature from whence thy atheistical practices did spring. And now, if by his word he be telling you all things that ever you did, then what do you say to this question, *Is not this the Christ?* Is he at one glance giving you a view of all your lewdness, all your baseness, all your vileness? Then do you perceive that he is a Prophet, when he tells you how many false husbands you have had? O! *Is not this the Christ?* Is not this the only true Husband with whom your soul should match? Is he the man that hath told you all things that ever you did? O then, *Will you go with this man?* Will you marry the man, the God-man, the Christ of God? He is content, even after all your whoredoms to receive you for a bride, even after you have been adulterously matched with the devil and your lusts; will you match with this man, and quit with all your base husbands that have been haleing and dragging you to hell, and say, *What have I to do any more with idols?* Oh! my five husbands have ruined me; my false unhappy matches can give me no comfort, either in death or through eternity, but rather contribute to my eternal condemnation. But here is a glorious wonderful match in my offer, *a man that hath told me all things that ever I did; Is not this the Christ,* that is anointed to save me from the guilt of all that ever I did, and to save me from sin and wrath. O then, is it a match? is it a bargain? Why, say you, Who is he that I may match with him? Where is this Christ? Behold, man, woman; he is saying to you in this word, *I that speak unto thee, am he;* though it be by a poor sinful messenger that I am speaking to you, says Christ, yet, *I that speak unto you am he.* And now, O hath he discovered himself to you in this word, and drawn out your heart to the match? Then think not strange that you meet with some interruption in his converse with you; but go your way and leave your water-pot behind you; and give up not only with your unlawful husbands, but even with your lawful works and endeavours in point of trust and confidence: for your own black righteousness, and doings of yours, will never draw a drop of living water to you; but let your heart say, *In the Lord only have I righteousness and strength; I will go in the strength of the Lord God, and make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only.* O may it be heard tell of you in the city of Dunfermline, as it was heard of this woman in the city of Samaria, that you have met with Christ; that by your words and walk henceforth you are determined to say, *Come see a man that told me all things that ever I did; Is not this the Christ?*

SERMON LIII.

GOD's *great Name*, the ground and reaſon of ſaving *great Sinners*.*

PSAL. cvi. 8. *Nevertheleſs, he ſaved them for his name's ſake.*

MY friends, the ſacramental cup that ſome of you have in view, is a cup of ſalvation; and thoſe that adventure to take that cup into their hand, had need to be perſons duly informed, and heartily concerned about ſalvation. The very firſt piece of heart-exerciſe in all that are effectually convinced and awakened to a ſenſe of ſin and fear of wrath, is that or the like queſtion, ariſing from the bottom of the heart; *Men and brethren, what ſhall I do to be ſaved?* Surely they are not fit for a communion-table, who have never yet come this length in religion, ſo as to be more concerned about ſalvation, and the reſolution of this queſtion, than ever they were about any temporal concern in the world; for ſuch as ſtand fair to be worthy communicants, they have come yet a greater length than this, *namely*, to get that queſtion reſolved to their ſatisfaction, and their minds ſpiritually enlightened in the knowledge of the method of ſalvation through Chriſt, ſo as to ſee upon what terms, and for what reaſon it is that God ſaves them; and particularly, that there is no reaſon why he ſhould ſave them, unleſs he bring the reaſon from himſelf, that it will not be for their ſake, but for his own. God's great end, in all his works, is the glory of his own name; and eſpecially his work of ſaving ſinners through Chriſt: and that which makes it a great work, is, becauſe his great name is ſo much concerned therein, and magnified thereby, that it is not ſo greatly glorified any other way as it is here. God propoſes, in this work, that the *loftineſs of man ſhould be brought down, and the Lord alone exalted*; and hence all whom he ſaves, he humbles them ſo low for their ſin and wickedneſs, as that to bring them to this acknowledgment, that, if even God ſave them, it will be owing, *not unto them, not unto them, but unto his own glorious name.* What thought and concern about ſalvation ye have, I know not; but if ye be of theſe that believe, to the ſaving of your ſoul, you will ſee ſo much of your own ſinfulneſs and guiltineſs before God, that you will be brought to deſpair of ſalvation in any other way, and upon any other account, than that which was his method of ſaving Iſrael of old; *Nevertheleſs, he ſaved them for his name's ſake.*

How this people ſinned we are told in the two preceding verſes; and how God ſaved them, we are told here in the text; *Nevertheleſs, he ſaved them for his name's ſake.* The more full hiſtory of their ſinning, even in the extremity of danger they were in, and of God's ſaving them at the Red-ſea, ye have Exod. xiv. throughout. And concerning this wonderful ſalvation, there are four things ye may notice in the words.

1. We have a *glorious Saviour* in the pronoun, *He*, namely, JEHOVAH, the great God, our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, the Angel of the covenant, that appeared to Moſes in the buſh, and delivered Iſrael by the hand of Moſes. He is the Saviour; even he that ſays, *Look unto me and be ſaved, all ye ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none elſe.*

2. The *grievous ſinners* whom he ſaved, in the word, *them; he ſaved* THEM, namely, the Iſraelites, his profeſſing people, when they were in great peril, having the Red-ſea before them, and the rude enemy behind them, and inacceſſible mountains on each ſide of them: in the greateſt extremity, and yet a ſinful people; ſinning againſt God even in that extremity; yet, *he ſaved them.*

3. The *great argument* that moved him to ſave them, or upon what account he thus appeared; it was, *for his name's ſake*; that is, for his *own* ſake, as Hezekiah prays to be ſaved from Sennacherib, Iſa. xxxvii. 20. *That all the kingdoms of the earth may know, that thou art the Lord, even thou only:* or, *for thy name's ſake*; that is, for thy *glory's* ſake, Pſal. lxxix. 9. *Help us, O God of our ſalvation, for the glory of thy name; and deliver us, and purge away our ſins, for thy name's ſake:* That is, alſo for thy *mercy's* ſake, for thy *goodneſs* ſake; or, becauſe they were called by his name; this is urged, Jer. xiv. 9.—*Thou, O Lord, art in the midſt of us, and we are called by thy name, leave us not.*

4. The *marvellous nature* and *circumſtance* of this ſalvation, in the word, *Nevertheleſs*; the glory of divine mercy is herein magnified, that he ſaved them *for his name's ſake*, with a *non obſtante*, with a *nevertheleſs*; that is, notwithſtanding all their ſin, though their ſin cried to God, not to ſave them, but to damn them; not to help them, but to deſtroy them; *Nevertheleſs, he ſaved them for his name's ſake*, notwithſtanding their provocations.

OBSERV. *That when God ſaves ſinners, or a ſinful people, he does it for his* NAME'S SAKE, *notwithſtanding their provocation, whereby they forfeit his help, and deſerve deſtruction.*

I ſhall *firſt* premiſe ſome general poſitions for clearing the text and doctrine. *Secondly*, Illuſtrate the truth of the doctrine from ſome parallel texts of ſcripture.

1ſt, I ſhall premiſe ſome general poſitions for clearing the text and doctrine.

Firſt poſition. "That the ſalvation and temporal deliverance that God, for his *name's ſake*, wrought for Iſrael of old, in bringing them out of Egypt through the Red-ſea to Canaan, was typical of the great ſalvation from ſin and wrath, to eternal life, through Jeſus Chriſt;"

* This ſubject was finiſhed in one ſermon, preached at Carnock, July 18*th*, 1730. before the adminiſtration of the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper. It hath undergone three editions.

which

which ſpiritual and eternal ſalvation this text itſelf leads me to ſpeak of, not excluding the temporal deliverance, and remarkable appearances of divine providence, for the viſible church in general. As Iſrael's ſin and provocation, and the judgments that came on them for the ſame, was our example and warning-piece, 1 Cor. x. 6.; and great deſtructions *happened for enſamples* and types, ver. 11.; *And written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come:* ſo the great deliverances God wrought for them, were types of the great ſalvation that God works for ſinners, through Jeſus Chriſt, to the praiſe of the glory of his grace; or, *For his name's ſake.*

Second Poſition. "Many unconverted perſons, in the viſible church, may be delivered from temporal judgments, and ſaved of God only in outward reſpects, and that *for his name's ſake;* ſo doubtleſs, many unconverted perſons were among the Iſraelites; yea, moſt of them gave diſcoveries that they were ſo." They forfeited his help in many reſpects; yet he ſaved them in many reſpects, *For his name's ſake.* See Ezek. xxxvi. 22, 23. *Thus ſaith the Lord, I do not this for your ſakes, O houſe of Iſrael; but for my holy name's ſake:—Not for your ſakes do I this, ſaith the Lord God; be it known unto you.* Their ſlavery was ſo great, that it opened the mouth of the heathen, as if the God of Iſrael were no God; therefore God, *for his name's ſake*, helped them. See alſo Deut. ix. 5. Iſrael was bad enough, but the heathen were no better, but rather worſe; therefore, *for his name's ſake*, he appeared. Many whom God will not be merciful to in the world, may yet, *for his name's ſake*, be delivered in time.

Third Poſition. "Gracious ſouls do too much forfeit God's help in times of danger, and deſerve to be forſaken of God, and expoſed to miſery; yet, *for his name's ſake*, he ſaved them:" this is their acknowledgement, as you ſee in Jacob, Gen. xxxii. 10. *I am not worthy of the leaſt of all thy mercies.* Even ſo does the church acknowledge, Ezra ix. 8, 13. and Lam. iii. 22. *It is of the Lord's mercy that we are not conſumed.* And again,

Fourth Poſition. "God may puniſh his people dolefully, whom yet, *for his name's ſake*, he will not deſtroy;" as in theſe inſtances juſt now recited. See Jer. xxx. 10. God may puniſh his people for their ſin ſeverely, whom yet he will ſave eternally, *for his name's ſake;* yea, and puniſh them more than others, Amos iv. 6.—13. and iii. 2. *You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will puniſh you for all your iniquities.* Thoſe whom, *for his name's ſake*, he ſaved from ſin to eternity, he will make them feel it to be an evil and bitter thing in time.

Fifth Poſition is, "God may ſave a viſible church, in many outward reſpects, for the ſake of his name, which he reſolves to magnify, eſpecially, in behalf of his inviſible remnant among them, his hidden ones;" Iſa. i. 10. *Except the Lord of hoſts had left unto us a very ſmall remnant, we ſhould have been as Sodom, and we ſhould have been like unto Gomorrah.* Many are ſaved with a temporal ſalvation, for the ſake of thoſe whom God reſolves, *for his name's ſake*, to ſave with eternal ſalvation. Hence it is ſaid, with reſpect to the day of outward calamity, that, *for the elect's ſake, theſe days ſhall be ſhortened.* The wicked are more obliged to God's people than they are aware of. Hence,

Sixth Poſition is, "That that ſalvation, wherein God's name is moſt concerned, is ſalvation in Chriſt Jeſus to eternal life;" wherein he brings ſinners *from darkneſs to light, and from the power of Satan unto God;* from death to life; from a hell of ſin and miſery to a heaven of holineſs and happineſs.—Having propoſed theſe things ſhortly for clearing the text and doctrine in the general; before I proceed to the particular parts thereof, I ſhall,

2*dly*, Prove the doctrine by ſcripture inſtances; Ezek. xx. 8, 9. Read 1 Sam. xii. 22. Iſa. xlviii. 22, 25. Conſider, for this purpoſe, God's *promiſes;* ſuch as Iſa. xlviii. 8, 9, 11. His peoples *prayers;* ſuch as Jer. xiv. 7. But an induction of particulars, to this purpoſe, may afterwards occur for the confirmation.

Now having premiſed ſome things, and confirmed the doctrine, the method may be as follows.

I. To enquire what is that *name of God*, for the ſake of which he ſaves.
II. What it is for God to ſave for his *name's ſake.*
III. What *ſalvation* he works for his name's ſake.
IV. What is imported in this *nevertheleſs;* or, in God's ſaving with a *notwithſtanding;* and ſo over what impediments, real provocations, and ſeeming impoſſibility he brings about this ſalvation for his name's ſake.
V. Offer ſome *reaſons* why he thus ſaves for his name's ſake.
VI. Deduce ſome *inferences* from the whole for the application.

I. I am to enquire what is the NAME *of God*, for the ſake of which he ſaves. And,

1. By the name of God we may underſtand his *being*, or God himſelf; Deut. xxviii. 58. *That thou mayeſt fear this glorious and dreadful name,* THE LORD THY GOD. Our Lord Jeſus commands his apoſtles, to *go and teach*, [or, DISCIPLINE] *all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt*, Matth. xxviii. 19. Whatever then is intended by the name of God, each of the adorable perſons of the glorious Trinity, are equally concerned therein. It is a name common to them all; and in this ſenſe they have not diſtinct or diverſe names; for it is not ſimply the name Father, and the name Son, and the name Holy Ghoſt that is intended, but the name of God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, one God. By the name of God then, is meant God himſelf; and to ſave, *for his name's ſake*, is to ſave for his own ſake, as he ſays, Iſa. xliii. 20. *I, even I am he that blotteth out thy tranſgreſſions, for mine own ſake.* We find the names of things taken for the things themſelves; *A few names in Sardis;* that is, a few perſons.

2. By the name of God, we may underſtand the *authority* of God; that is, his abſolute right and power to do what he pleaſes with his own creatures. He hath right to order, and power to execute, whatſoever he will concerning them; *My counſel ſhall ſtand, and I will do all my pleaſure*, Iſa. xlvi. 10.; ſo that when he ſaves, *for his name's ſake*, he ſaves for the ſake of his ſovereign will and pleaſure, and for manifeſting his own abſolute authority; his right and might to effectuate what he pleaſes.

3. By the name of God, we may underſtand the *Chriſt* of God; for in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt is

is the whole name and authority of God; Exod. xxiii. 21. *Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions; for my name is in him.* But in case any should think, Is it not a part of God's name, that he *pardons iniquity, transgression, and sin?* Why then is it said of Christ, *He will not pardon your iniquity, for my name is in him?* I answer, The pardon here is not a pardon that respects *condemnation*, and freedom from hell; but *castigation*, as a father is said to pardon a child, when he will not *spare the rod*, nor forbear to *chasten:* thus he will not pardon your iniquity, without taking vengeance on your inventions; *for my name is in him;* i. e. my *authority* is in him. Christ is the very name of God; and when he pardons, *for his name's sake*, he pardons for his Christ's sake: thus the Old-Testament saints, as they used to pray to be saved of God, *for his name's sake*, so they sometime pray for his *word's sake*, 2 Sam. vii. 21.; that is, for Christ's sake, the *Word that was made flesh*; for the same prayer is rendered for thy *Servant's sake*, 1 Chron. xvii. 19. To this purpose, Psal. lxxxiv. 9. David's prayer is, *Behold, O God, our shield; look upon the face of thine Anointed:* And Daniel's prayer is, *for the Lord's sake*, Dan. ix. 17. And, O but God hath done much, and will do much for Christ; because his *name is in him*, and in him he is well-pleased and reconciled.

4. By the name of God we are to understand, the *attributes* of God. I shall mention some of these.

(1.) His *power* is his name, and for the sake of that he saves, as in the text; *He saved them for his name's sake, that he might make his mighty power known.* Compare Exod. xix. 16. and Rom. ix. 17. For this cause God *raised up Pharaoh, that he might shew his mighty power in him, that his name might be declared throughout all the earth, even his mighty power in saving of Israel out of his hand.* This argument Moses makes use of to divert God's threatened wrath, Num. xiv. 15, 16. This is the name God manifests to Abraham, Gen. xvii. 1. *I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be thou perfect.* And the *three children*, Dan. iii. 17. have recourse to this name; *Our God whom we serve, is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us.* If there be any thing that stands in the way of the accomplishment of his promises, he is able to remove it; so Abraham's faith fixed here, Rom. iv. 21. *Being thus persuaded, that he that had promised, was able also to perform.* When God saves *for his name's sake*, it is for the sake of his power, to shew, *That he is able to do above all that we are able to ask or think;* that he is able to do above our wants, above our deserts, above our prayers, and above our thoughts: we cannot want more than he can give; we cannot pray for so much as he can bestow; we are not able to think what he can do. God's power is a part of his name, that faith may take hold of for salvation, and flee unto, even when there is no explicite view of his will; thus faith the leper, *If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.* I cannot tell if he will help me, a soul may say, but I know he is able, and I am called to trust in his powerful name, and to take hold of his strength, Isa. xxvi. 4. chap. xxvii. 5. While you can do no better, it is good to trust in his power, and put his will in his own discretion, and refer that to himself; that soul is not far behind.

(2.) His *mercy* is another part of his name: when he saves, *for his name's sake*, he saves for his mercy's sake; *Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy*, Micah vii. 18. *He is the Lord; the Lord God merciful and gracious*, Exod. xxxiii. 6. He so far delights in mercy, that *mercy rejoices over judgment*, James ii. 13. Hence the psalmist's prayer is, Psal. vi. 4. *Return, O Lord, deliver my soul for thy mercy's sake:* and Psal. lxxix. 8. *O remember not against us former iniquities; let thy tender mercy speedily prevent us, for we are brought very low:* and ver. 9. *Help, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name; deliver us, and purge away our sins, for thy name's sake.* David *had fainted, unless he had believed to see the goodness of the Lord*, Psal. xxvii. 13. Out of a sense of misery, we ought to go to the fountain of mercy, and so look to be saved *for his name's sake.*

(3.) His *wisdom* is another part of his name; *The Lord is a God of knowledge, by him actions are weighed*, 1 Sam. ii. 3.: Yea, *his understanding is infinite.* The psalmist takes up the wisdom of God as his name, and for the sake thereof seeks to be led and guided; *For thy name's sake lead me and guide me*, Psal. xxxi. 3. God, in saving sinners, through Christ, has such a regard to his name, as a God of infinite wisdom, that in this method of salvation, the *manifold wisdom of God is shown*, Eph. iii. 10.

(4.) His *truth* and *faithfulness* is another part of his name, for the sake of which he saves and shews mercy; his *mercies are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness*, Lam. iii. 3. It is declared to be one of the capital letters of his name, Exod. xxxiv. 6. *Abundant in goodness and truth:* and hence, how often did God remember, toward Israel, his promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, notwithstanding their sin? Read Psal. cv. 8, 9, 10. 2 Kings xiii. 23. And, O what will not God do for his truth's sake, for his promise's sake! for, *he is not man that he should lye.* He that, for his mercy's sake, makes the promise, will, for his truth's sake accomplish it; *Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old*, Micah vii. 20. In saving sinners, through Christ, his truth is exceedingly manifested: his truth in fulfilling the threatenings of the law upon the Surety, in the room of the sinner; his truth in fulfilling the promises of the gospel, that are all *Yea* and *Amen* in Christ; his truth and faithfulness in fulfilling the promise made to Christ in the eternal compact; which may be part of the meaning of that word, Rom. iii. 25. *To declare his righteousness for the remission of sin, through* that *propitiation:* when God forgives sin through his blood, he declares his righteousness and faithfulness in his promise made to Christ, with reference to his *seeing his seed*, upon his giving *his soul an offering for sin*, Isa. liii. 10.

(5.) His *justice* is another part of his name, for the sake of which he saves, and works salvation. The justice of God may be viewed as either *retributive* or *vindictive: Retributive* justice is that for the sake of which he saves either more generally, or in a more special way: In a *general* way, even some wicked sinners in the visible church may be unjustly oppressed by their enemies that are more wicked than they, as Israel was by the Egyptians; therefore God righteously took vengeance on them, and delivered

livered Iſrael. In a *ſpecial* way it may be viewed in the ſaints themſelves, who are ſinners; yet, becauſe objects of promiſed mercy in Chriſt Jeſus, therefore he ſaves and delivers for his righteouſneſs and juſtice' ſake; *Quicken me, O Lord, for thy name's ſake: for thy righteouſneſs ſake bring my ſoul out of trouble*, Pſal. cxliii. 11. Thus he is ſaid to *uphold* his *people with the right-hand of* his *righteouſneſs*, Iſa. xli. 10.—His *vindictive* juſtice is alſo that for the ſake whereof he ſaves, upon the ſuppoſition of its having got full ſatisfaction; and ſo we ordinarily underſtand, Rom. iii. 25. *Whom God hath ſet forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteouſneſs, for the remiſſion of the ſins that are paſt, through the forbearance of God.* It is ordinary for people to ſeek to be ſaved for his mercy's ſake; but believing views of juſtice ſatisfied, and God reconciled in Chriſt, would make the ſoul as freely and boldly ſeek to be ſaved for juſtice's ſake in and through Chriſt the atonement, in whom that name of God, *Juſtice*, hath more glorious ſatisfaction than ever it will have in the damnation of ſinners. This is expreſly God's name, Exod. xxxiv. 7. *Keeping mercy for thouſands, forgiving iniquity, tranſgreſſion, and ſin, and that will by no means clear the guilty*; that is, in diſpenſing mercy, he will be ſo far from diſpenſing with juſtice, that, by no means, will he ſhew mercy in pardoning ſin to the ſinner, without the higheſt reſpect to juſtice in puniſhing ſin in the Surety, in whom his vindictive juſtice, taking vengeance on ſin, is ſo cleared and vindicated, that when he pardons ſin, through Chriſt, he is as juſt in pardoning ſin as he is merciful in doing ſo; for he has ſo ordained it, to the glory of his great name, that *he might be juſt, and the juſtifier of them that believe in Jeſus.*

(6.) His *holineſs* is a part of his name, for the ſake of which he ſaves. This is declared to be his name, Exod. xv. 11. *Who is like unto thee, glorious in holineſs.* Iſa. lvii. 15. *The high and lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity, whoſe name is holy.* For the ſake of this he pities and ſaves, Ezek. xxxvi. 21. *But I had pity, for my holy name's ſake, which the houſe of Iſrael had profaned among the heathen:* hence read, ver. 22. *I do not this for your ſake, but for mine holy name's ſake.* God, in ſaving ſinners, through Chriſt's righteouſneſs, hath his holineſs, in the precept of the law, as much magnified by the active obedience of Chriſt, as his juſtice in the threatening of the law is magnified by his paſſive obedience.

I might here mention the *providence* of God as a part of his name, his watchful care over his people; *For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro, to ſhew himſelf ſtrong in their behalf*, 2 Chron. xvi. 9. He rules and over-rules all for their good.—I might mention his *titles*, whereby he is deſigned; ſuch as, *The Lord of hoſts; the mighty God; the King of kings.*—And I might likewiſe notice his *word*, which he is ſaid to *magnify above all his name.*—But, in a word, as the *name* is that by which any thing or perſon is known; ſo the *name of God* is the *very thing whereby he makes himſelf known*; whether it be in his *titles*, *attributes*, *ordinances*, *words*, or *works*. He hath made himſelf known by his work of creation and providence; but a thouſand times more clearly in the work of redemption and ſalvation: herein appear, not only thoſe attributes that ſhine in creation and providence, but alſo ſome perfections of the divine nature, that would not have been diſplayed, in caſe the firſt covenant had ſtood; ſuch as the infinite *mercy* and *patience* of God towards guilty ſinners: nor ſuch a pitch of condeſcenſion as he hath here diſcovered; nay, nor any other attribute had ſhined forth in ſuch luſtre and beauty as here it doth: therefore, while Satan thought to have deleted the name of God, that he wrote upon the creature at firſt, behold how infinite wiſdom counteracts him, and makes that the occaſion of making his name more known than before. Theſe attributes of God, therefore, that are diſplayed in the new covenant of grace, and exerted in the ſalvation of ſinners according to that covenant, is that name of God that is principally here to be conſidered.

II. The *ſecond* thing was, To ſhew, *what it is* for God to SAVE, *for his name's ſake*; or, for the ſake of his name. Having cleared what his name is; What is it, I ſay, for God to SAVE, *for his name's ſake?*

In general, beſide what has been ſaid, God's ſaving, *for his name's ſake*, imports, I think, his making his name the ALL of our ſalvation, becauſe the ſinful creature is nothing, hath nothing, will do nothing, can do nothing in the affair of his own ſalvation; therefore God himſelf will *be all*, and *do all*: Iſa. lix. 16. and Iſa. lxiii. 5. *He looked and there was none to help: therefore his own arm brought ſalvation.* Thus God deſigned to ſhew himſelf to be *all in all.*—More particularly,

1. For God to SAVE, *for his name's ſake*, is to make his name the *motive* whence he ſaves. What moved him to ſave any guilty ſinner? It is his name; his own mercy moved him; his own grace moved him; his own bowels of pity and compaſſion moved him; his own love moved him; his own name moved him: *God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in him, ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life.*

2. For God to SAVE, *for his name's ſake*, is to make his name the *reaſon* why he ſaves. Though his name be the motive, yet ſome may think there is ſurely ſome reaſon drawn from the creature: Arminians ſay, that it was the *foreſight of faith and good works*; that he *foreſaw ſome would be better than others*, and *improve the means better*; and for this reaſon he would ſave them: but the word of God ſays otherwiſe, Deut. vii. 7, 8. *God loves ſinners, becauſe he loves them.* His ſovereign mercy is the cauſe of his ſhewing mercy; *I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy*, Rom. ix. 15.

3. To SAVE, *for his name's ſake*, is to make his name the *matter* of their ſalvation, in as much as his name itſelf is their ſalvation. His name is their *ſtrong tower*, Prov. xviii. 10. His name, *the eternal God himſelf*, is their *refuge*, Deut. xxxiii. 27. Inſomuch, that whom he ſaves, they have not only ſalvation *from* him, but *in* him; *Iſrael ſhall be ſaved* IN *the Lord with an everlaſting ſalvation*, Iſa. xlv. 17. Chriſt, therefore, who calls us to *look to him, and be ſaved*, he himſelf is the ſalvation of the ſinner. *Now mine eyes have ſeen thy ſalvation*, ſaid old Simeon, Luke ii. 29. *Behold, thy ſalvation cometh*, ſays God, Iſa. lxii. 11. Chriſt is not only the helper, but the help itſelf; *O Iſrael, thou haſt deſtroyed thyſelf, but in me is thine help*, Hoſ. xiii. 9. See Pſal. xviii. 2. *The Lord is my rock, and my fortreſs, and my deliverer: my God, my ſtrength, in whom I will truſt; my buckler, and the*

the horn of my salvation, and my high tower. He is given for a covenant of the people, a light to the Gentiles, Isa. xlix. 6, 7. Again,

4. To SAVE, *for his name's sake*, is to make his name the *means* of salvation; and so it must be, if his name itself be the *all* of our salvation. By what means doth he save? It is even by his name: *By whom doth Jacob arise but by the God of Jacob?* By whom are sinners saved, but by the name of God? by the Christ of God? And *there is none other name given under heaven whereby we must be saved*, Acts iv. 12. *No man comes to the Father, but by him as the way*, by him as the Leader, and as the name of God.

5. To SAVE, *for his name's sake*, is to make his name the *measure* of our salvation: he will, therefore, save as far as his name and honour is engaged by promise to Christ, or to his people in him; 1 Kings viii. 56. Read also Josh. xxi. 45. *There failed not ought of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass.* Thus God saves his people in particular cases, as far as his name, and faithfulness, and truth is concerned; *God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will, with the temptation, also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it*, 1 Cor. x. 13.

6. To SAVE, *for his name's sake*, is to make his name the *end* of our salvation, even the glory of his name; the great end he proposes in saving, is even *the praise of the glory of his grace*, Eph. i. 6. The praise of the glory of his wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth. This is the great end of God in his work of saving sinners through Christ; *This people have I formed for myself, they shall shew forth my praise*, Isa. xliii. 21. Christ's grand prayer, when he was accomplishing the work of our salvation and redemption, was, *Father, glorify thy name.* And here let us stay a little, and admire the great design that God had in hand in saving, *for his name's sake.* God's chief end herein being the glory and honour of his name, What is that? Why,

(1.) In saving, *for his name's sake*, he designs the *manifestation* of his name, the declaration of his name, as it is said, Rom. iii. 25. *To declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;* to make known his name in every salvation of Israel, or of his church, his great design still is, that his name may be known, declared, published, and proclaimed.

(2.) In saving, *for his name's sake*, he designs the *vindication* of his name. His name is abused and reproached in the world, which is filled with harsh thoughts of God, as if he were either unjust, or unmerciful; therefore, in saving, *for his name's sake*, he will vindicate his name, *That he may be just when he speaks, and clear when he judges*, Psal. li. 4. That he may appear to be not only merciful, in saving; but also just, and the *justifier of them that believe in Jesus*: and as just in saving believing sinners, that flee to his name, as he is just in damning unbelieving impenitent sinners.

(3.) In saving, *for his name's sake*, he designs the *exaltation* of his name; *I will be exalted among the heathen; I will be exalted in the earth*, Psal. xlvi. 10. He designs that *the right-hand of the Lord should be exalted in doing valiantly*, Psal. cxviii. 16.; and *make mention that his name is exalted*, Isa. xii. 4. *Therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy on you*, Isa. xxx. 18. Wherefore hath God exalted Christ to his right-hand, but that his name may be exalted in him? *Who being in the form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God: that at the name* [or, IN *the name*] *of Jesus, every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth*, Phil. ii. 6, 10. On which account, God hath highly exalted him to the glory of God the Father. And wherefore does he save, and glorify, and exalt any sinner through Christ, but that his name may be glorified and exalted?

(4.) In saving sinners, *for his name's sake*, he designs the *pleasure* of his name; that his name should not only be exalted but delighted in, because *it delights in shewing mercy*, through Christ, Micah vii. 18. We read of *the good pleasure of his will*, Eph. i. 5.; *the good pleasure of his goodness*, 2 Thes. i. 11. God being infinitely well-pleased in Christ, he takes pleasure in giving out of his goodness through him; and he saves to the good pleasure of his name, and to the contentment of all his attributes; to the good pleasure of his goodness, the good pleasure of his grace, the good pleasure of his holiness, the good pleasure of his justice, the good pleasure of his truth and faithfulness: all the perfections of God are well-pleased; *Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other*, Psal. lxxxv. 10.

(5.) In saving sinners, *for his name's sake*, he designs the *aggrandizing* of his name; I mean, that his name should not only be glorified and exalted, but magnified to the highest, according to the song of the angel upon the coming of the Saviour; *Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, and good-will towards men*, Luke ii. 14. His name is magnified to the highest in this way of salvation through Christ. Damnation is but the lowest way, wherein God is glorified of sinners, and it is to their eternal ruin. Let sinners consider this, that they may not go on in the road to hell, but may fall in love with that way, wherein God is glorified and magnified to the highest. For, herein God is glorified by the highest person, his eternal Son, in his doing and dying, and rising and reigning, and mediating at his right-hand; glorified in the highest place, with the highest praise, in the highest manner, and to the highest degree.

(6.) In saving sinners, *for his name's sake*, he designs the *eternalizing* of his name; *It shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off*, Isa. lv. 13.: that is, that his name may be celebrated with Halelujahs of praise to all eternity: *The glory of the Lord shall endure for ever: the Lord shall rejoice in his works*, Psal. civ. 31. *Thy name, O Lord, endureth for ever, and thy memorial throughout all generations*, Psalm cxxxv. 13. Christ, the Saviour, was *set up from everlasting*, that the sinner saved of God in him might praise him to everlasting: *His name shall endure for ever;* and his *ransomed shall come to Zion with everlasting songs, saying, Salvation to our God that sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever*, Rev. vii. 11, 12.

QUEST. *What is it in the name of God that he hath such regard to, when he saves for his name's sake?*

ANSW. He hath regard to his name in all the *parts* of it that I have already mentioned, and in every attribute, insomuch, that no attribute shall be injured, but every one of them extolled more than another.——He also hath regard to his name in all the *properties* and *qualities* of it.

† The reason of this assertion was accounted for above, p. 322, 454. to which we refer.

it.—His name is a *glorious* name; and, in saving sinners, through Christ, he hath regard to the glory of it; that it be glorified in the manner I have hinted at.—His name is a *great* name; and, in saving sinners, through Christ, he hath regard to the greatness of it, by bringing about such a great salvation. And, *what will he not do for his great name?*—His name is a *holy* name; and therefore, in saving sinners, through Christ, he hath regard to the holiness of it; not only in sanctifying all whom he saves, but in saving, by a righteousness, whereby his holy law is not only *fulfilled*, but *magnified and made honourable*; in providing a Saviour of such infinite dignity, that he casts a lustre on the law, by his obedience to it.—His name is a *dreadful* name; and therefore, in saving sinners, through Christ, he hath such a regard to the dreadfulness of it, that his most dreadful vengeance lighted upon sin, in the person of the Surety, the Saviour, when he became a sacrifice for sin.—His name is a *precious* name; and therefore, in saving sinners, he hath such a regard to the manifesting the preciousness of it, as to make it appear in the precious blood of Christ, which is the price of salvation.—His name is a *blessed* name, and he cannot be more blessed and happy than he is in himself; yet, to manifest the blessedness of his name, he saves sinners, so as to show he loves not to be blest and happy alone, but will have *men to be blest in him*, that *all nations may call him blessed*.—His name is a *wonderful* name, a mysterious and unsearchable name; and therefor it is said, Isa. ix. 6. *His name shall be called, Wonderful.* Angels have been prying into this depth so many thousand of years, and yet are not at the bottom of it, but still are prying into the mystery of the gospel salvation through Christ; and such is the regard God hath to this wonderful name, in saving sinners, that every part of their salvation is a miracle and wonder, manifesting the wisdom of God in a mystery. —In a word, his name is an *everlasting* and *unchangeable* name; and it is his regard thereunto that makes him, by the means of his everlasting righteousness, bring about this everlasting salvation.

III. The *third* thing proposed, in the general method, was, To shew what SALVATION he works, *for his name's sake.* Salvation is either temporal, spiritual, or eternal; and though God, *for his name's sake*, works many *temporal* deliverances for his church and people, as you see in Israel here, vers. 9, 10, 11, 21, 22, 43, 45, 46. and all this *for his name's sake:* also, he saved the church of Scotland many a time, *for his name's sake*: he saved us from Paganism, *for his name's sake*, when he first sent gospel light to our land; he saved us from Popery, *for his name's sake*, at the glorious Reformation, which was here carried on by solemn National Covenants, that were the glory of our land, whatever contempt is now put upon them; he saved us from Prelacy, and arbitrary power and tyranny, at the merciful Revolution, *for his name's sake*; and he hath saved us, from time to time, from many attempts of enemies that were seeking to raze us to the foundation, as some are subtilly doing at this day, by damnable errors, which strike at the foundation of all religion; I mean, especially Arian blasphemy †: but, whatever church salvation, or temporal salvation of this sort to a visible church, God works, *for his name's sake*, yet it is that *spiritual* and *eternal* salvation, typified by Israel's salvation, that the name of God is most concerned with and exalted by; therefore, I especially speak of this *everlasting* salvation in Christ.

And therefore, if the question be, *What* SALVATION *of this sort he works, for his name's sake?*

I *answer*, There is no *part* of this great salvation but the name of God is engraven upon it, as being what he works, *for his name's sake.* I shall offer a few instances thereof: from election to glorification, all the parts of salvation that ly betwixt these two words, *from everlasting to everlasting*, are brought about *for his name's sake.*

1. Wherefore did he *elect* any sinners from eternity? It was *for his name's sake*, to shew his absolute sovereignty in making vessels of mercy, of whom he pleased; *And that he might make known the riches of his glory to them*, Rom. ix. 23. *He hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love. Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ, to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace*, Eph. i. 4, 5, 6.

2. Wherefore did he *redeem* any sinners by the blood of his eternal Son? It was *for his name's sake*; Eph. i. 7. *In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; wherein he hath abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence.* The redemption of Israel is designed and ordered for the glory of the God of Israel; *Sing, O ye heavens,—for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel*, Isa. xliv. 22.

3. Wherefore doth he *call* any sinners effectually? It is *for his name's sake:* this is illustrated at large by the apostle; *You see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of this world*, &c. 1 Cor. i. 26,—31. *He hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which he purposed in Christ before the world began*, 2 Tim. i. 9. Hence the saints ascribe their conversion and quickening to the name of God, and to the grace of God; *By grace I am what I am*, says Paul, 1 Cor. xv. 10. *Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name be the glory*, Psal. cxv. 1.

4. Wherefore doth he *justify* and *pardon* any guilty sinner? It is even *for his name's sake*; Isa. xliii. 25. *I, even I am he that blotteth out thy transgression for my name's sake.* And Rom. iii. 24, 25, 26. *We are justified freely by his grace, through thy redemption that is in Jesus Christ, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness, for the remission of sins that are past*, &c. Again,

5. Wherefore doth he *adopt* any child of wrath into his family? It is *for his name's sake*; Eph. i. 5. *We are predestinate to the adoption of children, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace.* Again,

6. Wherefore doth he *sanctify* any filthy sinner? It is even *for his name's sake*; 1 Cor. i. 30. *Christ is made of God to us sanctification, that no flesh might glory in his sight:* but that *he that glorieth might glory in the Lord.* And hence all the great things promised in the covenant of grace, Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26, 27. Among the rest, *His putting his Spirit within them, and causing them to walk in his*

his ſtatutes, are ſaid to be done *for his holy name's ſake*, ver. 22.

7. Wherefore will he *carry on the good work*, which he hath begun, and never utterly leave his people, nor ſuffer them altogether to depart from him? Why? It is even *for his name's ſake*, and his promiſe' ſake; Jer. xxxii. 40. *I will make an everlaſting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their heart, and they ſhall not depart from me.* Heb. xiii. 5. *I will never leave thee, nor forſake thee* finally.

8. Wherefore doth he *glorify* at laſt? It is *for his name's ſake*, who is the giver both of *grace and glory*, Pſal. lxxxiv. 11. *It is your Father's good pleaſure to give you the kingdom. The gift of God is eternal life, though Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.*——Thus every part of ſalvation, from firſt to laſt, is wrought, *for his name's ſake. The Lord is a rock, and his work is perfect:* he begins, *for his name's ſake*; carries on, *for his name's ſake*; and completes the work, *for his name's ſake*, that the head-ſtone of ſalvation may be laid on with ſhoutings of *grace, grace unto it.*

As all the *parts* of ſalvation, ſo all the *means* of ſalvation, are granted *for his name's ſake.*—Is right *hearing* a mean of ſalvation? Well, This is what he gives, *for his name's ſake*, according to that promiſe, John x. 16. *Other ſheep I have that are not of this fold, them alſo I muſt bring, and they ſhall hear my voice.*—Is *prayer* a mean? Well, right praying is what he alone grants, *for his name's ſake*, according to the promiſe, Zech. xii. 10. *I will pour out the Spirit of grace and ſupplication.* —Is *faith* a mean of ſalvation? Yea, and it is a part of ſalvation alſo, which God gives, *for his name's ſake*, according to his word, Eph. ii. 8. *By grace you are ſaved, through faith; and that not of yourſelves: it is the gift of God.*—Is *repentance* a leading part of ſalvation? This is alſo what he gives, *for his name's ſake*, on the back of faith, as a fruit thereof, according to his promiſe, Zech. xii. 10. *They ſhall look on him whom they have pierced and mourn*; and he hath *exalted Chriſt* to give it, Acts v. 31.

My friends, if there be any other things that we reckon pertains to ſalvation, which God doth not work, *for his name's ſake*, you may realize it as no part of ſalvation; for, I will aſſure you, his name will have the glory of every part of ſalvation.

IV. The *fourth* thing propoſed, was, What is imported in this *nevertheleſs*, or in God's ſaving with a *notwithſtanding*; and ſo to ſhow over what impediments, whether real provocations, or ſeeming impoſſibilities of bringing about this ſalvation, *for his names ſake;* NEVERTHELESS *he ſaved them, for his name's ſake.* It is impediments on the ſinner's part that the text ſpeaks of; therefore I confine myſelf to theſe. He ſaved Iſrael here, notwithſtanding dreadful ſins. Read verſes 6, 7, 13, 14, 16, 19, 20, 21, 24, 25, 28, 29. 32, 34,—39, 43. Yet *nevertheleſs he ſaved them, for his name's ſake.* Did he notwithſtanding all this, ſave them, *for his name's ſake?* Then, what will not he do for his name? And what may not ſinners expect upon this ground? What bar cannot God break, *for his name's ſake?* What mountain cannot he come over, *for his name's ſake?* What provocation can he not overlook, *for his name's ſake?* Let all the ſinners that hear this doctrine, beware of provoking God any more by their ſins. When thus the ſaving mercy of God is proclaimed, in your ears; for, provoked mercy will turn to fearful vengeance; Damnation to eternity will be your doom, if this offered ſalvation be not received: and in order to allure you to the reception and welcoming of it, I am now telling you the freedom of it, and how God can ſave you with an everlaſting ſalvation, notwithſtanding of the moſt grievous provocations that hitherto you have been guilty of, and notwithſtanding of the greateſt impediments that you have laid in the way. More particularly,

1. He can ſave, *for his name's ſake*, notwithſtanding *grievous guilt* and *heinous tranſgreſſions.* Hence his name is declared to be a *God pardoning iniquity, tranſgreſſion, and ſin. Come now and let us reaſon together*, ſays God, Iſa. i. 18. *Though your ſins be as ſcarlet, they ſhall be as white as ſnow; though they be red like crimſon, they ſhall be as wool.* Make not this objection againſt yourſelves in coming to a God, in Chriſt for ſalvation; for here you ſee mercy courting you, notwithſtanding this very objection.

2. He can ſave, *for his name's ſake*, notwithſtanding *long continuance* in ſin; though you have been a *tranſgreſſor from the womb* to this day, be it never ſo long that you have been following that fearful trade of ſin, yet mercy is now following you with a *how long; how long.* Many a *how long* is he purſuing you with; one is, Num. xiv. 11. How LONG *will this people provoke me? And* HOW LONG *will it be ere they believe me?* —Another, *how long* is, Pſal. iv. ii. How LONG *will ye turn my glory into ſhame?* HOW LONG *will ye love vanity?*—Another *how long* is, Prov. i. 22. HOW LONG, *ye ſimple ones, will ye love ſimplicity?* —Another is, Prov. vi. 9. How LONG *wilt thou ſleep, O ſluggard? When wilt thou ariſe out of thy ſleep?*—A ſixth *how long* is, Jer. iv. 14. How LONG *ſhall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee?*

3. He can ſave, *for his name's ſake*, notwithſtanding *manifold apoſtaſies* and *backſlidings*; Jer. iv. 14. *O Jeruſalem, waſh thine heart from wickedneſs, that thou mayeſt be ſaved: how long ſhall vain thoughts lodge within you? Turn, O backſliding children, ſaith the Lord, for I am married unto you*, Jer. iii. 14. And ver. 1. *Though thou haſt played the harlot with many lovers, yet return again unto me. Let the wicked forſake his ways, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon*, Iſa. lv. 5. *I will heal your backſlidings.*

4. He can ſave, *for his name's ſake*, notwithſtanding of your *prodigious neglect* and *contempt of God* hitherto. See Iſa. xliii. 22,—25. *But thou haſt not called upon me, O Jacob; but thou haſt been weary of me, O Iſrael;—I, even I am he that blotteth out thy tranſgreſſions, for my name's ſake, and will not remember thy ſins.* O wonder of wonders! that ſuch may be ſaved, *for his name's ſake.*

5. He can ſave, *for his name's ſake*, notwithſtanding *grievous, rebellious incorrigibleneſs* and *frowardneſs.* See Iſa. lvii. 17, 18. *For the iniquity of his covetouſneſs was I wroth, and ſmote him: I hid me, and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart. I have ſeen his ways, and will heal him: I will lead him alſo, and reſtore comforts unto him, and to his mourners.*

6. He can ſave, *for his name's ſake*, notwithſtanding *outward afflictions* and *poor circumſtances* in the world, Zeph. iii. 12. And *I will alſo leave in the midſt of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they ſhall truſt in the name of the Lord.* Iſa. xxvi. 8.

How

Yea in the way of thy judgments, O Lord, have we waited for thee; the desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee. Though you be an outcast, that no body cares for you, he may save you, *for his name's sake*; for, he *gathers the outcasts of Israel*, Isa. lvi. 8.

7. He can save, *for his name's sake*, notwithstanding *baseness*, *unworthiness*, and *pollution*, for there is a fountain opened; Zech. xiii. 1. *In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin, and for uncleanness.*

8. He can save, *for his name's sake*, notwithstanding *gross darkness* and *fearful ignorance:* it is written in the prophets, they *shall all be taught of God*, Isa. liv. 13. John vi. 45.

9. He can save, *for his name's sake*, notwithstanding *long refusals*, and *resisting of many calls, and slighting many opportunities;* Rom. x. 21. *All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.* Importing, that after all these refusals, he is yet standing with open arms to receive all comers, saying, *Whoever will, let him come.*

10. He can save, *for his name's sake*, notwithstanding of *none such*, and *unparallelled wickedness*; what, if there be no sinner like you, *nevertheless*, he can save, *for his name's sake*; because there is no Saviour like him: if thy unbelieving heart suggests desperate thoughts, as if there were no salvation for thee, saying, Who is a sinner like unto me? Let Micah vii. 18. be an answer, *Who is a God like unto thee, pardoning iniquity?*

In a word, he can save, *for his name's sake*, notwithstanding the *greatest* and *highest mountains* either of *sin* or *misery* that seem to be in the way; Zech. iv. 7. *Who art thou, O great mountain? before our Zerubbabel, thou shalt become a plain.* He can save, *for his name's sake*, notwithstanding *dreadful hardness of heart*, and innumerable plagues of heart, atheism, unbelief, deadness, and security; the God that works, *for his name's sake*, can *take away the heart of stone, and give the heart of flesh*; and out of stones raise up children to Abraham. He can save, *for his name's sake*, notwithstanding of *nameless maladies*, *nameless objections*, that no minister in the world can mention, far less remove: may be the obstacles, in the way of your salvation, are out of the sight of man, out of the sight of ministers; but they are in God's sight, and the omniscient God, that knows it, is the omnipotent God, that can remove it, and save, *for his name's sake.* Oh! but may some poor soul think, no doubt, he *can* save, *for his name's sake*; but my objection is, I doubt of his *will.* Why, man? wherefore is God now telling you what he can do; but to remove your ill thoughts of him, and to manifest his good-will towards you; behold, he is more willing to save, than you are willing to be saved: if it be salvation from sin, as well as salvation from hell that you mean, then you are either unwilling to be thus saved, and so your ruin is, that you *will not come* to him for salvation; or, if you be willing, you are more than welcome to him for all the salvation he can work for you. It is his will to save you, notwithstanding of thousands and millions of objections in the way.

V. The *fifth* thing proposed, in the general method, was, To offer some *reasons* why he thus saves, *for his name's sake.* Why?

1. He saves, *for his name's sake*; because, if he did not so, he would save *none of Adam's race*: the best saints on earth cannot deserve mercy; the salvation of the most righteous is an act of grace; therefore, the *righteous run to his name*; and even the *just must live by faith*, saying, *Though our iniquities testify against us*, yet *do thou it for thy name's sake*, Jer. xiv. 7. And, *help us, for the glory of thy name*, Psal. lxxix. 9. He could save none, if he did not save them *for his name's sake.*

2. He saves, *for his name's sake*, that sinners may *hope in his name*; that they may return to him, and call upon him for mercy; *There is mercy and forgiveness with him, that he may be feared*, Psal. cxxx. 4. Why, say you, could not God be more feared, if he had no mercy and forgiveness with him? It is true; man, in that case, could fear as devils do, despairingly; but not with any penitential fear; *The goodness of God leads to repentance*, Rom. ii. 4. Thus God interprets his merciful providences, as a drawing with the *cords of love.* None could trust in his name, if he did not save, *for his name's sake.*

3. He saves, *for his name's sake*, that sinners may *adore his name*; that they may admire his mercy. God remembers his own glory; and therefore saves, *for his name's sake*, that men may glorify his name. O wonder-working God, that can shew mercy when nothing is deserved but misery; this effect it had upon David, Psal. viii. 1, 9. *O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!* Psal. xlviii. 10. *According to thy name, O God, so is thy praise unto the ends of the earth.*

4. He saves, *for his name's sake*, that *sinners*, who will not flee to his name as a strong tower, and afterwards glorify his name, by living to his praise, may be *left inexcusable in their sins.* The glory of God's justice will be conspicuous in those that have slighted his mercy; *Behold, you despisers, and wonder, and perish!* They that despise such mercy, *treasure up to themselves wrath against the day of wrath*, Rom. ii. 5.

5. He saves, *for his name's sake*, because it is the *only fit way* for *us* to be saved in: if God should offer to save us for our own sakes, for our righteousness' sake, for our duties sake; Oh! how unfit would that be! We might think God were mocking us, because we have nothing but sin and hell about us; and our best righteousness deserves damnation: but when he offers salvation, *for his own name's sake*, then it appears to be a fit offer; we cannot think God is mocking us: would he thus affront himself, when his own name is the ground of faith laid before us?

6. He saves, *for his name's sake*, because it is the only fit way for *him* to save us in: it is the only way of salvation suitable to his infinite excellency, who cannot but consult the glory of his perfections in all his works. Now, God's glory requires that no salvation should be found but in his name. Why hath he told us of mercy running in the channel of the new covenant? Why hath he told us that justice itself is drawn in to be upon the sinner's side, in as much as he can be justified in forgiving them? Why hath he displayed so much of wisdom in making judgment and mercy to meet, and kiss each other? Wisdom in punishing sin, and yet saving the sinner. Why? it is even that he might be glorified; that the *loftiness of man might be brought down, and the haughtiness of man laid low, and that the Lord alone may be exalted,*

Isa. ii. 11. This way of saving is suitable to his nature.

VI. The *sixth* thing proposed, was, To draw some *inferences* from the whole. And is it so, *That when God saves sinners, or a sinful people, he does it for his* NAME'S SAKE, *notwithstanding their provocations, whereby they forfeit his help, and deserve destruction;* then,

1*st*, Hence learn, by way of *caution*, the following particulars.

1. That this doctrine yields no *encouragement to sin*, though God save sinners, *for his name's sake;* the current of his providence, the current of his word, the current of his dealing, all declare his enmity at sin. What is there in the word that can encourage us in sin? All the *threatenings* of the law say, in effect, as you regard the wrath of God, beware of sin: All the *commands* of the law say, as you regard the authority of God, beware of sin: All the *promises* of the gospel say, as you regard the grace, love, and mercy of God, beware of sin: And God's saving, *for his name's sake*, says, as you regard the great *name* of God, beware of sin. The great salvation that he exhibits, *for his name's sake*, is salvation from sin; and therefore, to make this an encouragement to sin is to affront his name, to abuse his name, to profane his name, and to take his name in vain; *And he will not hold them guiltless that take his name in vain.*

2. Think not that God will *deliver any from eternal damnation*, who are gone to hell, or save them, *for his name's sake;* no, by no means: they are lost for ever, that die out of Christ.

2*dly*, Hence see, by way of *information*, a foundation for the following truths.

1. The reason why the *saints confide in God;* and why believers *trust in his name*, and flee to his name in time of danger; they are acquaint with his name: *And they that know his name will put their trust in him*, Psal. ix. 10. They know his grace, his goodness, his power, his holiness, justice, and truth; and they have the encouragement of a promise so to do, Psal. xci. 14. *I will set him on high, because he hath known my name.* And why is it that they pray for help, *for his name's sake?* because they know God will do more for his name, than otherwise he could do, Psal. xxv. 11. Jer. xiv. 7. Thus Joshua, when Israel were smitten at Ai, chap. vii. 9. *And what wilt thou do unto thy great name?* Again,

2. Hence see, to whom we ought to give the glory of *experienced mercy*, even to *God's name;* as Psal. cxv. 1. *Not unto us, not unto us, but to thy name be the glory, for thy mercy and thy truth's sake.* Thus you will find David frequently at this work, Psal. cxlv. 1, 2. *I will extol thee, my God, O King; and I will bless thy name for ever and ever. Every day will I bless thee, and I will praise thy name for ever and ever.* This is one ground of God's helping, Isa. xxix. 22, 23. This is in a manner all that JEHOVAH gets by all his glorious salvations wrought for us, Ezek. xxxvi. 23. Let us therefore learn to render the glory of all God's works unto his glorious name.

3. Hence see, a *door of hope opened for sinners in this gospel.* Does God save, *for his name's sake*, these who may not put in for salvation? Whatever they be, whatever objections you can make, they are answered by this one argument, God saves, *for his name's sake*, when there is no other reason for his doing so in the world: he can make a reason to himself, and find the answer in himself why he will save.

4. Hence see, the *freeness of the gospel-method of salvation;* for God saves with a *non obstante*, that is, with a *notwithstanding*. O but the gospel-salvation is free! The law brings in so many *provisos;* that is, either the law of works, truly so called; it says, *If ye do, ye shall live;* if you be perfect, ye shall be happy; or the law, falsly so called, the many remainders of it in man's heart that makes the sinner think, why I cannot be saved, unless I do as well as I can; unless I be so and so qualified, I cannot expect to be saved: but the gospel opens a door of free access to sinners with a *nevertheless;* notwithstanding whatever sins, guilt, disorder, confusion, death, distress, and ruin; notwithstanding whatsoever wickedness be about you, yet here is a way wherein you may expect salvation: NEVERTHELESS *he saved them, for his name's sake*

OBJECT. *Must I not be saved upon my believing and repenting? Is not faith at least the condition of my salvation?*

ANSW. *Faith* and *repentance* are *parts* of this salvation that God gives, *for his name's sake;* and how can they be *conditions* of that salvation, whereof they are leading parts? *By grace you are saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God*, Eph. ii. 8. Christ is *exalted to give repentance*, Acts v. 51. None are saved without faith and repentance; because all that are saved of the Lord, are saved thereunto: they are saved from unbelief, and brought to faith; saved from impenitency, and brought to repentance. Faith and repentance are the beginnings of this salvation, and salvation cannot be completed, without having a beginning: but both beginning and end are what God gives, *for his name's sake: Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Christ*, Phil. i. 6.; because his name is *Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending*. FAITH itself is not necessary to salvation, as a *moral condition;* but only a *physical instrument*. And hence, as it is not possible a beggar can be the better of a free gift offered to him, if he do not *take* it, or *accept* of it; yet his taking of it is no *moral condition*, but only the *natural instrument*, or mean of his possession: so, neither can any possibly be the better of this free salvation, that God offers in the gospel, if they will not take it, or have it in the manner it is offered, namely, Salvation from sin and wrath, unto eternal holiness and happiness, and all freely, for *God's name's sake*. TAKING is no moral condition, otherwise it would contradict the design of the gospel. Faith is nothing else but a welcoming this salvation in this manner: it is the soul's acquiesing and *falling in with* this method; not a condition of it properly, but a closing with it freely: it is a believing that God will save in this way, *for his name's sake:* and not for the sake of our faith, or any thing else done by, or wrought in us. It is a being content to be saved this way, that the name of God may for ever get the praise; and renouncing all other grounds of faith and reasons of hope, taking this *name of the Lord for his strong tower*, resolving to rest here.

5. Hence see, what is the *last* and *ultimate refuge of faith*. The first resort of faith is to a word, a *may be the Lord will be gracious:* but finding no rest here, then perhaps it goes to a direct promise; such as that, *a new heart will I give you;* and pleads for the promise' sake: but needing

needing to be better fixed, it goes to Chriſt, and pleads for Chriſt's ſake; *in whom all the promiſes are Yea and Amen.* But why ſhould God ſave for Chriſt's ſake? What obligation is God under to accept of that ranſom and atonement in the blood of Chriſt for me? Why? Then laſt of all it flees to God's name, and ſees that God's name will be more magnified in this way of ſalvation, than it can be in any other way of God's dealing with it; and hence it is never ſaid he damns, *for his name's ſake;* for his name gets not ſo much glory that way. Here then is the laſt ſhift of faith, and its ultimate refuge and ground of hope; and there is ground enough here.

Uſe 3. The *next* uſe ſhall be for *examination.* Try whether or not God hath *begun* to ſave you, *for his name's ſake;* or, if you have got his name *engaged* and *concerned* in your ſalvation-work. For the trial of this intereſting point, conſider the following things.

1. They whom God hath begun to ſave, *for his name's ſake,* and to whom he will be further merciful, *for his name's ſake,* they are made *ſenſible* that God hath hitherto helped them, *for his name's ſake;* and that they are *beholden* to God's name for every bit of bread; indebted to his name for their preſervation out of hell; obligated to his mercy and power, that hitherto he hath helped, pitied, and ſaved them from everlaſting ruin: and they are ſo affected with his mercy, that they endeavour to live like perſons ſenſible of this obligation they are under to his name; though, in ſtrict juſtice, they deſerve nothing, and God may ſay, as Judg. x. 13. *I will deliver you no more;* and ſwear, as Jer. xliv. 26, 27. *Behold, I have ſworn by my great name, ſaith the Lord, that my name ſhall be no more named in the mouth of any man,* &c. Yet being a gracious God, will not utterly leave them, 1 Sam. xii. 22. but ſave them, and others, for their ſake; ſo good is he to them, Gen. xviii. 32.

2. Hath *frowning* providence done you good? Are you purged by afflictions? For theſe whom God delivers, *for his name's ſake,* their deliverance from trouble bears ſome reſemblance to his name who delivers.

QUEST. *How ſhall we know, when God's rod hath done its work, and when God hath ſaid,* IT IS ENOUGH? 2 Sam. xxiv. 16.

ANSW. (1.) When you are *humbled* for the ſin that cauſed God take his rod in his hand; ſuch as want of love, deſpiſing the goſpel, abounding of error, diviſion, unbrotherly animoſities. Have theſe things been lamented, loathing the ſimplicity of the goſpel, and the plain adminiſtration of God's ordinances? Profeſſors grown full in their ſtomachs. Is the caſe altered? The abounding of hypocriſy under the ſpecious name of higher attainments, *&c.*

(2.) When a people can *thrive* under merciful providences without the rod; for God will not needleſly afflict any, much leſs his own people, 1 Pet. i. 6. Lam. iii. 33. More particularly,

1. Are *your ſalvation* and *God's glory* twiſted and conjoined? Will God's name be a loſer, if your bonds be ſtrengthened and continued? Joſhua ſaid, *What wilt thou do unto thy name?* This moved God to ſhew mercy on a wicked people, Deut. xxxii. 26, 27.; leſt God ſhould loſe his declarative glory in the wonders he had wrought for Iſrael; leſt the heathen ſhould ſay, God cannot ſave his people. Can you ſay, Oh! I think God will want much glory, if I be not ſaved; and I cannot think that his name ſhould want that glory and praiſe that I ſee it will get in ſaving me.

2. They whom he ſaves, *for his name's ſake,* are *brought off from all hope* of being ſaved for their *own ſake:* as God ſays, *Not for your ſakes have I done this, but my own name's ſake;* ſo they are brought to ſay, not for my ſake will God do ſo and ſo; but, *for his name's ſake.*

3. They *ſeek all they want* from God, *for his name's ſake.* Many a graceleſs beggar ſeeks an alms for God's ſake, that know not what they ſay; but believers are beggars at God's door, and they ſeek for God's ſake: they ſeek pardon, *for his name's ſake,* with David; *For thy name's ſake, pardon mine iniquity, for it is great:* they ſeek, ſaying, quicken me, *for thy name's ſake;* purify, *for thy name's ſake;* give grace, *for thy name's ſake:* and every thing they ſeek, is *for his name's ſake.* Thus they lean upon his lap, and give evidence of their being *loved with an everlaſting love.*

4. They will deſire to *do* much, *for his name's ſake;* and will be content to SUFFER, *for his name's ſake.* Such is their regard to his name, that every duty they perform will be eaſy to them, when they have his name and honour in their eye; and they count their ſufferings all to be light, when they ſuffer for his name: this made them take *joyfully the ſpoiling of their goods,* Heb. x. 34.

5. They will ſet his *name on high,* as being a *name above every name.* Hence they will deſire, and endeavour to have his name exalted in the world, that all men may know his name: they will be grieved when his name is profaned and blaſphemed; they will be content that their name ſink and be buried, that his may ariſe, ſaying, *Let me decreaſe, and him increaſe;* whatever come of my name, let thy name be exalted: their ambition will be to have his name written in their foreheads; *I will write upon them my new name,* Rev. iii. 12.

6. They *approve* and *eſteem the way of ſalvation,* for this reaſon, becauſe God ſaves, *for his name's ſake:* their hearts ſay, O! I prize ſalvation the better, that his name is honoured thereby: they ſet his name *above* their ſalvation, as the *crown* of it; and his name *below* their ſalvation, as the *ground* of it; and his name and attributes *round about* their ſalvation, as the *defence* of it: the *place of their defence* being the *munition of rocks.* His name is a rock round about them; *As the mountains are about Jeruſalem, ſo the Lord is round about his people, from henceforth, even for ever.* As that is his reaſon for ſaving them, even his name, ſo it is the reaſon for expecting ſalvation: as God's argument in ſaving them, is drawn from his name; ſo their argument in truſting in him for ſalvation, is drawn from his name. O! but this is what ſweetens the thoughts of ſalvation, that his name is exalted thereby: they deſire no other way of ſalvation but through his name.

7. They not only run *to* this ſtrong tower, the name of the Lord, but they run *into* it, and *reſt* there: they hang their ſalvation upon this ſtrong nail; they build upon this everlaſting rock; here they have their reſt. As the ſparrow and ſwallow built their neſts on the rafters of the temple and tabernacle, and there laid their young; ſo they dwell on high: Chriſt

is

is the temple, and God's name and attributes are, as it were, the lofty pillars and high rafters of the temple; and faith builds there, resides there, where neither the devil, nor all the powers of hell, shall be able to disturb or annoy them: there they dwell safely from the fear of evil; there they lay their young, and bring forth their fruit unto God, even all the fruits of holiness and righteousness, which are to the praise and glory of God: for, as *from him their fruit is found*, Hos. xiv. 8. from the temple; so their fruit is to him, being dedicated to the temple, to the praise and glory of his name that dwells there.

8. They whom God has begun to save, *for his name's sake*, as their confidence is placed only in his name, as the leading argument of their trust; so this argument will carry them through thousands of *difficulties*, *oppositions*, and *impediments* that seem to ly in the way of their salvation; this name of God will strengthen you against thousands of *temptations*, thousands of *objections*. Notwithstanding your sins, your guilt, your rebellion, your apostasy, the wrath gone out against you for sin, as it did against Jonah, in fearful streams of indignation; yet faith will look again to God's holy temple, to God's holy name, and say, *Nevertheless he saves for his name's sake*: there are thousands of things to damp and discourage me in looking for salvation, and if I consider them, I must despair; but, with Abraham, I desire to consider nothing but God's name, and word of promise, Rom. iv. 19. Here is one thing that can overcome all things, O! I hope he will save me, *for his name's sake*; have you win here? stay here, and you are safe. There is not a man fuller of God, in all the world, than he that is brought to nothing before God, and has nothing to rely upon but the great name of God. That name never failed a soul that trusted to it.

In a word, they whom God saves, *for his name's sake*, are brought, 1. To *know* his name. 2. To *trust* in his name. 3. To *love* his name. 4. To *fear* and *worship* his name.

Use 4. The *fourth* use shall be by way of *exhortation*. And our exhortation shall be tendered, 1. To *sinners* in general. 2. To *believers* in particular.

1st, To *all sinners* in general. O Sirs, does God save, *for his name's sake*, and that with a *notwithstanding* of innumerable sins? Then let sinners hope in his name, and fly to his name for salvation.

QUEST. *How is this doctrine the ground of faith to* ALL, *seeing these whom God designs to save are only the* ELECT, *and these whom he actually saves are only* BELIEVERS? How then is this doctrine to be conceived as an encouragement to all sinners to look to his name for salvation?

ANSW. Salvation is to be considered three ways; either salvation decreed, salvation obtained, or salvation exhibited in the word.—Salvation *decreed*, concerns the elect indeed; and *the election shall obtain*: but thus it is not the first object of any man's faith. Who are elect is a secret; and *secret things belong to God*. You are not concerned with salvation as it lies in the decree.—Salvation *obtained*, is what concerns believers; and this is not the object of any man's faith either, but rather the object of the sense of them who have it, when they know they have it.—But salvation *exhibited*, in the word, is what every man that hears the gospel is concerned with; salvation promised, salvation offered in the general dispensation of the gospel, with a particular invitation to every one to look to Christ for salvation. Now, to lay hold of salvation here, as it lies in the word, is the safe way for you to take: if you lay hold on salvation, exhibited to you in the word, then you will come to find it salvation obtained; and when you find it salvation obtained, then you may find it salvation decreed: and this is the right order in which you ascend to God's decree, by taking hold of his word, when *to you the word of this salvation is sent*. See Rom. x. 6, 7, 8. *Say not, even in thine heart, Who shall ascend to heaven*, to see if salvation was decreed for me? or, *who shall descend into the deep*, to the heart, to see if salvation be obtained? you will find no object of faith in yourself: but, *the word is nigh, the word of* salvation *which we preach*; it is *in thy mouth, and in thy heart*, to be acknowledged with the mouth, and embraced with the heart, ver. 9. O then, sinner, his word, which you are called to take hold of, is his name; it is that whereby he makes himself known: fly to his name, and look for salvation, as it is in his word, in his name. And in coming to him for salvation; 1. Let his name be your *motive*; for thus you will glorify his name. 2. Let his name be your *tower*, to which you fly for salvation. 3. Let his name be the *measure of your hope*: how much he will be glorified in saving you, so much let your hope and expectation go forth that he will do so. 4. Let his name be your *plea* and *argument*; *What wilt thou do for thy great name?* Josh. vii. 9. O save, *for thy name's sake*. *Father, glorify thy name*. Cast anchor here, and you shall ride out all storms, and be eternally safe.

2dly, We next tender our exhortation to *believers*, in particular, who have run to this *strong tower of salvation*, the *name of the Lord*. O admire his goodness, admire his name: he knows all your sins against him, and against his name; yet, *for his name's sake*, he shews mercy. O! let sin against so good a God be abhorred: let his *goodness lead you to repentance* more and more: *The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord*. O believer, are you called by his name: praise him for his mercy, truth, and faithfulness; *According to thy name, O God, so is thy praise unto the ends of the earth; thy right-hand is full of righteousness*, Psal. xviii. 10. O Sirs, ascribe all the mercy you met with to his name; and study to be meet objects for God's name, to be more and more glorified, upon his engaging his name for your help. Study to become such persons as the scriptures require; for though sinners have ground of hope, that he MAY do, *for his name's sake*; yet saints have ground of hope that he WILL do, *for his name's sake*: the graceless may run to him with hope, that he *may begin* the good work, *for his name's sake*; but the gracious may run to him with hope, that he *will perfect* the good work, *for his name's sake*. His name is engaged.

In a word, O improve his name in every case; for he hath a name suiting every want, every need. Do you need *wonders* to be wrought for you? His name is *Wonderful*: look to him so to do, *for his name's sake*.—Do you need *counsel* and *direction*? His name is the *Counsellor*: cast yourself on him and his name for this.—Have you *mighty enemies* to debate with? His

name

name is the *mighty God:* ſeek he may exert his power, *for his name's ſake.*—Do you need his *fatherly pity?* His name is the *everlaſting Father: As a Father pitieth his children, ſo the Lord pitieth them that fear him.* Plead his pity, *for his name's ſake.*—Do you need *peace*, external, internal, or eternal? His name is the *Prince of peace:* ſeek, *for his name's ſake*, that he may *create peace.*—Do you need *healing?* O Sirs, his name is JEHOVAH-ROPHI, the *Lord the healer* and *phyſician:* ſeek, *for his name's ſake*, that he may *heal all your diſeaſes.*—Do you need *pardon?* His name is JEHOVAH-TSIDKENU, the *Lord our righteouſneſs:* ſeek, *for his name's ſake*, that he may be *merciful to your unrighteouſneſs.*—Do you need *defence* and *protection?* His name is JEHOVAH-NISSI, the *Lord your banner:* ſeek, *for his name's ſake*, that his banner of love and grace may be ſpread over you.—Do you need *proviſion* in extreme want? His name is JEHOVAH-JIREH, in *the mount of the Lord it ſhall be ſeen, the Lord will provide.*—Do you need his *preſence?* His name is JEHOVAH-SHAMMAH, the *Lord is there;* IMMANUEL, *God with us:* look to him to be with you, *for his name's ſake.*—Do you need *audience* of prayer? His name is the *hearer of prayer.*—Do you need *ſtrength?* His name is the *Strength of Iſrael.*—Do you need *comfort?* His name is the *Conſolation of Iſrael.*—Do you need *ſhelter?* His name is the *city of refuge.*—Have you nothing, and need *all?* His name is *All in all.*——Sit down and adviſe names to your wants and needs, and you will find he hath a name ſuitable thereunto: for your ſupply, he hath wiſdom, to guide you; and power, to keep you; mercy, to pity you; truth, to ſhield you; holineſs, to ſanctify you; righteouſneſs, to juſtify you; grace, to adorn you; and glory, to crown you. Truſt in his name, who ſaves, *for his name's ſake.*

SERMON LIV, LV.

HEAVEN'S GRAND REPOSITORY; or, the *Father's* Love to the *Son*, and depoſiting *all things* into his Hand, a ſtrong Encouragement to Faith.*

JOHN iii. 35. *The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.*

MY friends, the natural ſtate we are all into, is a ſtate of poverty and want. The firſt Adam ſpent our ſtock, and left us nothing but ſin, and miſery, and death. If we have any right view and knowledge of ourſelves, we will know that we are now curſed in want of *all things;* that we are nothing but ſin, and have nothing but ſin, and can do nothing but ſin, and deſerve nothing but hell. As creatures, we are originally nothing; as worthleſs creatures, we are leſs than nothing; and as wicked creatures, we are worſe than nothing. If any here are made truly ſenſible of their total want of all that is good, and would know where they may be ſupplied, my text makes a diſcovery of a good hand, wherein there is a greater ſtock of proviſion and furniture than ever Adam had before his fall. Here is a ſecond Adam, the eternal Son of God, ſo well qualified for ſupplying our wants, that there was never a hand heard tell of in heaven or earth, that could have more than he hath; *The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.*

It is no matter though you have nothing in your hand, if you come to him who hath all things in his. As the apoſtle Paul *gloried in his infirmities, that the power of Chriſt might reſt upon him;* ſo, it were good if we were glorying in our *emptineſs*, that the *fulneſs of Chriſt might be magnified in us.* As he hath a full hand, ſo it is an open hand; for, this immenſe fulneſs is made the *ground of faith*, as you ſee in the context; becauſe it is laid down as a foundation of what follows: *He that believeth on the Son, hath everlaſting life.* What this believing is, we may ſee, ver. 33.: it is *receiving his teſtimony*, and *ſetting to the ſeal that God is true.* God is true, whether we ſet to our ſeal or not; but, by faith, we ſubſcribe to his truth; and hereby God reckons himſelf honoured and glorified: for, he that receiveth the teſtimony of Chriſt, ſubſcribes to the truth of God; and, by believing in Chriſt, we ſet to our ſeal that God is true to all the promiſes made concerning Chriſt; and ſo give credit to all that he hath ſaid by the prophets; and that he is true to all the promiſes made in Chriſt, venturing our ſouls upon the veracity of God: and the more credit we give him, the more honour we put upon him.

QUEST. *But how does it appear, that when we receive the teſtimony of Chriſt, we receive the teſtimony of God, and ſet to our ſeal that God is true?*

ANSW. Why, becauſe, as Chriſt is the *Word of God*, ſo he is the *Sent of God*, to deliver the word of God; *He whom God hath ſent, ſpeaketh the words of God:* and he was ſent of God for this very end; *A prophet ſhall the Lord your God raiſe up unto you, from amongſt your brethren, like unto me; him ſhall you hear in all things, whatſoever he ſhall ſay unto you.* But for clearing this further, we ſhall propoſe, and anſwer another queſtion.

QUEST. *How does it appear, that Chriſt, as the Sent of God, ſpeaketh the words of God? and conſequently, how may we be ſure of this, that when we believe the truth of Chriſt, we believe the truth of God?*

ANSW. It appears that he ſpeaks nothing but the *words of God*, becauſe he hath the *Spirit of God*, and the *Spirit above meaſure;* for, *God giveth not the Spirit by meaſure unto him.* The prophets of old had the Spirit in a limited manner, only

* This ſubject was handled in two ſermons. The firſt was delivered at a ſacramental ſolemnity at Kinglaſſy, June 13th, 1731. The ſecond was an Action-ſermon, preached at Dunfermline, June 27th, 1731. *Never before publiſhed.*

with respect to some particular revelations, and sometimes spoke of themselves; but Christ had the Spirit always residing in him, without stated measure or limitation; and therefore spoke always the words of God. The more of the Spirit of God that any person hath, the more will he speak the words of God: now, the Spirit was never in any mere creature, but as in a vessel; but the Spirit was, and is in Christ as in a fountain, and as in a bottomless ocean: therefore his words may well be depended upon, and rested in, as the words of God. Here is a foundation for faith in respect of his *veracity*. But, is there as much foundation for faith in respect of his *ability* and *furniture* every way? Yea, there is; for, *he loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.*

In which words we may notice these two things following:

1. An *assertion; The Father loveth the Son: He was always his delight*, Prov. viii. 30. And he is his delight still.

2. A *proof* and *evidence* of this assertion; he hath *given all things into his hand.* He gives him so much trust, that he could not entrust him with more; for, what more can be conceived than *all things?* Love is best known and evidenced by the greatness of the lover, and the loving gifts he bestows upon the object beloved. Here is the greatest gift, evidencing the greatest love; *The Father hath loved the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.* This is the honour of Christ, and the happiness of his people, that the Father hath given all things into the hand of Christ the Mediator. If you would have a sum of these *all things*, it may be gathered from what follows, *viz.* that it is *everlasting life*, and all that attends it, and all the means that lead to it; all the parts of it, and all things that belong to it; for it follows, *He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life.*

The text then lays down a strong ground of encouragement to believe on the Son of God unto eternal life: therefore we may lay down the following doctrinal proposition as the sum of it, namely,

OBSERV. *That the Father's love to the Son, evidenced by his giving all things into his hand, is a strong argument and encouragement for faith to believe in him.*

You will see this same argument adduced, and made use of by the Lord Jesus Christ himself, Mat. xi. 27, 28. *All things are delivered to me of my Father.* And amongst other things, all the Father's *counsels* and *secrets*, he being the great secretary of heaven: and, what follows? *Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* Come to me, as the Father's trustee, who hath intrusted me with all things.

We shall endeavour, through divine assistance, to prosecute this subject in the following method.

I. I would speak a little of the Father's *love* to the Son.

II. Speak of this *evidence* of the Father's love: and that, 1. Shew some of these *things* the Father gives to the Son. 2. Notice the *import* of the expression, *He gave all things into his hand.* 3. How this *evidences* the Father's love to him. 4. *Why* he hath thus manifested his love to him.

III. How this love of the Father, thus evidenced, in giving all things into his hand, is a *ground of Faith.*

IV. Make some *application* of the whole.

I. I am to speak a little of the Father's *love* to the Son. For clearing of this there are these following positions I would offer.

First Position is, "That there are many *scriptu-* "*ral expressions* of the Father's love to the Son." He is called *the Beloved*, emphatically, Eph. i. 6. He is called his *dear Son*, or the *Son of his love*, Col. i. 13. He solemnly declares his love to him from heaven three several times; once, at his baptism; again, at his transfiguration; and afterwards, in his agony, by that audible voice, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.* He expresses himself with the greatest complacency in him; and that in such terms as might invite all the world to fall in love with him: *Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth*, Isa. lxii. 1.

Second Position. "That the Father's love to the "Son, imports something in it that is very "*great* and *glorious*." It imports, that there is an infinite and inconceivable sweetness in the person of Christ, and in his undertaking, that renders him the object of his Father's dearest love and complacency. There is such a loveliness in him, as makes him not only the darling of saints, but the darling of his Father. It imports, that the Father's heart is fixed upon him; that his very soul is, as it were, knit unto him. Would you know where to find God's heart, so as to get a share of his heart's love? Then, get into Christ; for, his heart is fixed upon him, and rejoices in him: and, indeed, they that rejoice in Christ, they partake of his Father's joy and delight.

Third Position. "That there are several *capaci-* "*ties* in which the Father loveth the Son." He loves him as his *Son*, and he loves him as his *Servant;* he loves him as *God*, the second person of the glorious Trinity, and as *Mediator*, God-man.—He loves him, I say, as God the *Son;* therefore called, *the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father*, John i. 18. This is expressed in terms adapted to our capacity: but it is a mystery too deep for us to fathom; for, how one divine person loves another divine person, none but a divine person can understand. How the Father loves the Son, none but the Father and the Son can comprehend. As he is begotten of the Father, by an eternal and an ineffable generation; so he is loved of the Father by an eternal and ineffable love. The Father cannot but love him as he loves himself; for, as in respect of his nature and essence, he is one God with the Father and eternal Spirit; so, in respect of his personality, he is his Father's exact picture, being the *image of the invisible God*, and the *express image of his person.*—Again, He loves him as *Mediator*, God-man: in which office he is the Father's Servant on our business; *Behold my Servant, whom I uphold*, Isa. lxii. 1. This is what most concerns us; for what would it avail us to hear only that the Father loveth the Son, if we had no share of that love? But, behold, here is the good news of the gospel, that the Father loveth the Son as he is clothed with the office of a Mediator and Saviour, to save the like of you and me. He loves him as his *Servant, whom he hath chosen* to his office: he loves him as his *anointed*, whom

whom he hath qualified for this work; *I have put my Spirit upon him, and he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles*; that is, to bring forth light and salvation to the Gentiles: for he loves and delights in him as one whom he hath given for a *covenant of the people, for a light to the Gentiles, to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison.*

Fourth Position. "That there are several *things* "for which the Father loves the Son as our "Mediator." He loves him for his undertaking of this office from all eternity; and hence he is said to be his *Father's delight*, while his *delight was with the sons of men, rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth*, Prov. viii. 30, 31. The Father was so much in love with him, for this *undertaking*, that he promised to support him therein; *Behold, my Servant, whom I uphold.* And he solemnly engages, that *the pleasure of the Lord should prosper in his hand*, Isa. liii. 10. As he loves him for his undertaking, so he loves him for his *performance* of the work, by his coming, and doing, and dying, that he might *finish the work the Father gave him to do.* The hardest part of the work seemed to be that of his dying, and giving himself a sacrifice; and see how the Father loves him for this, John x. 17. *Therefore doth the Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it up again.* Eph. v. 2. *He gave himself a sacrifice of a sweet smelling savour unto God.* The Father was delighted with his doing and dying, his active and passive obedience; because, by this means, he wrought out an everlasting righteousness for our justification, to the honour of the law and justice of God; *The Lord is well-pleased for his righteousness' sake; he will magnify the law and make it honourable*, Isa. xlii. 21. The Father loves him for every thing he did as our Redeemer; for, *he did always those things that pleased him*, John viii. 29.—He loves him for his *compassion* and *tender sympathy* he bears with sinners; therefore it was said of him, *A bruised reed shall he not break, and a smoking flax shall he not quench, until he hath sent forth judgment unto victory*, Isa. xlii. 3.—He loves him for his courageous encountering with his *sufferings* in our room, ver. 4. *He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he hath set judgment in the earth; and the isles shall wait for his law.*—Yea, the Father is delighted with him for what he is *doing*, namely, his *praying*, and *interceding* in heaven: he never rejects any of his prayers, but *hears him always*, John xi. 42. Again,

Fifth Position. "That there are several *proper-* "*ties* of the Father's love to the Son." It is an *eternal* love; it is an *unchangeable* love; the *same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.*—It is a *tender* and *affectionate* love; therefore called his *beloved Son*, his *dear Son.*—It is a *wise* love, though he loved him dearly, yet he would not let sin pass unpunished, when but imputed to him; *The Lord hath chastised me sore*, says Christ, Psal. cxviii. 18. *The chastisement of our peace was upon him.*—It is a *boundless* love and unlimited; it is a love that *passeth knowledge*: and, indeed, God's love to his people, in Christ, hath these properties; and if it be ineffable and boundless, what thought can we have of the vastness of his love to Christ?—In a word, it is a *bountiful* love, as appears by the effects of it; which leads me to the

Sixth Position. "That there are several *effects* "of the Father's love to the Son, several evi- "dences and discoveries of it;" such as his choosing him, from eternity, to this honourable work; upholding him therein; revealing all his mind and bosom to him; accepting of him; and being well-pleased with all that he did; exalting and glorifying him at his right-hand; commanding all men to pay honour to him.—But the particular effect and evidence of his love here mentioned, is the *great trust* he commits to him; he hath *given all things into his hand.* This leads me,

II. To the *second* thing proposed, namely, To speak of this *evidence* and *effect* of the Father's love to the Son, he *hath given all things into his hand.* Here consider, 1. What are *these things* the Father gives into Christ's hand. 2. What is the *import* of the expression, his *giving all things into his hand.* 3. How this *evidences* the Father's love to him. 4. *Why* he hath thus manifested his love to him.

1*st*, What are *these things* the Father hath given into Christ's hand? *All things*, says the text; and surely it is but some of *all things* we can mention.

1. All *government* is given into his hand; *To us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulders;—of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth even for ever: the zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this*, Isa. ix. 6, 7. And it is a *wonderful* government; for, his name is called, *Wonderful.* A *wise* government; for, he is the *Counseller:* A *powerful, divine* government; for he is the *mighty God:* An *everlasting* and a *friendly, fatherly* government; he is the *everlasting Father:* A *princely* and *peaceable* government; for, he is the *Prince of peace:* and it is a *growing* government; for, *of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end:* It is an *universal* government; and therefore it is said, *All power in heaven and earth is given to him*, Mat. xxviii. 18. He is Lord of all, and *Head over all things to the church*, Eph. i. 22. Angels are his servants, devils are his captives, and *all flesh* is in his hand; *Thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he may give eternal life unto as many as thou hast given him*, John xvii. 2. Both the golden sceptre and the iron rod are given into his hand: the government of the world, and the government of the church. He is the great Lord disposer of all events, and the great Lord dispenser of all blessings, and the great Judge of quick and dead; *The Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son*, John v. 22.

2. As all government is given into his hand, so all *grace* is given into his hand; eternal life, and all its preliminaries. The second Adam has got all the stock put into his hand, therefore he is said to be *the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth: and out of his fulness we are to receive, and grace for grace*, John i. 14, 16. All grace is in his hand, so as there is no grace to be had any where else: justifying grace, sanctifying grace, saving grace, all the graces of the Spirit; yea, the Spirit and all his graces, all his gifts; his mission and motions, are in the hand of Christ. The context says, he has *the Spirit above measure:* and the dispensing of the Spirit in what measure he pleases to us is in his hand, John xvi. 7. and xv. 26. He hath the sending of the Spirit in his hand, insomuch that, when the Father sends the Spirit, he sends

him

him in Christ's name; *The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance*, John xiv. 26.

3. All the *blessings* of the covenant are given into his hand; therefore we are *blessed in him, with all spiritual blessings, in heavenly places*. Hence, says the apostle, *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath* thus *blessed us*, Eph. i. 3. Therefore it is said, *Men shall be blessed in him, and all nations shall call him blessed*; and *in him shall all the nations of the earth be blessed*. You have a sum of these spiritual blessings that are in Christ, 1 Cor. i. 10. *Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.* No flesh must glory in his sight; but, that all flesh might glory only in the Lord, and have no where else to go for any blessing, but to that blessed hand, into which the Father hath given all things.

4. All the *promises* of the covenant are given into his hand; he is, therefore, the centre of all the promises; *All the promises of God in him are Yea, and in him Amen, to the glory of God*, 1 Cor. i. 20. As the promise is affirmed by his word, and confirmed by his blood; so, the donation of the promises, and application of the promises, is in his hand. All the promises are primarily made to him, and secondarily, to us in him. As the immediate object of faith is the word of promise; so, when faith intermeddles with the promise, it cannot but see Christ in it, and it in Christ: faith takes Christ in the promise, and the promise in Christ.

5. All the *fulness* of God is given into his hand, as Mediator; *It pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell*, Col. i. 19. And chap. ii. 9. *In him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily*. All the fulness of divine perfection is in him; for, he is *the wisdom of God, and the power of God*; and all the other attributes of God, and all the glory of God, and the glory of all these perfections of God, is in him, to be seen; *For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ*, 2 Cor. iv. 6.

6. All the *work* that the Father had to do was and is given into his hand.—The work of creation was given into his hand of the Father; for, *by him he made the worlds*, Heb. i. 2.—The work of *providence* is given into his hand; he *upholds all things by the word of his power*, ver. 3. —The work of *redemption* and all the parts of it, from the beginning to the end; redemption by the price of his blood; redemption by the power of his Spirit; redemption from the law, from sin, Satan, death, and hell; and redemption to eternal life is all in his hand. Isa. lxi. 1. *The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound: to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, &c.* The Father hath anointed, and qualified, and furnished him for the work; and clothed him with all offices, such as, Prophet, Priest, King, Surety, Saviour, Mediator, and Redeemer, for accomplishing the work: and thus he is entrusted with all his Father's business. This he knew after he entred the stage of this world in our nature; at twelve years of age, he said to his parents that were seeking him sorrowing; *Wherefore was it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?* Luke ii. 49. And all the time he was on earth, he never rested till he *finished the work which the Father gave him to do*. And the work that is yet upon his hand, relating to the application of redemption, he is restless till it be finished.—In a word, *all things* that the Father hath are given into his hand, John xvi. 15. *All things that the Father hath are mine*: insomuch that he is the author and *Creator* of all things, John i. 1. *All things were made by him*. And the *upholder* of all things, as he is the proprietor of all things, by the Father's donation, Mat. xi. 27. *All things are delivered unto me of my Father*. And he is the *centre* of all things, Eph. i. 10. *That in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one, all things, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth*. He is the *Head of all things*, Eph. i. 22. Col. ii. 10. He is the *Heir of all things*, Heb. i. 2. But now I come to shew,

2*dly*, What is the *import* of the expression, *He hath given all things into his hand*. I think the words import,

1. The *freeness* of this dispensation. O! in what a free manner, and with what a free heart hath the Father given all things into Christ's hand! All God's gifts are free; but never did he give any thing more freely than he gave *all things* into Christ's hand. Love is always free in its donations to the object beloved; and the Father's love to the Son, being infinitely great, O! how freely hath the Father given *all things* to the Son? It is true, that all things that concern the happiness of his people, and all the blessings of the covenant were dearly purchased by the Lord Jesus; and so it cannot be said of what God hath given to Christ, as Mediator, as it must be said of what he gives us, that it is without our merit, and without motive on our part; for, in Christ, there is infinite value in his blood, to merit; and infinite dignity and loveliness in his person, to move the Father to give all things to him; and therefore, when I say it was a *free* gift, do not understand it as free in opposition to *merit* or *motive*, for they were both in Christ to an infinite degree; but it is free in opposition to *force* or *constraint*. The Father had no reluctancy in his infinite mind, no grudge in his heart in giving all things into Christ's hand; nay, it was with infinite frankness and freedom; for it was in infinite love and kindness,

2. The words import, the *fulness* of this dispensation: the Father hath given him *all things*; he hath kept nothing back from him. He hath given him all his mind, all his heart, all his counsel, all his secrets, all his treasures of wisdom and knowledge, all his glory, all his authority; all things in heaven, and earth, and under the earth; all persons, and cases, and causes; nothing is withheld †.

3. The words imports the *fitness* of Christ to bear the weight of all things. What hand could be fit to put all things into? Well did the Father know who is the fit hand; and, behold! infinite wisdom sees none so fit as Christ, that so all things might meet in the centre, even in the middle person of the glorious Trinity, and that all things might hang in the midst between heaven and earth, between God and man; therefore, infinite wisdom makes all things concentre in a God-man, that thus poor

† Several of these particulars may be seen copiously opened up above, on a subject somewhat parallel, p. 554, 555.

poor ſinful men might get hold of all things they ſtand in need of in Chriſt; even of God himſelf; for, *God is in Chriſt.*

4. The words import, the *firmneſs* of his title to all things, inſomuch, that not only hath he a natural right, as God; but a donative right, as Mediator, God-man, to *all things*; which are ſo put into his hand, that they are under his authority: all things that belong to his church, being in his hand, are at his keeping; all things that can befal his church, being in his hand, are at his diſpoſal; all things ſinners need, being in his hand, are at his giving: and, indeed, all things are given into his hand, that he, having a full hand, ſinners may come and ſhare of his fulneſs. But,

3*dly*, How doth this *evidence* the Father's love; or, what love appears in this? Why,

1. The Father's giving all things into Chriſt's hand, ſhews his love to him to be a *confiding* love; a love attended with confidence in him, that he can truſt him with all things that concern his greateſt glory, and his peoples good; that he is the Father's Confident and great Truſtee, whom he can truſt with all his treaſures of grace and glory, with all his treaſures of power and majeſty. He loves him ſo, that he can entruſt him with all things. He is entruſted with all the keys of his Father's houſe; *I go to prepare a place for you, that where I am, there you may be alſo*, John xiv. 2.; and with *the keys of hell and death*, Rev. i. 18.

2. The Father's giving all things into Chriſt's hand, ſhews his love to him to be a *complacential* love. A lover is known by his gifts; we give gifts to them we love; the more we love them, the more we give them. Here then is the greateſt gift, arguing the higheſt love, the deareſt love, the moſt complacential love. He gives them not only to the *half*, but to the *whole of his kingdom*; the whole of his dominion and empire: he gives them *the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermoſt ends of the earth for his poſſeſſion*, Pſalm. ii. 8. Hence,

3. It ſhews that his love to him is a *generous* love: what greater generoſity can be manifeſted than by giving him all things? Could he give him more? No, it is as much as God could give; and, indeed, God only could give ſuch a gift; and it is only God that could receive ſuch a gift. It is only the proprietor of all things that could give them; and it is only the proprietor of all things that could take them in his hand, and under his management.

4. It ſhews that his love to him is a *ſuperlative* love, and that he loves him above all things, therefore *gives all things into his hand.* If there were any thing that the Father loved better than Chriſt, he would have kept that out of his hand; but having given him *all things*, it ſays, there is nothing he can lay in balance with him. O! how ſhould we love him above all things as the Father doth? We do not love him at all, if we do not love him above all.

5. It ſhews, that his love to him is an *ingenuous* love; there is no flattery here, nor diſingenuity; but the moſt wonderful affection, proved by the moſt conſpicuous action; and the love of his heart evidenced by the love of his hand, which he hath opened ſo wide to him as to give him all. The Father and the Son not only join hands, as it were, as many will do, where there is little ingenuity of love, and integrity of affection; but the Father opened his hand and put all things into the hand of his Son.

6. It ſhews, that his love to him is a *conſtant* love, and that he will never repent that he ſet his love upon him; for, *The gifts and callings of God are without repentance:* and therefore, as he will never recal his love to Chriſt; ſo, he will never take out of Chriſt's hand any thing that he hath given him. Not one ſoul of all the elect, of whom Chriſt ſays, *Thine they were, and thou gaveſt them me*, John xvii. 6.; not one ſoul of them, no not the pooreſt youth or girl in the world will he ever take out of his hand again. Nay, the Father's hand and his meet together, as it were, and hold them faſt, that they may never periſh, never be loſt, John x. 28,—30. The Father hath given him all power in his hand to ſave and *quicken* whom *he will*, John v. 21.: and he will never revoke the power and authority that is given him.—Thus you ſee how the Father's giving him *all things*, evidences his love; and what love it evidences. In a word, it evidences infinite love, eternal love, unchangeable love.

4*thly*, I am to ſhew, *why* he thus manifeſts his love to him, by giving *all things into his hand.* And,

1. The Father manifeſts his love to the Son, by giving him *all things*, becauſe the Son *lays out all things* that he gets for his Father's honour and glory. For example, the *words* which the Father gave him he gives out to his people; *I have given unto them the words which thou gaveſt me*, John xvii. 8. and ver. 14. *I have given unto them thy word.*—Again, the *Spirit* which the Father gives to him, he gives to them; *The water that I ſhall give him, ſhall be in him a well of water ſpringing up unto everlaſting life*, John iv. 14.—And both his word of grace, and ſpirit of grace, poured into the Mediator's lips, are what he gives out, in a conformity to the promiſe; *This is my covenant with them, ſaith the Lord; my Spirit that is upon thee; and my words, which I have put into thy mouth, ſhall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy ſeed; nor out of the mouth of thy ſeeds ſeed, ſaith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever*, Iſa. lix. 21.——Thus he that hath *received gifts for men*, and to whom the Father hath *given all things* for men, *even for the rebellious*, he gives out what he hath received to the Father's honour and glory. Hence, ſays Chriſt, John xvii. 4. *I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finiſhed the work which thou gaveſt me to do.* And what work? See a notable part of the work, ver. 22. *The glory which thou gaveſt me, I have given them.* And what is that glory? See a notable part of that mentioned, ver. 23. even the glory of his grace and love drawing them to oneneſs with the Father and the Son; *I in them, and they in me; that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou haſt ſent me, and haſt loved them, as thou haſt loved me.* It lies in manifeſting his love, his Father's love to them, in the reſemblance that it bears of his Father's love to him. God, therefore, manifeſted his love to Chriſt in *giving all things into his hand*, becauſe he lays out all things the Father gives him to the Father's glory: hence he is exalted as LORD, *To the glory of God the Father*, Phil. ii. 9. As *Lord of lords*, and *Lord of all things*, to the glory of God the Father, that he may bring in the revenue of praiſe and glory, and of all things to the Father. And thus, by him a re-

venue of honour comes in to the crown of heaven, and *glory to God in the higheſt.*

2. The Father has manifeſted his love to his Son, by giving him *all things*; becauſe, as he is one with the Father in *nature* and in *will*, and is the *Father's expreſs image*; his eſſential image, as God; and his repreſentative image, as Mediator; ſo he had the *greateſt regard* imaginable to his Father's will and command in all things; *I delight to do thy will, O my God*, Pſa. lx. 8, 18. *I lay down my life, and this commandment have I received of my Father*, John x. 17. May I not allude to that word, Luke xi. 13. *If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children*, eſpecially if they be obedient children? O! how infinitely more muſt God the Father manifeſt his love towards his eternal Son, in *giving good gifts to him*, whoſe *meat and drink was to do his Father's will!* See Phil. ii. 6,—10.

3. The Father manifeſts his love to his Son, by giving him *all things*, not only as a *reward* of his work and victories, that are over his head, but alſo as *furniture* for the work and victories that are yet upon his hand to accompliſh; for, *His reward is with him, and his work is before him*, Iſa. lxii. 11. Chriſt came to deſtroy God's greateſt enemies, as well as to do God's greateſt work; *For this purpoſe was the Son of God manifeſted, that he might deſtroy the works of the devil. He deſtroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.* And the devil hath groaned ever ſince he met with him. He hath groaned with a ſore head, a pained head; for, *He bruiſed the head of the ſerpent.* Chriſt was the ſtouteſt combatant, or ableſt hand that ever hell or the devil met with; he would make no parly or ceſſation with his enemies, nor give over the battle till he brought the *keys of hell, death, and the grave alongſt with him.* See how magnificently his victories are deſcribed, Iſa. lxiii. 1,—4. *Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozra? This that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatneſs of his ſtrength? I that ſpeak in righteouſneſs, mighty to ſave. Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel? and thy garments like him that tradeth in the wine fat? I have troden the winepreſs alone, and of the people there was none with me; for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood ſhall be ſprinkled upon my garments, and I will ſtain all my raiment: for, the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come.* And becauſe all things are put under his feet, in point of victory and ſubjection; all things are put in his hand, in point of reward: and not only as a reward for what is over, but as furniture for his further work and victories, as long as there is any ſoul on earth to be ranſomed from the power of ſin and Satan. See Pſal. lxxxix. 20,—25. *I have found David, my ſervant; with my holy oil have I anointed him. With whom my hand ſhall be eſtabliſhed; mine arm alſo ſhall ſtrengthen him. The enemy ſhall not exact upon him, nor the ſon of wickedneſs afflict him. And I will beat down his foes before his face, and plague them that hate him: but my faithfulneſs, and my mercy, ſhall be with him; and in my name ſhall his horn be exalted. I will ſet his hand alſo in the ſea, and his right-hand in the rivers.* Why does the Father furniſh him as you ſee, Iſa. xlii. 1, 4. *Behold my Servant, whom I uphold; mine Elect, in whom my ſoul delighteth: I have put my Spirit upon him, he ſhall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles:* —*He ſhall not fail, nor be diſcouraged, till he ſet judgment in the earth: and the iſles ſhall wait for his law.* It is, that he may *bring forth judgment to the Gentiles*: therefore, he is made Head *over all things unto the church.*

4. The Father manifeſts his love to the Son, by giving him *all things*, that he might be the *Reſtorer of all things* to God, and the giver of all things unto man; *Then I reſtored that which I took not away*, ſays Chriſt, Pſal. lxix. 4. The firſt Adam's ſin had robbed God and man: God's attributes were robbed of their honour, God's law was robbed of its obedience; man was robbed of the favour of God, of the image of God, of the grace of God, of the bleſſing of God. Now, all things are given into Chriſt's hand, that he might reſtore all things to God and man that ſin had robbed them of: and accordingly he, as Mediator, *Reſtores what he took not away*; he reſtores glory to the perfections of God, and obedience to the law of God; and by this means alſo, he reſtores to man the favour of God in juſtification, and the image of God in ſanctification.

In a word, he is the great magazine and ſtorehouſe, the poſſeſſor of all things, and the reſtorer of all things, and the outgiver of all things, that ſinners ſtand in need of, that thus a good ſolid *foundation for faith* may be laid unto ſinners. This leads,

III. To the *third* general head propoſed, namely, How this love of the Father to the Son, thus evidenced, by giving all things into his hand, is a *ground of faith* to ſinners?

It is laid down here for the encouragement of the faith of all ſinners that hear of it; for it follows, *He that believeth on the Son hath everlaſting life.* Everlaſting life is in his hand, where all things are; and therefore, let ſinners come to him, and believe in him, for all things that they need. It is the greateſt encouragement to faith in the world, that all the riches of the new covenant are depoſited *in his hand*; and that in ſeveral reſpects.

1. It is the ſtrongeſt encouragement to faith that all is in ſuch a *good hand*; for,

(1.) Here is ground of faith and hope to ſinners, that *all things* are given into ſuch a *kind* hand. Herein the love and *kindneſs of God towards man appeared*, Titus iii. 4.; that all things ſinners need are given into the hand of a *loving friend* of theirs, an *elder brother*, a *near kinſman*; one that is *bone of our bone, and fleſh of our fleſh*; who, out of kindneſs towards us, took on our nature; out of kindneſs, died in our nature, and in our room; in loving-kindneſs, came from heaven, and returned again thither; and now, in loving-kindneſs, ſends the goſpel unto us; and has promiſed to ſend the Spirit with it. Is not here ſtrong ground for faith and hope?

(2.) Here is encouragement for faith and hope, that *all things* are given into ſuch a *high* and *great* hand; who, as he hath infinite kindneſs, ſo he hath infinite greatneſs: and therefore will act both in a ſuitableneſs to the kindneſs of his heart, and to the greatneſs of his mind. As a *liberal man deviſes liberal things*, and a great man loves to do great things, how much more will the great God do infinitely greater things, and that even towards great ſinners? And therefore, they may be encouraged to come to him, and look for great things from him.

(3.) Here is ground of encouragement to the faith and hope of ſinners, that *all things* are given into

into ſuch a *wiſe* hand; even his, who is *the wiſdom of God*, and knows how to give out of his treaſures, and when, and in what meaſure; *His underſtanding is infinite. He is a God of judgment, and bleſſed are all they that wait for him*, Iſa. xxx. 18.; for, *He waits to be gracious.* He waits the beſt time, and therefore we would do beſt to wait his time, and we ſhall find it to be the beſt: *He that believeth maketh not haſte*, knowing that *wiſdom dwelleth with God.*

(4.) Here is ground of faith and hope to ſinners, that *all things* are given into ſuch an *able* hand; who is the *power of God*, as well as the *wiſdom of God:* able to keep things that the Father commits to him, and able to keep all things that believers commit to him; *able to ſave to the uttermoſt*, able to help at the laſt extremity, able to give out all things needful for our various circumſtances, and able to do far above all that we can aſk or think.

(5.) Here is ground of faith, that the Father hath given *all things* into ſuch a *ſure* hand; inſomuch, that all the bleſſings and mercy, that he hath in his hand to give, are called, *The ſure mercies of David*, Iſa. lv. 3. Acts xiii. 34. All the promiſes in him, are ſure promiſes; for, the *covenant ſtands faſt in him;* Pſal. lxxxix. 28. *My faithfulneſs and my mercy ſhall be with him*, ſays God, ver. 24. His name is called, *Faithful and true*, Rev. xix. 11. You may depend upon his word, more than upon the oath of all the angels of heaven, and ſaints on earth; theſe are but changeable creatures, but he is the unchangeable God, and unchangeable truth itſelf.

(6.) Here is ground of faith, that *all things* are given into ſuch an *open* hand. He keeps an open door to all that will come, and an open hand to all that will take; and therefore ſays, Rev. xxii. 17. *Whoſoever will, let him come, and take of the water of life freely. Ho every one that thirſteth, come ye to the waters; he that hath no money, come; buy wine and milk without money and without price*, Iſa. lv. 1. As the Father hath an open hand to him, ſo he hath an open hand to us: *Freely he hath received, and freely he gives.* His hand, though it be a ſure hand, yet it is not a ſhut or a cloſed hand; no, by no means: it is an open hand, and a giving hand; and well were it for us if we had a receiving hand: he gives freely, and we are called to receive freely. And hence he commands us to *preach the goſpel to every creature*, be what they will, of rational creatures among Adam's poſterity; although they have ſinned themſelves into the likeneſs of devils; yet, if they be creatures, preach the goſpel to them; offer Chriſt, and all things in him, to them: and he injoins his miniſters to be free and unhampered in their offers and proffers, ſaying, *Freely ye have received, freely give.* Here is ſuch encouragement to faith, that ſinners may ſee that they are welcome to come, and take what they will, out of his ſtock.

2. Here is ground for faith and hope, that *all things* being given to Chriſt, there is *nothing that ſinners need*, but what is here; *bread enough and to ſpare.* There is an overflowing ocean of all good in Chriſt for ſinners, and that his grace doth infinitely exceed all our ſins, and all our wants. It is unbelief that doth diminiſh and limit the fulneſs of Chriſt: it ſhews the ſoul a multitude of ſins and wants, but it hides and conceals the fulneſs of Chriſt, and locks up his treaſures. It is true, people pretend this, and that, as a hinderance and diſcouragement to their believing: but however the ground of their not cloſing with Chriſt is, it turns chiefly upon this, that they doubt of his fulneſs. *Nay*, ſay you, *my doubt is of his* WILLINGNESS; *but I have no doubt of his* FULNESS. I fear you miſtake it, O ſinner; and that your chief doubt is about his fulneſs; and that your doubt of his willingneſs flows from the doubt of his fulneſs. What! is it poſſible that one can believe the immenſe fulneſs of Chriſt, as having all things in his hand, and yet, at the ſame time, believe that he is a niggard, and has nothing to ſpare? No, no: if you believe his fulneſs, you cannot but believe his willingneſs; and if ye doubt of his willingneſs, it flows from a doubt of his fulneſs; for theſe two go together: *In my Father's houſe, there is bread enough and to ſpare*, Luke xv. 17. If you think there is nothing to ſpare for you, it is becauſe you think there is not *bread enough*, and fulneſs enough in Chriſt; for, if ye believe there is *bread enough* in him, then you will believe that there is to *ſpare* alſo. Examine, therefore, your faith of his fulneſs again; if you do not ſee there is enough in Chriſt, no wonder you do not ſee what a free heart he hath, when you do not ſee what a free hand he hath. But, O ſinner! as the *fulneſs of the Godhead is in him;* ſo, if there were ten thouſand millions of worlds, and as many heavens full of men and angels, Chriſt would not be pinched to ſupply all their wants, and fill them all. Chriſt is the *well of life*; but, who knows how deep it is to the bottom? And the due conſideration of this might provoke all the world to come, and *draw water out of this well of ſalvation with joy*, were it not that their eyes are ſhut, through unbelief; they ſee not the well, nor the overflowing fulneſs thereof.

3. Here is ground for faith and hope, in that as *all things* are given to Chriſt, ſo this inexhauſtible fulneſs in him is not *for himſelf*, but to be diſpenſed, and communicated to *poor ſinners:* For, here is the Father's giving all things to the Son, as Mediator betwixt God and man. You will ſay, *There is fulneſs enough in Chriſt; but what is that to me?* Why, it wholly concerns thee; it is treaſured up in Chriſt for *ſinners;* yea, for the *worſt of ſinners*, that they may believe in him, and receive all things in him and with him: *He hath received gifts for men*, Pſal. lxviii. 18. Ah! ſay you, but I am a rebellious devil. Well, it is even for the *rebellious.* Hence alſo, Eph. i. 22. *He is head over all things to the church;* he hath *all things in his hand.* Well, but it is as head of the body the church: as treaſures and endowments of wit, and ſenſe, and the like in the natural head, are for the body, and for the ſervice of it; ſo, the treaſures in Chriſt are for the ſervice of ſinners in the viſible church; ſinners, that are made ſaints already; and ſinners, who are to be made ſo, by his grace; and his grace that is in him is publiſhed and *preached to every creature under heaven*, Col. i. 23. that every one may apply it to himſelf, and hear believingly, when he is ſaying, in effect, "I have all things in my hand, and I have "them for thee: I have life and ſalvation, and "I have it for thee; I have peace and pardon, "and I have it for thee; I have righteouſneſs, "ſanctification, and redemption, and I have "them for thee; I have grace and glory, and I "have

" have them for thee." Therefore, go to him, ſinner, and expect all from him; and ſay not, Alas! it is not for me; for, be who thou wilt, *To thee is the word of this ſalvation ſent:* and, therefore, *receive not this grace of God in vain;* for, it is unbelief that ſays, There is nothing for me: but faith ſays, It is all for me: O! he is a fit Saviour for me; he hath ſupplies of all wants for me; healing for me, help for me, all for me.

4. Here is ground for faith and hope to ſinners, in regard, that the Father's love to Chriſt, in giving *all things into his hand*, as the Saviour of ſinners, is juſt a *diſcovery of God's ſovereign grace and love to ſinners*, in and through Chriſt: and therefore, God is repreſented as ſitting upon a *throne of grace*, and the Lamb ſitting alſo upon the throne, where, in his Father's name, he diſpenſes the bleſſings that are given to him, and that as a glorious King, upon a gracious throne. He acts like a King, pardons like a King, ſaves like a King and Sovereign; and while he diſtributes all in a way of free grace, he pardons, becauſe he will; ſaves, becauſe he will; has mercy, becauſe he will have mercy. Why, what is the nature of ſovereign grace? It is the nature of it to act from itſelf, to itſelf, without conſideration of any thing in us; without reſpect either to the worthineſs or unworthineſs of the creature; neither reſtrained, by our evil; nor conſtrained, by our good: but all running out in a way of free love; Hoſ. xiv. 4. *I will heal their backſlidings; I will love them freely.* " No matter then, may faith ſay, however vile and wretched I be, while I have to do with ſuch love; the Father loving the Son, and giving him all things, and that in love to the like of me." As free grace is the riſe and ſpring, ſo the exalting of free grace is the end of this great buſineſs of ſalvation in Chriſt. It is not what ſuch and ſuch ſinners do, or do not deſerve, that he conſiders; but what his grace can do for them, and what will make moſt for the glory of that grace, and what will ſet the crown, the brighteſt crown on the head of free grace. This is evident, Eph. i. 6, 12, 14. *To the praiſe of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved;—That we ſhould be to the praiſe of his glory, who firſt truſted in Chriſt:—Which is the earneſt of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchaſed poſſeſſion come, to the praiſe of his glory.* His deſign is, that *grace might reign*, Rom. v. 21. and that ſinners might ſing the praiſes of free grace, free love. " O! who am I? ſays " the ſoul that hath obtained mercy: What! " ſuch a rebel, and yet pardoned! ſuch an ene- " my, and yet reconciled! ſuch a black devil, " and yet waſhed and made white in the blood " of the Lamb! ſuch a fiend of hell, and yet " made a favourite of heaven! O grace! grace!" This is God's deſign to magnify his grace and love in Chriſt upon ſinners, that they may love him much, who has pardoned much; and ſerve him lovingly, who has ſaved them freely.

5. Here is ground for faith, and encouragement for the hope of ſinners, that the Father having *loved the Son, and given all things into his hand*, it muſt be *acceptable to the Father* that ſinners come to Chriſt for all things they need, and employ him in all things they have ado, and truſt in him for all things they want: *This is his commandment, that we believe in him*, 1 John iii. 23. *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleaſed, hear ye him.* Do you think God will be angry with you, if you come to Chriſt? No; you cannot pleaſe God better, you cannot honour him more: for, this is his very deſign in giving *all things* to him, that you may come and get all things from him.

6. Here is ground for faith and hope, that the Father loves the Son, ſo as to give *all things into his hand*, in regard that, as it is acceptable to the Father, ſo it is *honourable to the Son*, that ſinners come to him for all things. As the Father gave all things to Chriſt, that he might put honour upon him; ſo the ſinner, giving employment to Chriſt, in all things he hath ado, puts honour upon him: and as it is to the Father's honour, that he gave all things to Chriſt; ſo it is to the Son's honour, that he gave out of this fulneſs to ſinners in a way of cauſing them to believe in him. And here is wonderful encouragement to faith and believing, that it is the glory and perfection of Chriſt, as Mediator, to receive ſinners, and give out himſelf, and all things to them, that they need. Chriſt has a twofold glory, *viz.* the glory of his perſon, as the Son of God; and the glory of his office, as Mediator, and Head of the ſecond covenant: the former is infinitely complete and full, and can admit of no diminution, or augmentation, being unchangeably the ſame for ever; but the glory and perfection of his office, as Mediator, is ſtill more and more complete, the more ſinners he receives, and the more grace he gives out; and here there is an *increaſe of his government*, an increaſe of his glory, and perfection, and completeneſs; hence the church is called *his fulneſs*, Eph. i. 23. If the church be his *fulneſs*, then the more that is filled, by his receiving ſinners, and giving out grace to them, the more full and complete is he himſelf. His mediatory honour and perfection grows; and hence alſo the ſaints are called *the glory of Chriſt*, 2 Cor. viii. 23. As Chriſt alone is their glory, ſo they are his glory. How his glory? Not only becauſe they glorify him actively, but alſo becauſe he lays out his grace upon them, and they have nothing but by free gift from him; and therefore he is ſaid to be glorified in them. O! what encouragement to faith and believing is here! ſeeing thus you not only ſhall be glorified by Chriſt, and have everlaſting life by him; but alſo, you ſhall glorify Chriſt, and he ſhall have everlaſting honour by you. O Sirs, it is a part of his exaltation to give out of his fulneſs; for, *He is exalted to give repentance and remiſſion of ſin.* O! how may unbelief ſink and die, and faith riſe and ſing, before this conſideration. " It is Chriſt's honour to receive " me; it is his glory to beſtow himſelf and " his grace upon me. The Father in love hath " given all things to him, that he may get " honour and glory in giving out all things " needful for me."

IV. The *fourth* thing propoſed, in the general method, was the *application* of the ſubject.

Is it ſo, that the Father loves the Son, ſo as to give all things into his hand? Hence many precious truths may be ſeen in the ſeveral branches of the text and doctrine, namely, 1. That the Father loves the Son. 2. That he hath given all things into his hand. 3. That this is a ſtrong argument and encouragement for faith.

1ſt, Is it ſo, that the *Father* LOVETH *the Son?* Hence we may ſee,

1. The

1. The *infinite love of God*, in giving the Son of his love to be a Saviour and a ſacrifice for the like of us. O! *how excellent is his loving-kindneſs!* And, *how precious is his grace*, that he ſhould love ſuch vile creatures, and make his love to flow in ſuch a channel as this of his love to his Son! Here is a *love that paſſeth knowledge* and comprehenſion, and they comprehend it beſt, who comprehend that it is incomprehenſible; they know it beſt who know that it *paſſeth knowledge*, Eph. iii. 18, 19. O! does the Father love the Son, as our Surety and Saviour? How aſtoniſhing ſhould the love of God, in Chriſt, be to us? Are we not obliged to love that God that loves our Redeemer; and loves him, becauſe he is our Redeemer.

2. See here a *ſtrong argument* to make uſe of in our *application to God for what we need*. We are to go to God, in Chriſt, and to plead upon the love he bears to Chriſt; there cannot be a ſtronger argument with God than this, the *Father's love to the Son*. This is the argument on which Chriſt pleads, and prays for his people, John xvii. 24. *Father, I will, that they alſo whom thou haſt given me, be with me, where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou haſt given me; for thou lovedſt me before the foundation of the world.* You hear commonly, that we ſhould *pray in the name of Chriſt*; and if we *pray the Father, in his name, we ſhall be heard, whatſoever we aſk.* What is it to pray the Father in Chriſt's name? It is even to raiſe our faith, and embolden our confidence with God, merely on the account of that high love the Father bears to the Son; and that, though we have nothing that is lovely in God's ſight; nay, but rather every thing that is lothſom, though we have nothing in us to make God love us, but a thouſand things to make him lothe us; yet we build our hope of acceptance and ſucceſs, upon the Beloved of the Father, and upon the Father's love to him. He is a bleſſed believer that can plead with God upon this argument, for he ſhall prevail: *And whatſoever ye ſhall aſk, in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye ſhall aſk any thing in my name, I will do it*, John xiv. 13, 14. *And in that day ye ſhall aſk me nothing; verily, verily, I ſay unto you, whatſoever ye ſhall aſk the Father in my name, he will give it you*, John xvi. 23. Where you ſee both the Father and the Son engaged to do it.

3. See how *dear and precious Chriſt ſhould be to us*; ſince the Father loves him, what ſhould move us to love him if this do not? How precious ſhould he be to us who is precious unto God? It would argue that the mind of God and the Spirit of God was in us, if the Father's beloved were our beloved.

4. See here the *right rule of our love to Chriſt*, namely, to love him *as* the Father loves him. Wherein ſhould our love to Chriſt reſemble the Father's love? Why, the Father's love to the Son was evidenced in *chooſing* him to be our Saviour and Surety: ſo ſhould our love to Chriſt be manifeſted in making choice of him to be our Saviour and Surety; inſomuch, that as God hath laid all our help upon him, ſo we ſhould lay all our help where God hath laid it.—Again, the Father's love to the Son was evidenced in giving *all things* into his hand: thus ſhould our love to Chriſt be evidenced in putting *all things* in his hand as the Father doth; and particularly, you may put your *hearts* in his hand; that he may keep them; put your *ſouls* in his hand, that he may ſave them; put your *plagues* in his hand, that he may heal them; put your *corruptions* in his hand, that he may weaken and ſubdue them; put your *wants* in his hand, that he may ſupply them; put your *work* in his hand, that he may *work all your works in you, and for you*; put your *burdens* in his hand, that he may bear them: put all things in his hand, and thus evidence your love to him, by putting honour upon him, as a Prophet, to teach you; as a Prieſt, to pardon; and as a King, to conquer you by his grace, and crown you with his glory. This leads to the ſecond branch.

2dly, Is it ſo, that the Father hath evidenced his love to his Son by GIVING *all things into his hand?* Hence we may ſee,

1. How the *infinite wiſdom of God* hath outwitted the policy of the devil in his ſubtile attack upon, and in robbing the firſt Adam of all his ſtock, and thereby thinking to deſtroy all mankind: but, behold, the ſecond Adam appears with a ſtock incomparably greater than that which the firſt Adam loſt! O! what a happy change of Adam's! what a happy change of covenants and covenant heads! The ſecond Adam is well-furniſhed, having *all things in his hand*; and there the ſtock is well ſecured in a hand that the devil dare not meddle with; in a hand that hath already *bruiſed his head*, and hath *ſpoiled principalities and powers*; and hath *all things put in ſubjection under his feet*, Heb. ii. 8.

2. See what a *great want it is to want Chriſt*; for, then they want all things: they have nothing that are without Chriſt; they have no wiſdom, they have no ſtrength, no righteouſneſs. They are deſtitute of God; for God, and all his perfections, are in him. They are deſtitute of the Spirit; for, the Spirit, and all his graces, are in Chriſt; they are deſtitute of all things; for, *all things are in him*; and he is *all in all*. Without Chriſt, ordinances are nothing but an empty ſhell; the ſacramental ſupper, without Chriſt, is but an empty table; ſermons, without Chriſt, are but an empty ſound; heaven, without Chriſt, is but an empty void: heaven would be but darkneſs if the Lamb were not the light of the place. The ſinner, then, that remains without Chriſt, is nothing but a hell full of wickedneſs; empty of all good, and curſed in the want of all things.

3. See what a *great thing it is to have Chriſt*, becauſe they who have Chriſt, have *all things*, Rom. viii. 32. When God gives Chriſt, he cannot but, *with him, freely give him all things*; for, *he hath given all things into his hand*. O how happy are believers! *All things are yours*, becauſe *Chriſt is yours*; 1 Cor. iii. 21,—23. *All things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things preſent, or things to come; all is yours, and ye are Chriſt's, and Chriſt is God's.* The believer's ſtock can never be ſpent; and he can never ſee himſelf in miſery as long as he is looking to his Head. He can never loſe any thing but it is well repaid in Chriſt; and ſo long as Chriſt is to the fore, he has *all things* in him.

4. If the Father has given *all things* into Chriſt's hand, then hence we may be ſure of ſeveral particulars.

(1.) We may be ſure that we cannot go to a *better* hand for all that we need; for, he hath *all things in his hand*, both by a natural right, as God; and a donative right, as Mediator: therefore we may ſay, *To whom ſhall we go? thou haſt*

the words of eternal life, John vi. 68. To whom ſhould we go for light, and life, and ſtrength, and pardon, and peace, and perſeverance? To whom ſhould we go for the Spirit of faith, for the Spirit of repentance, for the Spirit of grace, and ſupplication? — Again, We may be ſure that it is *eaſy* with Chriſt to ſupply all our needs, and to give us *all-ſufficiency in all things*, 2 Cor. ix. 8. He hath not far to go to bring our ſupply; no: he hath no more ado but *open his hand*; for, the *Father hath given all things into his hand.*

(2.) We may be ſure that *all things ſhall work together for good, to them that love God*, Rom. viii. 28. All things are for their ſakes, becauſe all things are in the hand of their Lord, and Head, and Huſband; and he can eaſily turn them about in his hand for accompliſhing his pleaſure and their profit. The worſt things, as well as the beſt, are in his hand; the moſt heavy croſſes, as well as comforts, are in his hand, and at his diſpoſal.

(3.) We may be ſure that the *covenant is well-ordered in all things*, and the *covenant Head hath all things in his hand*, who will *do all things well*; and will have this teſtimony from all his children, at the end of the day, that he hath *done all things well.* How can it be otherwiſe, when all things are put in his infinitely wiſe and gracious hand? It is unbelief to ſay, O! there is an ill-ordered providence; there is an ill-ordered trial. Stay a little, till faith look up and ſee all things in Chriſt's hand; and ſee all things managed by the hand of infinite wiſdom, infinite holineſs, infinite righteouſneſs, faithfulneſs, and truth, and then it will ſay, "O! well-ordered temptation, that hath thus "humbled me. O! well-ordered tribulation, "that hath made me take reſt in God only. "O! well-ordered chaſtiſements, that have "driven me to my heavenly Father. O! well-"ordered loſſes and croſſes, that have weaned "me from the world, and made Chriſt preci-"ous to me. O! well-ordered deſertion, that "tended to imbitter that which ſeparated be-"tween God and me, and made his preſence "more precious to me than ever. O! well-"ordered victory, that ſin and Satan got over "me, that tended to fill my heart with holy "revenge againſt ſin, and made me ſet the "powers of heaven againſt the powers of hell. "O! well-ordered diſappointment, at ſuch "and ſuch a time, that made me know that "God was a Sovereign, to be waited on, and "not to be limited to my time. O well-order-"ed providence, that dried up the ſtreams of "creature-comforts, and worldly enjoyments, "that I might betake myſelf to the fountain "of all conſolation. O! well-ordered extre-"mity, that ſo tended to make the Lord's ap-"pearing, at ſuch a time, to be wonderful and "welcome; for, *I was brought low, and he help-"ed me.*" All things are well-ordered, becauſe all things are in his hand. Again,

(4.) We may be ſure that the *dead ſhall riſe again*, according to the word of God, and that by the power of the Mediator; for, all things even the duſt of the earth, is in his hand, and particularly the duſt of the ſaints; he hath undertaken to *raiſe them up at the laſt day*: John vi. 39, 40, 44, 54. *And this is the Father's will which hath ſent me, that of all which he hath given me I ſhould loſe nothing, but ſhould raiſe it up again at the laſt day. And this is the will of him that ſent me, that every one that ſeeth the Son, and believeth in him, may have everlaſting life, and I will raiſe him up at the laſt day. No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath ſent me draw him, and I will raiſe him up at the laſt day.*

(5.) We may be ſure that *dead ſinners* may be *raiſed to ſpiritual life*, and dead hearts quickened to a new and lively hope; for all things, and all hearts are in his hand, who is *the reſurrection and the life*; John xi. 25. *The hour is coming*, ſays Chriſt, *and now is*, [and, O! may it be now at this occaſion!] *when the dead ſhall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear ſhall live.* O! may the Spirit of life that is in Chriſt's hand, enter among theſe dead and dry bones, that they may live.

(6.) We may be ſure that *miniſters can do nothing to communicate ſaving light to darkened minds*, without power from Chriſt; for they are called *ſtars in his right-hand*; and they can give no light if he ſhut his hand: and while they, in particular, are ſaid to be *in his hand*, it ſays, that their gifts, and parts, and miniſtry, and ſucceſs; their labour, ſo long here or elſewhere, is all at the ſpecial diſpoſal of the Lord Jeſus.

(7.) We may be ſure that *nothing can fall out without his ordering, and over-ruling providence*; for, *all things*, and all the reins of government are in his hand. This may be ſilencing amidſt all the troubles that the church of God, and all the trials that the children of God, are tryſted with; *I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, becauſe thou didſt it*, Pſal. xxxix. 9. *Is there evil in the city, and the Lord hath not done it.* I have done it, ſays the Lord: all the evil of *afflictions* are of his ordering: Who laid ſuch a man on a ſick-bed? Who made ſuch a man a widower, and his children motherleſs? Who made ſuch a woman a widow, and her children fatherleſs? Who was it that made ſuch a man weak and ſickly, or ſmote ſuch an one with the gout, or gravel, or flux? *I have done it*, ſays the Lord.—As to the evil of *ſin*, you muſt anſwer for it; but as to the evil of affliction, I will anſwer for it; that it is I that have done it: wherefore, *be ſtill and know that I am God.*

(8.) We may be ſure hence, that *Chriſt is God*, otherwiſe he were not capable of this honour to have *all things given into his hand.* What ſhall we think of thoſe that would diſhonour Chriſt, by withholding all things from him, and denying his ſupreme Deity, making him incapable of receiving all things, or managing all things? How contrary to God the Father are Arian blaſphemers? The Father gives all things to him, and they would take all things from him, that the Father gave him; yea, and the things that the Father never gave him: his divine nature and eſſence is a thing the Father never gave him; for, he is eſſentially one and the ſame God with the Father; but, by diveſting him of this, they would take away all from him, and leave him nothing but a name.

(9.) We may be ſure, that the time is coming wherein Chriſt will *gather out of his kingdom all things that offend*, Mat. xiii. 41. For, *all things are under his hand*, and *under his feet*; and he is *Head over all things to the church.* Many things are amiſs in the church of God; it is robbed and ſpoiled, in many reſpects; but he that hath all things in his hand rules, and over-rules: let our eyes be towards him for better days; and though our eyes ſhould be ſhut before we ſee them, may we live and die in the faith of this,

this, that the *Lord will appear in his glory to build up Zion;* and that at laſt the church militant ſhall be triumphant.

(10.) We may be ſure, that Chriſt is a *pearl of great price,* and that he is the *money that anſwers all things*; becauſe *all things are given into his hand:* and we ſhould *count all things but loſs and dung, for the excellency of the knowledge of Chriſt.* There is that in Chriſt that will anſwer all our needs, all our wants, all our neceſſities, all our deſires, all our hopes.

(11.) We may be ſure, that all things ſhall be *fulfilled, whatſoever he hath promiſed;* for, *all things are in his hand.* We need not doubt of his performing his promiſe; for, what he hath promiſed to give, he hath in his hand to give, and will do it in his own time.

(12.) We may be ſure, that all things, whatſoever we aſk, *believing, we ſhall receive: And whatſoever ye ſhall aſk in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son: If ye ſhall aſk any thing in my name, I will do it,* John xiv. 13, 14. *And in that day ye ſhall aſk me nothing: verily, verily, I ſay unto you, whatſoever ye ſhall aſk the Father in my name, he will give it you,* John xvi. 23.

(13.) We may be ſure, that *preparation for a communion-table is to be had only from the Lord Jeſus*; for, as *all things come of him,* 1 Chron. xxix. 14.; ſo the *preparation of the heart is from the Lord.* We are to look to him for a communion-frame; and what is that? I think the beſt communion-frame is a believing frame: and what for a frame is that? Really, I ſuppoſe, it is the frame that is the leaſt known; it is a frame wherein the ſoul comes to be denied to all frames that it uſes to rely upon, and think much of, and come to ſay, in effect, to this purpoſe, Though the Lord ſhould deny me a lively frame, a mourning frame, a melting frame; yea, though he ſhould allow me nothing in my own hand, yet this ſhall ſuffice me, if I can go believing and rejoicing in this, that all my ſtock is in the hand of Chriſt. I have nothing to confide in but Chriſt, as the Lord my righteouſneſs and ſtrength: it is a frame wherein the perſon is ſenſible that he has nothing, but yet goes away leaning upon him whom the Father loves, and to whom he hath given all things. This leads,

3*dly*, To the *third* claſs of inferences, from the other part of the doctrine, namely, That the Father's love to Chriſt, in *giving all things into his hand,* is a *ſtrong argument* and *encouragement for faith:* this I have demonſtrated already. And if it be ſo, hence we may ſee,

1. That there is nothing to hinder our *matching* and *marrying with the Son of God by faith*; for, *all things are ready,* therefore we may *come to the marriage,* before you come to the *marriage-ſupper,* Mat. xxii. 4. *All things are ready;* for, all things are in the Bridegroom's hand: *The Father loves him, and hath given all things into his hand.*—The *wedding-garment* is ready for you to put on; pardon of ſin, and peace with God, and all is ready, in his hand to give you. But, ſay you, *I am not ready.* Why, what want you to make you ready? Do you want faith, repentance, love, or any grace, to make you ready? Do you want ſuch and ſuch a humbled, and believing, and penitent heart to make you ready? And will you never come till you have theſe things? Why, then, you will never come at all; for theſe things are no where to be had but in Chriſt's hand, where all things are. And therefore, in God's name, I call you, who are ſenſible of your want of all theſe good things, to come and join hands with Chriſt, and put your hand, as it were, in his hand, wherein all things are, and you ſhall not want; for, all things are ready in his hand to give you. Therefore,

2. It is no matter though ſinners have *nothing to bring alongſt with them to Chriſt;* though they are poor, and deſtitute of all things, they are welcome; yea, the more poor, the more welcome to him that hath all things in his hand to give. What though you are nothing, and have nothing, and are a thouſand times worſe than nothing, and crying out, in your heart, Oh! I have no faith, no love, no grace, no good about me, and all things wanting: is that your caſe? I will tell you, man, woman, you are the welcomeſt perſon in all the world to come to Chriſt, who has all things given into his hand: *To this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite ſpirit, and trembleth at my word,* Iſa. lxvi. 2. As for you that are *rich, and increaſed with goods, and ſtand in need of nothing;* and are ready to ſay you have ſo many good things, you have a good heart to God, and you have good frames, and good deſires, and are good Chriſtians, and good neighbours; and do ſo many good duties, and think you have ſo many good things; really I fear our Lord get little honour from you; for, you have ſome money, and you will not come to take all things freely out of Chriſt's hand, *without money, and without price.* Indeed, if people go to a public change, they can get nothing without money; but if you go to a king's palace, it is an affront to the prince if you ſhould offer money for any thing. Oh! what an affront is it to the *King of kings,* who has *all things* in his hand to give, for you to offer him money? I am not offering that, ſay you; yes, you do it, when you ſay, in effect, "I have ſo many "good things about me; therefore, I hope, he "will give me more; I am none of the worſt "of folks, I hope; and therefore, I truſt he "will ſave me." You are not yet for ſalvation by free grace, according to the new covenant; no: you are ſtanding upon the rotten covenant of works. If God have mercy on you, he will bring you to nothing, that he may bring you to Chriſt for all things.

3. Hence ſee the *nature of faith,* and a mark and evidence of its being true ſaving faith, or believing unto everlaſting life. It is a faith that believes the Father loves the Son, and hath given all things into his hand; and reſts content with ſuch a Chriſt as this: *Let a man examine himſelf, and ſo let him eat.* Examine your faith on this; Have you a faith that believes the Father's love to the Son, and giving all things into his hand, ſo as you are well content that all your ſtock of righteouſneſs and ſtrength is in Chriſt's hand? This is a mark that will diſtinguiſh the believer from the cloſeſt hypocrite. It is the ſoundeſt faith that can rejoice in this, that *all things are in Chriſt's hand.* Hypocrites may have ſomething *from* Chriſt, but they have nothing *in* him; they cannot make this their boaſt, that they have all things in Chriſt: but let hypocrites boaſt of their common gifts, common graces, common attainments, or whatever they may have from Chriſt; yet theſe only have moſt from him who are content, and glad at their hearts, that their

their all is in him; and that their ſtock is in his hand. Hence believers are ſaid to be *ſtrong in the Lord, and in the power of his might: ſtrong in the grace that is in Chriſt Jeſus.* Hypocrites may be, like the ivy, growing up the tree very cloſe, and receiving ſap therefrom; and yet it grows upon its own root. They may grow up in a profeſſion, and receive the ſap of common influences from Chriſt, and yet they grow upon the root of the old covenant, were never rooted in Chriſt: they have only ſomethings from him, but nothing in him. But the believer is rooted in Chriſt, and hath his all from him, into whoſe hand the Father hath given all things. Hence the Spirit of Chriſt may be upon a hypocrite, in reſpect of common operations; but the Spirit of Chriſt is in the believer, in reſpect of ſpecial inhabitation. The hypocrite is like a pool of water, maintained only from without, by the clouds; but the believer is like a well of water, *ſpringing up to everlaſting life*; for, he hath not only *many things from* Chriſt, but he hath *all things in* him, and lives upon him for all things.

4. And laſtly, We may hence ſee the *duty of all ſinners*, as well as *ſaints*, as long as they have ſin and want about them, namely, to *come to Chriſt for all things*; becauſe the *Father loves him, and hath given all things into his hand.* O what a full-handed Saviour is here! and ſuch a full and ſolid foundation for faith that you can have no objection againſt coming to Chriſt, but what the text will anſwer. Chriſt hath all *offices* for ſaving ſinners: the Father that gave him *all things*, hath anointed him to all ſaving offices. If you be *ignorant*; he is a *Prophet*, to reveal the will of God to you: if you be *guilty*; he is a *Prieſt*, to reconcile God and you, and make *peace by the blood of the croſs*: if you be a *bond ſlave* to ſin and Satan; he is a *King*, to ranſom you from the power of theſe enemies. He to whom the Father hath given all things, to him he hath given all offices ſuiting your various caſes; and, therefore, be your caſe what it will, there is no ground to ſtay at a diſtance from him.—As he hath given him all offices, ſo he hath given him all *relations* ſuitable to our need; therefore in ſcripture he is ſet forth in manifold relations wherein he ſtands to ſinners in the viſible church, namely, as a Head, a Huſband, a Bridegroom, a Phyſician, an Advocate; therefore, whatever relation he claims to himſelf, claim you to be the party related to him, ſaying, "If he be a Head, I will be a member; "if he be a Huſband, I will be a wife; if he "be a Bridegroom, I will be the bride; if he "be a Phyſician, I will be the patient; if he "be an Advocate, I will be the client."—Yea, he is given to be all things that we need, and all things are given into his hand. Nothing, therefore, in the world ſhould hinder your coming to Chriſt, and believing in him. Are you objecting againſt believing in him? No doubt you are; and yet I will tell you, I know of no objection you have, but what this doctrine will be an argument and a reaſon for faith, inſtead of being a reaſon againſt it.

You object, that you are a moſt *prodigious, guilty ſinner*: Why, that is a reaſon for your coming to him, becauſe the pardon of all ſin is in his hand; *he had power on earth to forgive ſin*: and hath he not power in heaven?—Are you a *filthy* ſinner? Why, that is a reaſon for looking to him; becauſe the waſhing away of all filthineſs is in his hand; and therefore he ſays, *If I waſh thee not, thou haſt no part in me. The blood of Jeſus Chriſt cleanſeth from all ſin.*—Are you overrun with *maladies, plagues*, and *diſeaſes*; ſuch as, deadneſs, darkneſs, hardneſs of heart, and enmity? Well, that is a reaſon why you ſhould come to him; for, the healing of all diſeaſes is in his hand; his name is, *The Lord, the healer.*—Are you a *bond ſlave* to the devil, and a *captive* to ſin? Why, that is a reaſon for your coming to him; for, the looſing of all bonds is in his hands: and, *if the Son make you free, you ſhall be free indeed.*—Are you under the power of *luſts* and *corruptions?* That is a reaſon for your coming to him; for, the ſubduing of all corruptions is in his hand: *All power in heaven and earth is given to him.*—Are you *burdened*, and under *heavy loads?* That is a reaſon why you ſhould come to him; for, the bearing of all burdens is in his hand: *Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you reſt. Caſt your burden upon the Lord, and he will ſuſtain thee.*—Are you under *heavy croſſes?* That is a good reaſon for your coming to him; for, the ſanctifying of all croſſes is in his hand: *By this ſhall the iniquity of Jacob be purged; and this is all the fruit to take away ſin. In their affliction they will ſeek me early.*—Are you preſſed with innumerable *objections*, that you think no miniſter in the world can anſwer? Why, that is a reaſon for your coming to Chriſt; for, the anſwering of all objections is in his hand: *I have put my Spirit upon him*, ſays the Father, *and he ſhall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.*—Are you oppreſſed with *fears?* Behold the diſpelling of all fears is in his hand; and he can force them away with a word, ſaying, *Fear not, only believe.*—Are you *bewildered* in the miſt of darkneſs and ignorance, not knowing what way to take? That is a reaſon for believing in him, who is given to be a *light to lighten the Gentiles. He that walketh in darkneſs, and hath no light, let him truſt in the name of the Lord, and ſtay himſelf upon his God. I will lead the blind in a way that they know not, and in paths that they have not known. I will make darkneſs light before them, and crooked things ſtreight.*—Are you under the power of *unbelief*, unable to believe? Well, that is a reaſon why you need to believe, that he hath power to make you believe: it is given to him, as Mediator, to be the *author and finiſher of faith.* Look to him for his drawing power.—Are you under the power of *obſtinacy*, unwilling to believe? Why, that is ſad; and yet it is the reaſon why you ſhould believe in him, and to believe that he is given to make you willing; *Thy people ſhall be willing in a day of thy power.*—Have you *nothing at all* in hand? Why, ſo much the better; if you can believe that *all things* are in Chriſt's hand, then ſhould your caſe be as that of the apoſtle, *Having nothing, and yet poſſeſſing all things.*

"But, ſays the carnal heart, what doctrine "is this, *nothing but believe!* believe that *all things* "*are in Chriſt's hand!* what advantage is this to "practical religion? This muſt be ſome ſtrange "doctrine." Well, I doubt not but it is ſtrange to fleſh, and to the legal heart that would have all things in its own hand; and cannot be perſuaded to believe that this way of believing is the way to heaven. "What! muſt there be no "*doing* at all, nor *working?*" Why, man, I muſt tell you, with the apoſtle, that *by the deeds of the law no fleſh living can be juſtified*: but if you be for right goſpel doing, acceptable to God, then know it,

it, in God's name I inform you, that the beſt believer is the beſt doer; for, if once you could believe that the Father hath given all things into Chriſt's hand, and believe it with application, that all your ſtock of righteouſneſs and ſtrength is in Chriſt, then you ſhould be *able to do all things, through Chriſt ſtrengthening you*, Phil. iv. 13. It is ſtrange, and yet it is as true as it is ſtrange, they that are for the way of doing, they can *do nothing*; whereas they that are for the way of believing, they can *do all things*: for, *all things are poſſible to him that believeth*; becauſe, when *he is weak, then he is ſtrong*, 2 Cor. xii. 10.: weak in himſelf, but ſtrong in the Lord; having no ſufficiency to think a good thought of himſelf, but his *ſufficiency is of God*, whoſe *ſtrength is made perfect in weakneſs*. Moſt gladly, therefore, doth he *glory in his infirmities, that the power of Chriſt may reſt upon him*. Happy therefore is that ſoul, which, in the ſenſe of the want of all things, can believe and be joyfully content in this, that the *Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand*. He that thus *believeth on the Son, hath everlaſting life: and he that believeth not, ſhall not ſee life, but the wrath of God abideth on him*.

May he, who hath all things in his hand, open his hand and give the Spirit of faith, that ſo *faith may come, by hearing* of the glorious object of faith. *

ACTION-SERMON.

JOHN iii. 35.

The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.

IT is in the holy and over-ruling providence of him, in whoſe hand all things and all hearts are, that I have been inclined to purſue this ſubject, on this ſolemn occaſion. I have not found my mind determined to enter on any other theme: and, I ſuppoſe, no ſubject can be more ſuitable to the work of the day; for, we cannot commemorate the boundleſs love of Chriſt to us, in dying for our ſins; nor can we remember it more effectually, than by remembering the Father's bountiful love to him, for his ſo doing; and that evidenced by his *giving all things into his hand*.

Nothing, in the world, will ſweeten the rememberance of Chriſt's love to us, ſo much as the believing rememberance of the Father's love to him: even as nothing can provoke us more to put honour upon Chriſt, than to ſee how much honour the Father puts upon him; and for this end, that *all men might honour the Son, even as they honour the Father*. Why, what honour has the Father put upon him? It is even the greateſt honour; and that wherein our greateſt happineſs lies: *He hath given all things into his hand*.

As this is laid down here for a *foundation of faith*, if you compare it with ver. 36. and with Mat. xi. 27, 28.; ſo here we have a full feaſt, and plentiful proviſion for our faith to feed upon this day, and all in the beſt hand: *The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand*.

The doctrinal obſervation we deduced from theſe words was as follows, namely,

OBSERV. *That the Father's love to the Son, evidenced by his giving all things into his hand, is a ſtrong argument and encouragement for faith to believe in him.*

The method laid down, for proſecuting this ſubject, was the following, *viz.*

I. I would ſpeak a little of the Father's *love* to the Son.

II. Speak of this *evidence* of the Father's love: and that, 1. Shew ſome of theſe *things* the Father gives to the Son. 2. Notice the *import* of the expreſſion, *He gave all things into his hand*. 3. How this *evidences* the Father's love to him. 4. *Why* he hath thus manifeſted his love to him.

III. How this love of the Father, thus evidenced, in giving all things into his hand, is a *ground of Faith*.

IV. Make ſome *application* of the whole.

We have already diſcuſſed the doctrinal part of this ſubject, and likewiſe made ſome improvement thereof: what I now intend further, upon this ſubject, is by way of EXHORTATION. And the exhortation I would offer this day, from this doctrine, is, That all that hear me would come to this full and ſufficient Saviour, believing that the Father hath furniſhed him with all things neceſſary for your everlaſting ſalvation; for, *he that* thus *believeth on the Son hath everlaſting life* in him. That which is the great matter and ground of faith, is alſo the great motive and argument for it, namely, *that the Father hath*, in love to him, and to ſinners in him and through him, *given all things into his hand*.

That I may, therefore, purſue and enforce this exhortation to believe in Chriſt, upon this ground, I ſhall, as the Lord may enable, obſerve the following method of diſcourſe.

Firſt, That our faith may be *fixed* in this truth, I ſhall offer ſome DEMONSTRATIONS of it; and evidence that all things are given into the hand of Chriſt, the Father's beloved.

Secondly, That faith may be *cleared* on this head, I ſhall notice a little the BEAUTY of this diſpoſure of infinite wiſdom, in giving all things into Chriſt's hand.

Thirdly, That our faith may be *enlarged* and *widened* in the view thereof, I ſhall ſpeak a little of the EXTENT of the *matter*, the *treaſure*, that Chriſt hath in him, while it is ſaid that *all things are given into his hand*.

Fourthly, That faith may be *enlightened* and *aſſiſted* further herein, I ſhall conſider the MANNER how all things are in the hand of Chriſt.

Fifthly, That faith may be *quickened* and *excited*, I ſhall offer ſome MOTIVES and CONSIDERATIONS, ariſing from, and accompanying this truth, that *all things are given into Chriſt's hand*.

Sixthly, That our faith may be *regulated* and *ſquared*, according to the goſpel rule, I ſhall cloſe with a few DIRECTIONS, as the Lord may enable.

And, O Sirs, ſince *faith comes by hearing* of the object of faith, by hearing what Chriſt, the object of faith, is, and what he hath, let your eye be towards him, and your ear be open to hear what is ſaid of him; that, in hearing,

* Here ends the firſt ſermon on this text, preached at Kinglaſſy. What follows was delivered immediately before the celebration of the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper at Dunfermline, June 27. 1731.

you may believe, without ſeeking to draw faith out of your own heart and bowels, whence you will never find it. If there be any ſubject in the world, the hearing whereof tends, thro' grace, to work ſaving faith, it is this, that faith, and all grace, all good, all fulneſs, *all things*, are in Chriſt's hand.

Firſt, The *firſt* thing I have propoſed, that faith may be *fixed*, and *ſettled*, and *aſſured* of this truth, is to offer ſome DEMONSTRATIONS thereof. And, O that it may be in the *demonſtration of the Spirit and with power.*

I ſhall only premiſe, that when we ſay, *All things are in the hand of Chriſt*, we mean not only *generally*, all things in the *kingdom of providence*; becauſe, *his kingdom rules over all*; and, *He is the head of all things unto the church*, Eph. i. 22.: but alſo *particularly*, all things in the *kingdom of grace*; of which he ſays, *My kingdom is not of this world*, John xviii. 46. But bleſſed be God, he hath not ſaid, his *ſpiritual* kingdom is not *in* this world; but it is not *of* this world: he hath his ſpiritual inviſible kingdom in the hearts of his people in this world; who, though they are *in* it, yet they are not *of* it, but *choſen out of the world*; yet, ſometimes this kingdom of his is viſible, in the remarkable tokens of his ſpiritual preſence in his ordinances. And, O for many ſuch tokens this day! But now, that all things are in Chriſt's hand, will be evident from the following demonſtrations.

1. *Demonſtration* of it is this, "If they that *inherit Chriſt*, inherit *all things*; then all things "are in his hand: but ſo it is, they that inherit him inherit all things, 1 Cor. iii. 21,—23. "*For all things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, "or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things "preſent, or things to come; all are yours, and ye are "Chriſt's and Chriſt is God's.*" This golden chain, together with all things preſent, and all things to come, is linked to the believer, becauſe he is united unto Chriſt. The believer hath an intereſt in Chriſt; by an intereſt in Chriſt, he hath an intereſt in God; and by an intereſt in God, he hath an intereſt in *all things*. As Solomon ſays, *Money anſwers all things*; becauſe all things that are vendible may be procured by it: ſo Chriſt anſwers all things to the believer. He is meat and drink to them; *My fleſh is meat indeed; and my blood is drink indeed.*—He is gold and ſilver to them; *The merchandize of wiſdom is better than ſilver; and the gain thereof than pure gold.* Come, *buy of me gold tried in the fire.*—He is raiment to them when naked; and they *put on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*—He is health to them when diſeaſed; *I am the Lord that healeth thee.*—He is all things to them; *He that overcometh ſhall inherit all things*, Rev. xxi. 7. Why? It is added, *I will be his God.*

2. *Demonſtration* of this truth, is, "If all things "without Chriſt be but *empty nothing*, then all "things only are in Chriſt's hand: but ſo it is, "all things are nothing without Chriſt; *Vani"ty of vanity, ſays the preacher, all is vanity*, Eccl. "i. 2." All the riches, pleaſures, profits, and preferments of the world is but emptineſs; your wiſdom, your parts, your children, your lands, your revenues, without Chriſt, can amount to nothing; they are but like cyphers without a figure. It is ſaid of believers, 2 Cor. vi. 10. *Having nothing, they poſſeſs all things*; becauſe, though they had nothing in the world, yet, having Chriſt, they have all things: and, on the other hand, it may be truly ſaid of the wicked and unbelieving, that, having all things, they poſſeſs nothing; becauſe, though they had all things in the world at their will, yet, being without Chriſt, they have nothing: all they have is but emptineſs; yea, all they have is a curſe, becauſe they have not Chriſt. And thus all things, without him, are not only *nothing*, but *worſe than nothing.*

3. *Demonſtration* of this truth is, "If all things "in the world be but a *ſhadow* of what is in "Chriſt; then all things are in his hand *ſub"ſtantially:* but ſo it is, all *good* things in the "world are but ſhadows of what is in Chriſt." Outward riches are but a ſhadow of the *unſearchable riches of Chriſt:* outward life is but a ſhadow of him who is *the way, the truth, and the life:* outward liberty is but a ſhadow of that freedom that is to be had in Chriſt; *If the Son make you free, then are you free indeed*, John viii. 36.; importing, that no freedom is freedom indeed and in truth but this: outward reſt is but a ſhadow of the reſt that is to be had in him; *Come to me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you reſt.* The ſun in the firmament is but a ſhadow of the Sun of righteouſneſs, and of his glory: roſes and lilies are but ſhadows of his beauty, who is the *roſe of Sharon, and lily of the valley:* rivers and fountains are but ſhadows of his fulneſs, who is the *fountain of living waters*; not a fountain cloſed, but a fountain opened to us: plants and trees are but a ſhadow of the verdure of him who is the *plant of renown*, the *tree of life.* All things that have any excellency in them are but ſhadows of him in whom all excellencies do concentre. All the ſtars of creature excellencies are but ſhadows of him who is the *bright and morning ſtar.*

4. *Demonſtration* is, "If the *knowledge* of all "things be worth *nothing*, in reſpect of the "knowledge of Chriſt; then all things are on"ly in his hand: but ſo it is, that all things "are but *loſs and dung* in reſpect of the *excellen"cy of the knowledge of Chriſt*, Phil. iii. 8." The great apoſtle deſired to *know nothing but Chriſt, and him crucified*; yea, *this is life eternal to know him, and God in him*, John xvii. 3. The knowledge of Chriſt is the moſt certain, the moſt profitable, and the moſt comfortable knowlege.—It is the moſt *certain* knowledge: we know other things only by their ſhape and ſpecies; but we know Chriſt by the Spirit: we know other things by the teſtimony of men; but we know Chriſt by the teſtimony of the Spirit: now, as the teſtimony of the Spirit is more certain than the teſtimony of man; ſo the knowledge of Chriſt is the moſt certain knowledge.—It is the moſt *profitable*; it is a knowledge that gives us the poſſeſſion of the things we know: by the knowledge of Chriſt, we are poſſeſſed of Chriſt; by our knowledge of his fulneſs, we are poſſeſſed of his fulneſs; *By his knowledge ſhall my righteous ſervant juſtify many.* If it be *life eternal to know him*, ſurely it is moſt profitable.—It is the moſt *comfortable:* all our want of comfort and ſatisfaction flows from our want of the knowledge of Chriſt; and all our true comfort ariſes from the knowledge and view of him. John *wept*, becauſe he thought none was able to *open the ſeals of the book* of God's decrees, concerning man's redemption; but, upon the diſcovery of Chriſt, the *Lion of the tribe of Judah*, the weeping was ſtilled; he wept no more, Rev. v. 4, 5.

5. *Demon-*

5. *Demonſtration*, or ſcriptural argument, is, "If Chriſt can *ſupply all wants*; then all things "muſt be in his hand: but ſo it is, he can ſup- "ply all wants which we labour under, Phil. "iv. 19. *My God ſhall ſupply all your needs, accord- "ing to his riches in glory, by Chriſt Jeſus.*" Whatever you labour under, there is that in Chriſt which can ſupply and ſupport.—Do you labour under *deſertion?* then he ſays, *I will never leave nor forſake thee*, Heb. xiii. 5.—Do you labour under *corruption* and *bondage* to ſin? It is he that ſays, *Sin ſhall not have dominion over you*, Rom. vii. 14.—Do you labour under *temptation?* It is he who, as the *God of peace*, will *tread down Satan under your feet*, Rom. xvi. 20.; and ſays, *My grace ſhall be ſufficient for you.*—Do you labour under *weakneſs?* It is he who ſays, *My ſtrength ſhall be perfected in thy weakneſs*, 2 Cor. xii. 9.—Do you labour under *affliction*, inward or outward? *Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all.*—Do you labour under fears of *public calamities* upon the land? It is ſaid of him, *This man ſhall be the peace, when the Aſſyrian ſhall come into our land.*—Do you labour under the fears of *death?* It is he who ſays, *O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy deſtruction. Repentance ſhall be hid from mine eyes.*

6. *Demonſtration* is, "If Chriſt can *ſatisfy* all "the deſires, *ſuit* all the conditions, and *an- "ſwer* all the objections of ſinners; then he "muſt have all things: but ſo it is, he can "ſatisfy all deſires of ſinners; for he is the "*Deſire of all nations*, and every thing deſirable "is in him; *He is altogether lovely*, [or ALL DE- "SIRES, as the word imports,] Song v. 16. "made up of deſirable things."—Is *worth* deſireable? He is the *treaſure hid in the field.*—Is *wiſdom* deſirable? In him are *hid all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge. Wiſdom hath builded her houſe*, Prov. ix. 1.: it is in the plural number, *wiſdoms.* Chriſt is a compound of wiſdom.—He can ſuit all *conditions* of poor ſinners: there is no condition you can be in, but he hath a promiſe ſuited to it: ſo that there is in Chriſt what ſuits all caſes; for, the promiſes are nothing elſe but the veins where the blood and fulneſs of Chriſt doth run.—Are you *wandering?* Chriſt ſays, *I am the way.*—Are you in *darkneſs?* Chriſt ſays, *I am the light of the world.*—Are you in *deadneſs?* Chriſt ſays, *I am the reſurrection and the life.*—Are you *guilty?* Chriſt ſays, he is the *Lord our righteouſneſs.*—Are you *polluted?* Chriſt ſays, he is the *fountain opened for ſin and for uncleanneſs.*—Are you *dejected?* Chriſt ſays, *He will ſend the Comforter.*—Do you need *protection?* Chriſt affirms, that he is the *rock of ages*, in whom is *everlaſting ſtrength.*—Do you need *direction?* Chriſt is the *wonderful Counſellor*, and he ſays, *I will lead the blind by a way they know not.*—As Chriſt can ſatisfy all deſires and ſuit all conditions, ſo he can anſwer all *objections.*—If any of you ſay, "Alas! I am "a poor *loſt* ſinner." Then Chriſt ſays, *I came to ſeek and ſave that which is loſt*, Luke xix. 10.—"Oh! ſays another, I am *unrighteous*, and I am "a *great* ſinner". Well, Chriſt ſays, *I came not to call the righteous, but ſinners to repentance*, Mat. ix. 13.—"Oh! ſays a third, but I *cannot* repent." Well, it is anſwered, *Him hath God exalted to give repentance to Iſrael, and remiſſion of ſins*, Acts v. 31.—"Alas! cries another, but I cannot *turn* from "ſin." It is anſwered, Chriſt is *ſent to bleſs you, in turning every one of you from your iniquities*, Acts iii. 26. It is his work to *turn away tranſgreſſion from Jacob;* to turn you *from darkneſs to light*, and from the *power of Satan unto God.*—"Ah! but I "have no *might* or *ability* to come unto Chriſt." It is anſwered, *He gives power to the faint, and to them that have no might he createth ſtrength*, Iſa. xl. 29, 30, 31. He is the *author of faith*, Heb. xii. 2.—"Oh! but I have ſinned to the *uttermoſt*." Why, then, he tells you, he is *able to ſave to the uttermoſt*, Heb. vii. 25.—"Alas! I am a *backſlider*, "and bent to *backſliding*." To this it is anſwered, *I will heal their backſlidings; I will love them freely*, Hoſ. xiv. 4.—"Oh! but though I "ſhould come to him, I cannot *follow* him; "his ſheep follow him." Well, what ſays he to this? Even that *he will carry the lambs in his arms, and gently lead thoſe that are with young*, Iſa. xl. 11.——Whatever the objection is, he can anſwer it; whatever the caſe is, he can remede it; whatever the deſire is, he can ſatisfy it: why then, *all things* muſt be *in his hand;* and no wonder, for all the treaſures of divine plenitude and fulneſs are in his hand.—This may ſuffice to demonſtrate the truth hereof.

Secondly, The next thing propoſed, was, in order to *clear* our faith in this matter, to notice the BEAUTY of this diſpoſure of infinite wiſdom, in giving *all things into Chriſt's hand.* And,

1. In this contrivance infinite wiſdom hath conſulted the *Father's right* and *property*, and manifeſted that he is the giver of all things, and the poſſeſſor of all things; inſomuch that, when he gives all things, he cannot loſe thereby the poſſeſſion of any thing he gives; for, the Father's giving all things into Chriſt's hand doth not imply, that he alienates his own right. It is true, when we give a thing to another, we loſe a right to it: but it is not ſo with God; for, when he gives *all things* to Chriſt, and when he gives Chriſt, and all things in him to us, he ſtill keeps his right to all that he gives: *All things are yours, and ye are Chriſt's, and Chriſt is God's*, 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23. Thus, what the Father gives into Chriſt's hand, remains ſtill in the Father's hand; *And I give unto them eternal life, and none ſhall pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them me is greater than all, and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one*, John x. 28,—30.

2. In this contrivance infinite wiſdom hath conſulted the *Son's right* and *title.* This donative right that he hath, as Mediator, as it is well adapted to him, who, as God, hath the ſame *eſſential* right and title to all things with the Father and the Holy Ghoſt. For, as to his eternal Godhead, he is the *everlaſting Father*, Iſa. ix. 6. *whoſe goings forth have been of old, from everlaſting*, Mic. v. 2. *By whom are all things, and we by him*, 1 Cor. viii. 6.—And, as Mediator, his *donative* right is attended with an *acquiſitive* right, by his purchaſe, by which he hath merited and obtained a *name above every name*, and a being *head over all things to the church*, Phil. ii. 9. Eph. v. 23.—A *bellical* right, by conqueſt, *making the people to fall down under him*, Pſal. xlv. 4.; making them *willing in a day of his power*, Pſal. cx. 3.; and *overcoming thoſe that make war with him*, Rev. xvii. 14. *He is able to ſubdue all things to himſelf*, Heb. ii. 8.—An *hereditary* right, being the *heir of all things*, Heb. i. 2.; and being the *firſt-born, higher than the kings of the earth*, Pſalm lxxxix. 27.; the *firſt-born from the dead, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence*, Col. i. 18.

3. In

3. In this contrivance, infinite wisdom hath consulted the *security of the stock and treasure*, with which Christ is intrusted; and taken the best method for securing all things in his hand. We will find it is done with a special solemnity: It is done by solemn *election*, he being chosen to this trust; *Behold my Servant, whom I uphold; mine Elect, in whom my soul delighteth*, Isa. xlii. 1.—It is done by solemn *transaction* between the Father and him, when the *counsel of peace was between them both; I have made a covenant with my chosen*, Psal. lxxxix. 3.—It was done by a solemn *call*, a formal and legal call; *I the Lord have called thee, and given thee for a covenant of the people, a light to the Gentiles*, Isa. xlii. 6.; and so to be all things to his people.—It was done by a solemn *commission*, under the broad seal of heaven, whereby he is authorized to be all things that sinners need: *Him hath God the Father sealed*, John vi. 2.—All things are given to him with the solemnity of a *promise*; such as, Psal. lxxii. 8,—11. *His dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth.* To the same purpose, Psal. lxxxix. 24, 25. *But my faithfulness and my mercy shall be with him: and in my name shall his horn be exalted. I will set his hand also in the sea, and his right-hand in the rivers.*—Yea, all things are given into his hand with the solemnity of an *oath*; Psal. lxxxx. 34, 35. *My covenant will I not break, nor alter the word that hath gone out of my mouth: once have a sworn by my holiness, I will not lye unto David.* Psalm cx. 4,—7. *The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, thou art a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedeck*, &c.: not only so, but a King, for ever, upon a throne, ruling over all things; *The Lord, at thy right-hand, shall strike through kings in his wrath: he shall judge among the heathen; he shall fill the places with the dead bodies; he shall wound the head over many countries.*——This vast treasure, then, is well secured.

4. In this contrivance, infinite wisdom hath consulted the *fitness of the great Trustee*, to whom all things are granted. O what wisdom is in this, that he who is, so to speak, the centre of the glorious Trinity, I mean the middle person, should be the centre of all things! Thus he hath, as it were, consulted the convenience of all things. How fit is it that all things should move towards their centre, and meet there! He is the centrical place, not only the middle person of the glorious Trinity, but also the Mediator between God and man, that all things being between God and man, they might have all things common between them, for his own glory and their good. Read concerning this, Eph. i. 10. *That he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are in earth, even in him.* All things good and bad may be said to be given into his hand: all *evil* things; such as, the devil, the world, and sin, and death, that they may be ruled and over-ruled: and all *good* things, that they may be managed and secured. All our enemies are put in his hand, that they may be destroyed; and all our blessings put in his hand, that they may be preserved. None but Christ was capable of such a trust; no mere creature, amongst men or angels, was capable to bear this glory: *It is he that builds the temple of the Lord, and bears the glory*, Zech. vi. 13. None but he was capable to be the disposer of all wants and dispenser of all blessings: therefore he is made the general receiver of all things.

5. In this contrivance, infinite wisdom hath consulted the *pleasure of all parties*, even the pleasure of all the persons of the glorious Trinity; *It pleased the Father, that in him should all fullness dwell*, Col. i. 19.: where you may notice, that the word FATHER is not in the original; and, therefore, this work of reposing *all things*, all fulness in Christ, may be looked upon, not only as the work of the Father, but the work of the whole glorious Trinity. It pleased Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, that in Christ should all fulness dwell; that into his hand should all things be given: the Father proposed, the Son accepted, and the Holy Ghost consented, that in Christ, as Mediator, should all fulness dwell; and this was done with rapturous pleasure. It pleased the Father to *propose* it; for, he says, *I have laid help upon One that is mighty:* It pleased the Son to *accept*; for, he says, *Lo I come!* It pleased the Holy Ghost to *consent*; for, *he rested on Christ*, and furnished him for his work: *The Spirit of the Lord God was upon me, for he hath anointed me*, Isa. lxi. 1. This ravishing pleasure, of the glorious Trinity, is not only plainly imported in the words of our text, where it is the Father's love to the Son, as our Saviour and Surety, is made the spring of his *giving all things into his hand*; but you have it plainly expressed, Isa. xlii. 1. *Behold my Servant, whom I uphold; mine Elect, in whom my soul delighteth.* And Prov. viii. 30. *Then*, says Christ, namely, from all eternity, *I was by him, as one brought up with him; I was daily his delight.* Now, in what respect was he the Father's delight? Even in respect of his *rejoicing in the habitable part of the earth, and his delights being with the sons of men.* The Father delighted in me, because I delighted in the Sons of men, in the very prospect of saving and redeeming them by my blood. He delighted to see him delighting in this mediatorial service, for which all things were given into his hand, with infinite pleasure.—And, as God consults his own pleasure herein, so the pleasure of all poor sinners, for whose sake and benefit all things were given into him: and hence, whenever the glory of this method of salvation, through Christ, is open to the heart of any poor sinner, they are not only pleased and satisfied, but ravished and filled with sweet wonder, and *strong consolation*, Heb. vi. 18.; and *rejoice with joy unspeakable*, 1 Pet. i. 8. The soul is, by a glorious and ravishing power, carried out to rest in this device, as every way worthy of God, and every way suitable and satisfying to their case.

6. In this contrivance, infinite wisdom hath consulted the *credit and honour of all concerned.* He hath herein consulted the credit and honour of his own *majesty* and *greatness*, in giving all things into the hand of Christ, the second Adam, and not transacted any more with man, in his own person, now when turned rebel to his crown and dignity; but transacted immediately with Christ, a person of equal dignity with himself, giving all things to him, and through him to us. Thus we are taught to keep at a due distance from this infinitely glorious Sovereign, and to come and receive blessings, not immediately out of his hand, but by the hand of Christ, the Mediator: *I am the way, no man cometh to the Father but by me.*—He hath consulted the credit of his *name*, and of all his glorious *excellencies*; the credit of his *broken law*, how it might not only be *fulfilled*, but

but *magnified* to the utmoſt; the credit of his *offended juſtice*, how it might not only be *ſatisfied*, but *glorified* to the higheſt. Why, infinite wiſdom knew that there was nothing that the violated law, or the injured attributes of God, could demand for the reparation of their honour, but what the ſinner's Surety, having *all things given to him*, could anſwer with eaſe, and to infinite ſatisfaction. The Creditor well knew that the Surety was not only creditable, but reſponſable, abundantly able to pay all the debt; *mighty to ſave:* mighty to ſatisfy, mighty to give all the infinite ſatisfaction demanded; inſomuch, that mercy vents to ſinners, without any prejudice to juſtice; and the attributes of God, ſeemingly inconſiſtent one with another, are reconciled in Chriſt: *Mercy and truth meet together, righteouſneſs and peace kiſs each other.* And God pardons and ſatisfies ſo as not only to be merciful, but even *juſt, in juſtifying the ungodly.*—He hath conſulted the credit of his *Son*, Chriſt Jeſus, who thus is honoured with a *name above every name* that can be named; all things being given into his hand, not only to furniſh him with his mediatorial ſervice, but alſo to reward him for it, Phil. viii. 9. He is honoured with a goodly train, a throng court of ſupplicants, all things being *given unto him*, that the *gathering of the people might be to him* for ſupply, and that the revenues of praiſe might be given to him through all eternity.—Yea, he hath conſulted the *credit* as well as the *profit* of all the redeemed, by giving all things into the hand of Chriſt. God never honoured the church nor advanced them to greater dignity, than by giving them an univerſal plenitude, as *head of the body the church:* and every believer may ſay, "My Head, my Huſband, my Lord, hath all "things in his hand." *This is the honour of all the ſaints*, they have all things in Chriſt: and *he is made of God unto them wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification, and redemption*; yea, and *all things*; that *he that glorieth may glory in him.*——So much for a hint at the *beauty* of this diſpoſure.

Thirdly, The next thing propoſed was, in order to *enlarge* and *widen* our faith in this matter, to ſpeak of the EXTENT of this ſtore and treaſure that Chriſt hath; the Father having given *all things* into his hand. Why then, beſides what we ſaid in the doctrinal part, conſider,

1. If *all things* are in his hand, then all the *attributes* of God are in him. There is nothing that the Father hath, excepting his perſonality, but the Son hath, as Mediator; *All things that the Father hath are mine*, John xvi. 15. All things that God hath they belong to the Mediator alſo, the God-man. Here then is an ocean where you and I may dive for ever, and never get to the bottom.—Having *all things*, he hath all the *wiſdom of God*, Col. ii. 3. *In him are hid all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge.* Poor fooliſh ſinner, who hath no wiſdom, knowledge, nor underſtanding, here is a treaſure for you; *Chriſt, the wiſdom of God, made of God unto you wiſdom*, 1 Cor. i. 30.—Having *all things*, he hath all the *power* of God; *We preach Chriſt crucified, to the Jews a ſtumbling-block, and to the Greeks fooliſhneſs; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Chriſt, the wiſdom of God and the power of God*, 1 Cor. i. 24. Poor feeble ſoul, who can do nothing, here is a good bargain for you to lay hold upon; it is he that can *work in you, both to will and do;* and make his *people willing in a day of his power.* You are not called to come to Chriſt, but by the power of Chriſt, which is the power of God. You are to receive him that can give you power to receive him; and, as one abſolutely weak, to take hold of his ſtrength, and look to his power, to whom is *given all power in heaven and in earth.*—Having *all things*, he hath all the *holineſs* of God; he is ſaid to be *made of God unto us ſanctification:* and ſurely here is an immenſe fountain of ſanctity, the infinite holineſs of God. O poor, vile, polluted ſinner, who hath loſt the image of God, by the fall of the firſt Adam, and the deficiency of his holineſs, here is a better head and huſband for you, in whom is all the fulneſs of the divine holineſs, that you may be *complete in him.*—Having *all things*, he hath all the *juſtice* of God, and all the *righteouſneſs* of God in him, and juſtice ſatisfied in him, by his mediatorial righteouſneſs; for, *the Lord is well-pleaſed for his righteouſneſs' ſake*; yea, he that is *the righteouſneſs of God*, is made unto us *righteouſneſs*, 1 Cor. i. 30.; and, O wonderful word! *He was made* SIN *for us,—that we might be made the* RIGHTEOUSNESS *of God in him*, 2 Cor. v. 21. O guilty, guilty ſinner! here is a joyful ſound in your ears, *He that hath ears to hear let him hear.* You may, in Chriſt, be more righteous in God's ſight, than ever you was guilty in his ſight; yea, you may be the *very righteouſneſs of God in him.* You may not only be juſtified, but find God to be juſt in juſtifying you, becauſe the juſtice of God is in him; and it is ſatisfied in him, magnified in him, glorified in him.—Having *all things*, he hath all the *mercy* of God in this hand; all the infinite love, pity, and compaſſion of God is in his hand, and in his heart. What is Chriſt, but the love of God wrapt up in a garment of fleſh and blood? 1 John iv. 9, 10. *In this was manifeſted the love of God towards us, becauſe that God ſent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live thro' him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that God loved us, and ſent his Son to be the propitiation for our ſins.* And Jude, ver. 21. *Keep yourſelves in the love of God;* how? *Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, unto eternal life.* O poor miſerable ſinner! would you wiſh to find mercy in the moment of death, and mercy at the great day? Know that there is no mercy to be expected out of God's hand, unleſs you look to his mercy as in the hand of Chriſt; for, he will never ſhew mercy to the prejudice of his juſtice; and it is only in Chriſt that *mercy and juſtice meet together and embrace each other.*—Having *all things*, he hath all the *faithfulneſs* and *truth* of God; *My mercy and my faithfulneſs ſhall be with him*, Pſal. lxxxix. 24. I have obſerved between thirty and forty places of ſcripture, where *mercy* and *truth*, *mercy* and *faithfulneſs*, are joined together; and here you ſee they are joined together in Chriſt. In him the mercy and love of God vents to the honour of divine truth, pledged even in all the threatenings of the law, as well as divine truth, pledged in all the promiſes of the goſpel; becauſe in him all the threatenings and curſes of the law have ſpent their force; *Chriſt hath redeemed us from the curſe of the law, being made a curſe for us*, Gal. iii. 13. And, *in him are all the promiſes, Yea and Amen to the glory of God*, 2 Cor. i. 20. He is *the way and the truth;* truth itſelf, the God of truth, and the truth of God. O perfidious, faithleſs, unfaithful, and treacherous ſinner! who haſt many times lied to the God of truth, wouldſt thou have thy falſhood all done

done away, and ſwallowed up in the truth and veracity of God, and your ſalvation ſecured notwithſtanding of your falſhood, fickleneſs, and inſtability? Here is a pillar on which you may ſtand firm and fixed, amidſt all changes, whether in your outward lot or inward frame; for, *All fleſh is graſs; but the word of the Lord endureth for ever.* The truth of God ſtandeth unalterably the ſame.—Again, having *all things*, he hath all the *authority* of God in his hand; *My name is in him*, Exod. xxiii. 21. O! poor loſt ſinner, when Chriſt, in this goſpel, comes to *ſeek and ſave that which is loſt*, ſay not, By what authority doth he theſe things? He is the Sent and Sealed of God, and he hath all the authority that God can give him. And if you aſk by what authority we, poor ſinful mortal worms, like yourſelves, do offer him, and all his ſtore to you? Indeed, we would have no authority, if he had not ſaid, *Go preach the goſpel to every creature; and lo, I am with you always, unto the end of the world.*—In a word, having *all things*, he hath all the *fulneſs* of God in his hand; *It pleaſed the Father, that in him ſhould all fulneſs dwell*, Col. i. 19. *In him dwells all the fulneſs of the Godhead bodily.* Not only all the *attributes* of God, but all the *fulneſs* of all the divine attributes. Not only the wiſdom of God, but all the fulneſs of the divine wiſdom; not only the power of God, but all the fulneſs of divine power; not only the holineſs of God, but all the fulneſs of divine holineſs; not only the juſtice and righteouſneſs of God, but all the fulneſs of divine righteouſneſs; not only the mercy of God, but all the fulneſs of divine mercy; not only the truth and faithfulneſs of God, but all the fulneſs of divine faithfulneſs; not only the authority of God, but all the fulneſs of divine authority; not only is God in him, but all the fulneſs of the Godhead. O! poor empty ſinner! here is unſearchable riches, a bottomleſs well of everlaſting ſalvation for you.

2. If *all things* are in his hand, then all the reins of *providence* are in his hand; this muſt follow upon what hath been ſaid, having all the perfections of God, ſurely *his kingdom ruleth over all.* What a vaſt field is here? I ſhall only touch at ſome of the borders thereof. For all things in heaven, earth, and hell are under his government as Mediator, Phil. ii. 10. Eph. i. 22. All the reins of common providence, in the world, and ſpecial providence, in the church, and among the children of God, are wholly in his hand.—Why then, having all things, he hath all *kingdoms* and *churches* in his hand; *By me kings reign, and princes decree juſtice*, Prov. viii. 15. When he will, he *cuts off the ſpirit of princes*, and is *terrible to the kings of the earth.* Pſal. lxxv. 6, 7. *Promotion cometh neither from the eaſt, nor from the weſt, nor from the ſouth, but God is judge; he putteth down one and raiſeth up another.* It is by him that the churches are planted and watered; and again diſplanted and turned into a barren wilderneſs when he pleaſes, Iſa. xli. 18. Pſal. lvii. 34. Whatever diſorders and confuſions be in the church of God, it is beſt for us to keep about the hand of Chriſt, who hath the over-ruling of all things to his Father's glory, and his peoples good.—Having *all things*, he hath all the *ſtars* of heaven in his hand, not only the ſun, moon, and ſtars of theſe viſible heavens; for, he could make the *ſtars in their courſes fight againſt Siſera;* but alſo, all the ſtars in the church's firmament, Rev. i. 16. and he orders them to ſhine ſo long in this place, and ſo long in the other as he pleaſes.—Having *all things*, he hath all the *winds* of heaven in his hand. When the church and children of God pray, Song iv. 16. *Awake, O north-wind; come thou ſouth*, &c. Whence do they expect theſe winds of the Spirit's influences? Even from him who hath ſaid of the bleſſed Comforter, *I will ſend him unto you*, John xvi. 7. It is he that propheſies unto the winds, Ezek. xxxvii. 9. *Thus ſaith the Lord, Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon theſe ſlain, that they may live.* If there be little of this quickening wind blowing about your hearts, yet he can order the winds to ariſe when he pleaſes; for, all the influences of the Spirit are in his hand, as well as the natural winds, Pſal. cxxxv. 7.—Having *all things*, he hath all the *waters* of the ſea, and all the *duſt* of the earth in his hand; *Who hath meaſured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with a ſpan? and comprehended the duſt of the earth in a meaſure?* Iſa. xl. 12. Perhaps you have friends buried in the ſea, or buried in the earth; whether the earth or ſea be their graves, are they friends in Chriſt? Rejoice in the faith of their happy reſurrection; *He will raiſe them up at the laſt day.* It is eaſy with him to command the earth and the ſea to give up their dead; for he hath every drop of water, and every pile of duſt within the view of his omniſcient eye, and within the hollow of his omnipotent hand.—Having *all things*, he hath all the *mountains* and *hills* in his hand, as in the forecited, Iſa. xl. 12. He is ſaid to *weigh the mountains in ſcales, and the hills in a balance.* The mountains and hills are in his hand, both in a literal and metaphorical ſenſe; they are in his hand and under his feet, ſo that it is eaſy with him to caſt them out of the way with his hand, or tread upon them, and come *ſkipping on the mountains, and leaping on the hills*, Song ii. 8. *Who art thou, O great mountain, before our Zerubabel? thou ſhalt become a plain*, Zech. iv. 7. How doth faith remove mountains, but by the hand of Chriſt? Poſſibly you may find mountains of ſin and guilt, mountains of trouble and diſtreſs, mountains of fears and objections, mountains of difficulties and diſcouragements in your way; but let them not fright you from coming to Chriſt; for, he hath them all in his hand; and he can overturn the mountains as eaſily as he can turn his hand.—Having *all things*, he hath all *weathers* in his hand, whether fair or foul, calm or ſtormy weather as he pleaſes to order; whether proſperity or adverſity, plenty or penury: *In the day of proſperity be joyful in him, in the day of adverſity conſider* that it is he alſo that hath appointed it; *for God hath ſet the one againſt the other*, Eccleſ. vii. 14.—Having *all things*, he hath all *times* and *ſeaſons* in his hand; he hath given to the *ſtork and ſwallow to know their appointed times*, and to *obſerve the times of their coming*, Jer. viii. 7. O Sirs, how infinitely well then does he know the fit time of his own coming, and the proper ſeaſon of viſiting his people! *He waits to be gracious; and he is a God of judgment, bleſſed are all they that wait for him*, Iſa. xxx. 18. The time of our ſojourning here, and the number of our months is in his hand. The time of his approaches to the ſoul, and the time of his ſtaying, is in his ſovereign hand.—Again, having *all things* in his hand, he hath all the *chains* of devils and of evil ſpirits in his hand; they are held in his chains, and under his

his check and controul; they cannot touch a herd of swine without his permission; and his hand is famed for *casting out devils*; and, perhaps, there are many such here to be cast out; but he hath no more ado but, *Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee to come out.* Thou unclean spirit, I charge thee to come out: thou drunken spirit, I charge thee to come out: thou profane spirit, I charge thee to come out: thou atheistical unbelieving spirit, I charge thee to come out. All the chains wherewith poor prisoners of hope are held, are in his hand; and, glory to God that hath *anointed him to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound*, Isa. xli. 1.—Again, having *all things*, he hath all the *keys* of hell and death in his hand; *I am he that liveth and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and death*, Rev. i. 18. When death and hell thought to have detained him prisoner, behold our mighty Samson came off with all the gates, and all the keys in his hand. Why, he had promised, saying, *O death, I will be thy plague; O grave, I will be thy destruction*, Hos. xiii. 14. And having done as he said, therefore his people, even staring death in the face, may, and sometimes do, sing that triumphant song, *O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law, but thanks be to God who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ*, 1 Cor. xv. 55.—Again, having *all things*, he hath all *work* upon his hand: having finished the work the Father gave him to do, even the work of redemption, by price; he hath yet upon his hand all the work that the redeemed have to do, even the work of redemption by power. In point of means, you are called to be much *about his hand*; but in point of power, you must put all *in his hand*; for, *without him you can do nothing*, John xv. 5. It is he who *worketh in us, to will and do of his good pleasure*, Phil. iv. 13. It is he that *works all our works in us and for us*, Isa. xvi. 12.: therefore we should pray, with the psalmist, Psal. cix. 21. *Do thou for me, O God the Lord, for thy name's sake*; and Psal. lvii. 2. *I will cry unto God, most high, unto God that performeth all things for me.* But this leads me to another particular.

3. If *all things* are in Christ's hand, then all *offices*, all saving offices are in his hand. You know, the Father hath anointed him to the office of Prophet, Priest, and King. O Sirs, what employment will you put in his hand? It is he, as a Prophet, that says, *They shall be all taught of God:* look to him for the promised teaching. It is he, as a Priest, that says, upon the ground of the sacrifice he hath offered, *I, even I am he that pardoneth thine iniquity, for my name's sake:* look to him for remission in his blood. It is he, as a King, that says, *I will subdue your iniquities;—Sin shall not have dominion over you.* O! ignorant sinner, will you find in your heart to refuse such a Prophet as Christ is? *Who teaches like him?* O! guilty sinner, will you refuse such a High-priest as this? such a sacrifice as this? O! enslaved sinner, will you refuse the help of such a King and Conqueror as this? If there be none of these offices to be dispensed with, then take hold of him in them all.

4. If *all things* are in his hand, then he is clothed with all *relations* that can contribute to the happiness of sinners. What friend or relation do you want, O sinner?—Want you a *father* to pity you? Behold, here you may have an *everlasting Father*, that is his name, Isa. ix. 6.; and, *in him the fatherless findeth mercy.*—Want you a *mother* to be tender of you? Behold, here motherless children may have their loss made up; *when father and mother leaveth you*, he is one to *take you up*, Psal. xxvii. 10. He is one that can be a thousand times better to you, than father or mother; and manifests more love than the tenderest mother that ever was; *Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget; yet will I not forget you*, Isa. xlix. 15.—Want you a *husband?* O! what would you think to be married with the *heir of all things?* Why, if the ear of faith be open, you may hear him saying, *Thy Maker is thy husband*, Isa. liv. 5.; and again, Hos. ii. 19. *I will betroth thee unto me for ever.* If you say, "O! how will it be consistent with the "justice of God for him to marry such a black "bride? Why, he says, *I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness;* I will betroth thee unto me in *wisdom*; I will betroth thee unto me in *judgment, in mercy, in loving-kindness; yea, and in faithfulness*; *and thou shalt know the Lord:* thou shalt know God in Christ. How can he betroth thee to himself, and yet be infinitely just, and wise, and merciful, and faithful in doing so? Because *mercy and truth have met together* in Christ, the glorious Bridegroom; they struck up a match together, and embraced each other, that there might be nothing to hinder the match between Christ and you.—Want you a *proper match* then, O sinner, or a meet help, poor bankrupt, run in such deep arrears to the law and justice of God? Is not he that hath *unsearchable riches* a fit match for you? Poor dying creature, that will be food for worms in a little, here is a living Head for you, that can make you live for ever. O! mortal worm, here is an immortal Husband for you. Poor changeable creature, here is an unchangeable match for you; *Christ the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.*—Want you a *lover?* are you an outcast, that reckons yourself despised by all the world, in so much, that none cares for you, or loves you? Behold, an infinitely loving and lovely Jesus, offering and boding his love upon you, saying, *I will heal your backslidings; I will love you freely*, Hos. xiv. 4. And he is seeking your heart, your conjugal love, saying, *My son, give me thy heart.*—Want you a *leader* through the dark and difficult steps of your way? A guide, a director, and counsellor in whatsoever affair you have upon your hand, wherein it is needful to be directed? O! here is a wonderful Counseller, who says, Isa. xlii. 16. *I will lead the blind in a way they know not, and in paths that they have not known.*—Want you a *shepherd* to feed you, or a captain to fight your battles for you?—Want you a *physician*, when in sickness, to heal you?—Want you a *refiner* and *purifier*, when you are in the furnace, to purge away your dross? Behold he who hath *all things in his hand*, has all the relations that you can desire.

5. If *all things* be in his hand, then all *graces* are in his hand. This is a great part of the glory of the *only begotten of the Father*, that he is *full of grace and truth*, John i. 14. and, *Out of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace*, ver. 16. *Grace is poured into his lips*, Psal. xlv. 2.; and I hope he is pouring grace from his lips by his word among some of you this day. *The Spirit*

of

of the Lord God is upon him, for he hath anointed him. He is anointed with the oil of gladneſs, anointed with the Spirit of all grace.—Want you grace to *believe?* Behold it is in his hand, as he is the *Author of faith.* Want you grace to *repent?* Behold it is in his hand, as a *Prince and Saviour exalted to give repentance.* Do you want grace to *pray?* It is he that has the Spirit of prayer in his hand to give, Zech. xii. 10. Do you want grace to *communicate?* Grace to *mortify* ſin? Grace to *bear* the croſs? Grace to reſiſt *temptation?* Grace to *do* and *ſuffer?* It is he that has all grace in his hand to give; and who ſays, *My grace ſhall be ſufficient for you:* hence his people are called to be *ſtrong in the grace that is in Chriſt Jeſus.*

6. If *all things* are in his hand, then all *bleſſings* are in his hand to give. He is the Lord Diſpenſer of *temporal* bleſſings; for, *The earth is in his hand, and the fulneſs thereof:* the Lord Diſpenſer of *ſpiritual* bleſſings; for, behold heaven is in his hand, and the fulneſs thereof: the Lord Diſpenſer of *eternal* bleſſings; for, *eternal life* is in his hand. It was promiſed of him, that *men ſhould be bleſſed in him;* and accordingly he is *ſent to bleſs us,* Acts iii. 26. *God having raiſed up his Son Jeſus, ſent him to bleſs you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.* I might here enumerate many particular bleſſings. The bleſſings of *illumination* is in his hand; for, he is a *Light to enlighten the Gentiles.* The bleſſing of *converſion* is in his hand; for, he ſays, *When I am lifted up, I will draw all men unto me.* The bleſſing of *juſtification* is in his hand; for, *We are juſtified freely by his grace.* The bleſſing of *reconciliation with God,* is in his hand; for, it is he that *maketh peace by the blood of his croſs.* The bleſſing of *ſanctification* is in his hand; for, *He is made of God unto us ſanctification.* The bleſſing of *acceptance* is in his hand; for, *By him we have boldneſs and acceſs, with confidence, through the faith of him.* The bleſſing of *conſolation* is in his hand; for, he is the *conſolation of Iſrael.* The bleſſing of a *happy death* is in his hand; for, *Bleſſed are the dead which die in the Lord.* The bleſſing of a *happy reſurrection* is in his hand; for, *He is the reſurrection and the life.* The bleſſing of a *happy ſentence* at the great day is in his hand; for, *All judgment is committed to him;* and it is he that will ſay to the wicked, *Depart, ye curſed, into everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels;* and to the righteous, *Come, ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you, from the foundation of the world.* The bleſſing of *eternal glorification* is in his hand; for, as he is the glory of the higher houſe, ſo he ſays, *Father, I will, that thoſe whom thou haſt given me be with me, where I am, that they may behold my glory:* and *ſo ſhall they be ever with the Lord.*—Can you tell me any ſpiritual bleſſing that is not in his hand? No: Eph. i. 3. *Who hath bleſſed us with* ALL *ſpiritual bleſſings, in heavenly places, only in Chriſt.*

And now, after all, what think ye of him? Have you no heart to join hand with a well-furniſhed Saviour, that hath all things in his hand? If you have got no heart to ſuch a good bargain, this is very ſad; but, becauſe it is a day of glad tidings, I will tell you among other things, that all *hearts* are in his hand, and it is his prerogative to open the locked heart. It is eaſy with him to create a clean heart, to melt the hard heart, to fix the wandering heart, to cleanſe the filthy heart, to elevate the drooping heart, to conquer the ſtubborn heart, to quicken the dead heart, to draw the backward heart, as I noticed on another ſubject; and if any thing draw your heart to him, it will be the revelation of his grace and fulneſs, as having *all things in his hand.*——Thus much may ſuffice for a comprehenſive view of the *extent* of this treaſure.

Fourthly, I come to the *fourth* thing I propoſed, which was, in order to the further *aſſiſting* of faith, to conſider the MANNER how all things are in Chriſt's hand. I have already told you, all things are in Chriſt's hand *naturally,* as he is God; and *donatively,* as he is Mediator: but, beſides, there are theſe following ways wherein all things given him of the Father are in his hand.

1. All things are in his hand *ſubſtantially;* not *ſymbolically,* as Chriſt is ſaid to be in the elements of bread and wine in the ſacrament; or, as God was ſaid to be in the temple, by the ſymbol of his preſence. It is not the *ſhadow* of all things, but the *ſubſtance,* which is in his hand; therefore it is ſaid, Col. ii. 9. *In him dwelleth all the fulneſs of the Godhead bodily;* that is, *ſubſtantially,* and ſo in a glorious, eminent, ſuperlative, and tranſcendant way. Chriſt is the ſubſtantial All of his people; the ſubſtance of all the types, and ſacrifices, and ceremonies under the law. They were but *the ſhadow of good things to come,* Heb. x. 1. All the good things themſelves are in Chriſt ſubſtantially.

2. All things are in him *communicatively;* his Mediatorial fulneſs is communicable and omnipotent. All ſhops are cloſed, but Chriſt's houſe ſtands open; and on the door this inſcription, WHOSOEVER WILL, MAY COME AND SHARE OF THIS TREASURE. Chriſt's fulneſs is communicable; and, therefore, *Out of this fulneſs we* may *all receive, and grace for grace,* John i. 16. We needed not preach of this ſtore that is in Chriſt's hand, if it was locked up in him. Why is it, that in him, as Mediator, *Dwells all the fulneſs of the Godhead bodily?* Why, but that we may be *complete in him,* Col. ii. 9, 10. Chriſt is a cabinet of rich jewels; faith is a key to open the cabinet: we receive out of his fulneſs by faith. Prayer is a key, *If any man lack wiſdom, let him aſk it of God.* If theſe keys be not in your hand, ſurely they are in his, who hath *all things in his hand.* O ſolicite him to caſt you the key, and give you the ſpirit of faith and prayer.

3. All things are in his hand *ſufficiently;* there is *bread enough and to ſpare,* Luke xv. 17. Fulneſs enough for the deſtitute; light enough for the dark; life enough for the dead: there is grace enough in him, pardon enough in him, help enough in him; *bread enough and to ſpare.* If you think there is none to ſpare for you, it is becauſe you do not believe there is enough in him; but will you diſgrace our infinitely noble and glorious Lord, by ſuppoſing that there is not enough in him? O! He can *ſatisfy the longing ſoul, and fill the hungry ſoul with good things.* Nothing in this world gives ſatisfaction to the ſoul: he was a fool that ſaid, when he had a full barn, *Soul, take thy reſt, thou haſt goods laid up for many years.* We may as well dream of a coffer full of grace and glory, as of a ſoul full of corn and wine; it is only Chriſt that has in him ſuitable and ſatisfying fulneſs for the ſoul, and enough to give complete, ſolid, permanent, and everlaſting ſatisfaction.

4. All things are in his hand *efficiently* and *effectively,*

effectively, in so much, that he can make others to share of a conformity to him, in that store that is in his hand. For example, hath he all comeliness? Well, what says he? *I have made thee perfect through my comeliness which I put upon thee*, Ezek. xvi. 14. Hath he all righteousness? Well, the believer is made righteous through his righteousness. Hath he all glory? The believer is made glorious through his glory, and all glorious within; *Beholding his glory we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord*, 2 Cor. iii. 18. — There is a power and efficacy in every saving discovery of the glorious treasure that is in Christ, a smilling favour in his face; and, O happy they, that are smitten with a conformity to him: who, beholding the glory of his grace, are made gracious; beholding the glory of his holiness, are made holy; beholding the glory of his mercy, are made merciful.

5. All things are in his hand *unchangeably*; for, he is *the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever*, Heb. xiii. 18. He is alway the same; and his stock and treasure is invariably the same. Whatever you get out of his hand, yet still the stock and store is in his hand. Let faith draw never so many bills upon him, for this and that supply, at this time and the other time, and get never so much rent, annual rent, or daily rent, out of the stock; yet still the stock and interest both are in his hand: and the believer hath his all to the fore; even when all that was in your hand is spent, yet all things remain as they were in Christ's hand: yea, and this well of salvation springs up for ever, and that to everlasting life. O great encouragement! the fulness of Christ, as it is in our hand may ebb and flow; but as it is in Christ's hand, it is unchangeably the same. The believer may be sometimes full, and sometimes empty; sometimes up, and sometimes down; but Christ is always the same; *I am the Lord, I change not.* All believers, since the beginning of the world, have been always putting down their buckets of faith, and drawing water out of this well of salvation; yet still it is full and running over; and no wonder, for his fulness is infinite; it is the fulness of God.

6. All things are in his hand *eternally*, Col. i. 19. *It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;* it is a *dwelling* fulness. In him it is, and in him it dwells for ever. *In him are durable riches and righteousness;* and, at *his right-hand are pleasures for evermore.* Hence also the blessings he communicates are everlasting blessings; everlasting peace, everlasting pardon, everlasting consolation, everlasting life; *He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.* Here is a depth to dive into for ever; Christ hath an eternity of all perfection in him. An eternity of all excellency, an eternity of all blessings: here is a portion that will make you up to eternity. Here is eternal wisdom, eternal power, eternal holiness, eternal happiness. *He is the true God, and eternal life.* Every thing is everlasting in him; his righteousness is everlasting righteousness, his strength is everlasting strength; his wisdom is everlasting wisdom. Poor dying mortal, here is an everlasting treasure. O! come here, come here, poor mortal, that art to die in a few days, and no matter though you give up the ghost shortly, when, instead of this short lasting life, here is everlasting life for you, as well as security from everlasting death. All things are in his hand eternally.—But here I shall go on

Fifthly, To the next thing I proposed, which was, in order to the *quickening* and *exciting* of our faith, to offer some MOTIVES and CONSIDERATIONS, arising from, and accompanying this truth, that *all things are given into Christ's hand.* O let us be exhorted to come to, and close with, and believe in, this glorious one. And, for motive, consider.

1. Is it possible that we can have or desire a better *pattern* to follow or imitate, in trusting in Christ, than his eternal Father, who hath entrusted him with all things? *Behold my Servant, whom I uphold!* Isa. xlii. 1.; or, as the word is observed to signify, *My Servant whom I* TRUST; and accordingly hath entrusted him with all things. And, Oh! may not this shame us out of our distrust? Thus the Father entrusted him with all the great concerns of his everlasting glory! And may not we well trust him with all the concerns of our everlasting welfare? O Sirs, is it not safest laying our help where God has laid it? Where the waters go, the fish will go; God and all his fulness is gone with Christ. Is it not best going where God goes, and resting where he rests, and loving whom he loves, and trusting whom he trusts.

2. Consider, is it possible that we can have or desire a better *hand* for all things to be put into, than the hand of Christ, whom the Father thus loves? All things you need to make you for ever happy, are in the hand of a God-man. That your stock may be sure to you, it is in the hand of a God; and that it may be near to you, it is in the hand of a Man. How can it be surer to you than in his hand, who is God as well as man? How can it be nearer to you than in his hand, who is man as well as God? O then, is not the stock in a *friend's* hand? A great friend, a near friend? God could not chuse a better hand both for his own interest and yours. It is more honourable for God, more profitable for you, that all things are put in the hand of Christ, the second Adam, the new covenant head, than if all things had remained in the state they were in before. The covenant of works was broken: but if you look believingly towards Christ, not only will God get more glory this way than if he should damn you for your sins, and satisfy his justice upon you to eternity; but also more glory than if he should have rewarded you with life, for your righteousness, according to the tenor of the covenant of works, supposing it had never been broken. Why, all the glory of God was designed to concentre in Christ, as in a bright constellation; and will you cross this design, that tends so much more to God's honour, and your profit, than if matters had stood in their old primitive posture? See how Job was taken up with the way of grace, beyond that of works, Job ix. 15, 20, 21. *Whom, though I were righteous, yet would I not answer; but I would make supplication to my judge. If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me; if I say, I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse. Though I were perfect, yet would I not know my soul, I would despise my life.*

3. Consider, as another motive, that as it is not possible to *miss everlasting life*, if you look believingly to him that hath all things in his hand; so it is not possible to *escape ever-*

lasting wrath if you believe not in him; read the verse immediately following the text; *He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him. He that believeth, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned.* He that believeth, cannot miss salvation; for, it is in the hand of Christ, to give to all comers: he that believeth not cannot escape damnation; for, *How shall we escape, if we reject so great a salvation?* so great a Saviour, who hath all things in his hand? It is established in heaven, and it stands now upon the honour of God to save all believers in Christ, and to damn all unbelievers. Only, as God gets more honour, and greater satisfaction in your salvation, through Christ, in a way of believing in him, than he can get in your damnation, if you remain in your unbelief; therefore, though you had no regard to your salvation or damnation, there is something here, of infinitely greater worth than your eternal life or eternal damnation, that should move you to this glorious Jesus for all things; and that is, for the sake of the eternal honour and glory of God and Christ; for, the Father hath put honour upon the Son, by giving all things into his hand. As you cannot put more honour upon Christ, so you cannot put more honour upon his Father that crowned him with this honour, than by putting all things you have ado in his hand, and coming to him for all things you stand in need of. Christ is glorified in such; for, they are his glory; yea, his crown of glory, Isa. lxii. 3. When you come to him and make use of this treasure that the Father hath put in his hand, you join with his Father in putting a crown of glory on his head.

4. Consider, for motive to look to this Jesus, that it is not possible, O sinner, that all things are given into Christ's hand, and yet you have *no concern* in it, since all is given to him that he may give it out to you. Why has he *received the Spirit above measure?* He tells you himself, Isa. lxi. 1. *The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, for he hath anointed me;* Why? even *to preach good tidings to the meek, and to proclaim liberty to the captives.* His Father also tells you, Isa. xlii. 1. *I have put my Spirit upon him, and he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles;* that is, give light and understanding, life and salvation to the Gentiles. Why hath our Lord Jesus *received gifts*, even the *gift of all things?* See Psal. lxviii. 18. compared with Eph. iv. 8. *He hath received gifts for men.* "But, say you, I am a poor rebel." Well, it is even for the *rebellious*. So, not only are all things in Christ's hand communicatively, as I said before, but all things are given him for this very end, that they may be communicated for the benefit of sinners. When Christ says, Mat. xxviii. 18. *All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth,* he immediately adds, *Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations:* As if he had said, Why have I received all power in heaven and in earth, but for this end that I may be able to save and relieve poor sinners? and, therefore, *Go ye, and teach all nations*, and tell them where their help lies. Say not, then, you have no concern, O sinner; it is because the Father hath *given all things into his hand*, that therefore he says to us, in your behalf, *Go, preach the gospel to every creature;* every sinner, though they have sinned themselves into monsters; sinned themselves into devils; yet, if they be creatures, preach the gospel to them; tell them I have life, and salvation, and all things in my hand for them; *Whosoever will let him come.* Put not away this grace of God from you through unbelief, saying, *It cannot be for me:* yea, it is for you; *To you is the word of this salvation sent.* Let faith say, It is for me, for me, that all things were given into Christ's hand. No, says unbelief, and the devil together, it is for the *elect* and not for me. O sinner, let not the devil cheat you about the object of faith; though, indeed, *the election only shall obtain;* yet the thing you are called first to believe, is not what is for you in the *purpose* of God, but what is for you in the *promise* of God, and in the offer of this gospel; and if you take what is for you here, you are safe in spite of all the devils in hell. Therefore let your heart say, "O! here "is life and salvation, and all things in Christ's "hand held out in this gospel for me; and e-"ven so I take it as offered to me." If it were not for you, we could not preach the gospel to every one here; but, in his great name, I preach it to every creature that hears me, that the *Father hath given all things into Christ's hand for you;* and, therefore, take him to you, and all things with him.

5. Consider, that Christ, having got *all things* put in his hand, for the behoof of sinners, it is not possible that he will *keep all close* in his hand, and give out nothing. No, no; it stands upon his honour as Mediator; it stands upon his credit as he is the church's treasurer, and the Father's trustee, to give out of that treasure of grace and fulness, that is given to him, for our behalf; he would not be faithful unto his trust if he should give out none of that treasure to poor sinners; but, who can charge him with unfaithfulness? What mouth, but that of cursed unbelief, will charge him thus? When unbelief says, Oh! he will give out nothing to me: What is the meaning of it? It is in effect a saying, He is not so faithful to his trust, as that I can expect he will give out any thing to the like of me. Alas! beware of blasphemy: let faith rather step in and say, I hope he will give out of his fulness to me, because his name is *faithful and true.* And if you can believe his truth and faithfulness pledged in the promise, as the Father's Trustee for sinners, and that with particular application to yourself, then his faithfulness is engaged unto you, believer, in particular. But here is a door of faith and hope even for sinners that are yet unbelievers, that there is a glorious and sweet necessity lying upon Christ, to give out of his grace and fulness to sinners of mankind; and why not to you? He must give out of his grace to make his *people willing in a day of his power*, and *bring them to himself; Other sheep I have which are not of this fold*, [namely, Gentiles as well as Jews,] *them I must bring; and they shall hear my voice*, John x. 16. *Them I must bring.* We are told, John iv. 4. *He must needs go through Samaria:* why, for what end? It was even to give out of his grace to a poor harlot, a vile sinful woman there: Even so, I hope he must needs go through Dunfermline, this day, to give out of that store the Father hath given him, for the sake of poor vile sinners here. Was there a blessed necessity for his suffering at Jerusalem? Yea, there was, Luke xxiv. 26. *Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?* Even so, there is a blessed necessity for his applying the virtue

virtue of his death and ſufferings, by pouring out of his Spirit, and communicating of his grace for that end.

6. Conſider, that though Chriſt be exalted to this honour and majeſty, of having all things given into his hand, yet it is not poſſible that therefore he ſhould be *proud*, and *lordly*, and *diſdainful*, ſo as not to regard the caſe of poor ſinners; for, the quite contrary is the truth, namely, becauſe he is thus honoured, therefore he humbles himſelf. Some may think, "Oh! when Chriſt is exalted to ſuch "ſupreme dignity, as that all things are in his "hand, ſurely he will reckon it below him to "regard ſuch a ſinner as I am; and ſtoop ſo "low as to waſh ſuch a leper as I am." Alas! Sirs, think not ſo; for he declares the contrary; read his mind on this with wonder and admiration, John xiii. 3,—8. *Jeſus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God, he riſeth from ſupper, and laid aſide his garments, and took a towel and girded himſelf: After that he poured water into a baſon, and began to waſh the diſciples feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. Then cometh he to Simon Peter; And Peter ſaith unto him, Lord, doſt thou waſh my feet? Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto him, What I do thou knoweſt not now, but thou ſhalt know hereafter. Peter ſaith unto him, Thou ſhalt never waſh my feet. Jeſus anſwered him, If I waſh thee not, thou haſt no part in me.* What was the reaſon, then, that Chriſt ſtooped down to waſh his diſciples feet? Even becauſe he knew the Father had given *all things into his hand.* Was he therefore proud? No; he was therefore humble. Poor ſinful men, that have nothing, are moſt proud; but the God-man, who hath all things, is moſt humble, and ſtoops to our infirmities, becauſe he is clothed with infinite excellency. His excellency, as Mediator, is the cauſe of his humility; and his humility prompts his excellency to be good to ſinners. O wonderful, humble Saviour! There is a twofold humiliation of Chriſt; *Firſt*, He humbled himſelf to come down into our nature, and ſhed his blood for us. *Secondly*, Being exalted, he humbles himſelf to come down into our hearts, our filthy hearts, and waſh them in his blood. In the former, he humbled himſelf, that God might exalt him; in the latter, God exalted him, that he might humble himſelf. He is exalted for this very end to pardon and purge guilty and polluted ſinners, Acts v. 31. It is no diſparagement to his exalted ſtate, for him to ſtoop down and waſh your feet, and waſh your heart; *Him hath God exalted, a Prince and Saviour, to give repentance to Iſrael, and remiſſion of ſins:* This is the way he waſhes, by giving pardon and repentance. For as high and honourable as he is, he thinks it his honour to give out grace. Wo is me, that he is not employed, ſince he thinks it his honour to waſh you! It is not below him; he does not think he will be diſhonoured or affronted, no: he knows that the lower he ſtoops, the higher will he be honoured in the hearts of his people. I appeal to all believing hearts; the lower that he condeſcends to you, to waſh your filthy hearts, O! did not your hearts exalt him the more, and wonder at his glory? Do you think the leſs of him? I ſuppoſe not. I am ſure you think the more, and the higher of him. O! ſinner, then, do not think he is too high to look down towards you; the higher he is, the lower doth he ſtoop; and therefore the higher you conceive he is, the more hope you may conceive of his pity and favour towards you; and the more you ſee is given into his hand, the more do you expect to get out of his hand: faith has the more footing.—— So much for the *motives*.

Sixthly, The next thing propoſed, in order to the *regulating* and *ſquaring* of our faith, according to the goſpel-rule, was to offer ſome DIRECTIONS. And,

1. Be convinced, that, as *all things are in his hand*, ſo *faith* itſelf is in his hand to give; for he is *the author of it*, Heb. xii. 2. And know, that nothing, but the power of God, can effectually work faith. The *goſpel muſt come, not in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghoſt*, 1 Theſ. i. 5. Seek not for faith, then, out of your own bowels; for, *Faith cometh by hearing*. Why, the goſpel, that you hear, is *the power of God to ſalvation*; and this power works ſecretly and ſilently upon the heart, in hearing, when the perſon may be little knowing that it is the power of God that is dealing with his heart; and yet that power is, perhaps, working ſo effectually, that, in hearing of Chriſt, there is a heart-beating towards him; a heart-bleeding towards him; a heart-burſting towards him; a heart-burning towards him. This power is ſometimes an enlightening power, raviſhing the heart with the glorious excellency of Chriſt, diſcovered in the word; and, with this, a ſoftening power, ſo as the heart is melted like water, before the Lord, that was a hard rock before; and, perhaps, with this a drawing power, ſo as the heart is panting after the Lord; and yet, perhaps, the perſon doth not know that the power of God is preſent; but, however, the goſpel is *the power of God*; and *faith comes by hearing* of it, when it comes not *in word only, but in power*. Faith comes not by working; it comes not by doing; it comes not by forcing yourſelf up to the act of faith; but it comes by hearing the object; it comes by hearing of Chriſt, and of what he hath in his hand. The object of faith comes not from our act of faith; but the acting of faith comes from the object of faith; and ſo it comes by hearing of the glorious object. Why ſtand you poring then upon your want of power to act faith, as if you were to pull it out of your own breaſt? You will be much nearer your purpoſe, if you will pore upon the object of it, Chriſt, who hath all things in his hand. If you be taken up with the object, there is no fear about the act of faith; for the ſoul, in believing, conſiders not what can I do? But, what can Chriſt do? It conſiders not, what have I in my hand? But, what hath Chriſt in his hand? And hence, when faith acts rightly upon Chriſt, it conſiders not itſelf, and its own actings; it is taken up with nothing but Chriſt: and it is the beſt act of faith that loſes itſelf, and is ſwallowed up in its object, ſaying, *Chriſt is all in all;* and I ſee all things in his hand.

2. Direction, in order to your cloſing with Chriſt, who hath all things in his hand; O! be convinced that you have *nothing in your own hand;* no righteouſneſs in your own hand, no ſtrength in your own hand; this would pave the way for ſaying, *Surely in the Lord* only, *have I righteouſneſs and ſtrength.* I fear there are ſome here, who are *rich and increaſed with goods*, and

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are relying on ſome of theſe good things that they have in hand; even believers are in danger here: ſome are ſaying, in their hearts, Perhaps I have ſome good duty and preparation-work I have been about, and I reſt on that; and hope for favour on that account: I had a good frame yeſterday, or yeſternight, or this morning; and I got grace to pray, and I am hoping, on that account, to obtain favour at God's hand this day. O man, take care of your hand; while you are relying on any thing in your own hand, you are too rich, and it will be a wonder if you meet not with a diſappointment; for he that *feeds the hungry with good things, ſends the rich empty away.* There is more hope, if notwithſtanding all your beſt duties, and beſt frames, you are entitled to nothing, and ſee you have no wiſdom, no grace, no good thing in your own hand; no good frame to confide in. What! have you nothing at all? No, not a crumb to put in your mouth? Are you reduced to poverty and beggary? Why, then, *Bleſſed are the poor in ſpirit;* come, and welcome, to a full Jeſus, who has all things in his hand. The poor and needy come beſt ſpeed here. Have you nothing to truſt unto but the grace that is in his hand? the fulneſs that is in his hand? and have you no hope or confidence built any where elſe? I can promiſe, in his name, it ſhall not be long ere you be ſupplied; for, *The needy ſhall not always be forgotten, nor the expectation of the poor periſh for ever.*

3. Direction I offer is, O man, woman, *lay all things that you want* diſtinctly and directly *over againſt all things he hath,* and you want out of his hand. For example, when you think on your own guiltineſs, then look to his righteouſneſs, and lay this over againſt that. When you apprehend your weakneſs, then apprehend the ſtrength that is in his hand, and lay the one over againſt the other. When you conſider your emptineſs, then conſider his fulneſs, and ſtudy Chriſt, and your condition together; if you ſtudy your condition without ſtudying Chriſt, then you will be full of deſpair and diſcouragements; if you ſtudy Chriſt, without ſtudying your condition, then you will be full of pride and preſumption. If you think on ſin, without Chriſt, you deſpair; if you think on Chriſt, without thinking on ſin, you preſume. If you be ignorant, think on Chriſt as a Prophet; if guilty, here think on Chriſt as a Prieſt; if enſlaved, apprehend him as a King. Obſerve the attributes and titles of Chriſt that are moſt ſuited to your condition; and lay them and your condition together. It is remarkable, that all the epiſtles, to the ſeven churches of Aſia, begin with titles of Chriſt; and every title is ſuited to the condition of that church. For example, his title to the church of Smyrna is, *The firſt and the laſt, that was dead and is alive,* Rev. ii. 8. Why ſo? Becauſe they were to *ſuffer hard things;* and were called to be *faithful unto the death,* and ſo on: he ſhews that he hath a title ſuited to every caſe. Thus, ſet the names and titles of Chriſt, that ſuit your condition, directly over againſt it; and aſſure yourſelf that Chriſt will make good his titles, that he is clothed with. If the title be, *The Lord is my ſhepherd;* then I may certainly infer, *I ſhall not want,* Pſal. xxiii. 1. Thus do you, when you find there is *diſtreſs* among the *ſaints,* then remember his title, *King of ſaints.* When you find *diſorder* and *commotion* among the *nations,* then remember his title, *The King of nations.* When you find *darkneſs* overſpreading your ſoul, then remember his title, *I am the light of the world.* When you find *death* and *deadneſs* taking place, then remember his title, *I am the reſurrection and the life.* When you are uneaſy with the *confuſions* and *black aſpect of affairs* in the *church,* then remember his title, *The Head of the body the church;* and *Head over all things to it: The government is upon his ſhoulders.* Know, that as Chriſt and the promiſe is yours in the goſpel-offer and publication to be believed in, reſted upon; ſo Chriſt is ſo far yours in poſſeſſion, as you, through grace, improve him, and reſt upon. The promiſe is ſo far yours in poſſeſſion as you improve it, and reſt upon it.

4. Direction I offer is, ſince the *Father hath given all things into his hand,* then, O let him be *improven* and *employed by you for all things.* Do not think you can put too much work in his hand, or that you can give him too many things ado for you. If you believe the *Father hath given all things into his hand,* you may be ſure you are welcome to employ him in *all things:* and the more buſineſs you have to put in his hand, the more welcome. You may come to him not only with all your ſpiritual affairs, and truſt him for all things that concern wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification, and redemption; but alſo with all your temporal affairs; for the promiſe, in Chriſt, is a *promiſe of the life that now is, and of that which is to come,* 1 Tim. iv. 8. Many profeſs to rely on Chriſt for eternal ſalvation, and yet they dare not truſt unto him for their temporal proviſion; and ſo diſcover the rottenneſs of their faith, in that they cannot depend on him for all things. It is ſaid, 1 John iv. 20. *He that loveth not his brother, whom he hath ſeen, how can he love God, whom he hath not ſeen?* So may we ſay, he that cannot truſt in Chriſt for things temporal, in this world; how can he truſt in him for things eternal, in the other world? Why then, *In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he will direct thy ſteps.* You may go to his table with an eye to him for his conduct and bleſſing, even in temporal affairs: and if you can truſt him in theſe, it will be a good evidence that you can truſt him, indeed, in the affairs of your eternal ſalvation alſo. Is there any remarkable change of circumſtances in your life and lot in this world, wherein you would have his conduct and countenance? Are you a miniſter? and would you be a bleſſing to the pariſh where God is ordering your lot? Are you a private Chriſtian? and would you be a bleſſing to the place or family wherein God may appoint your lot? Why, behold he hath the bleſſing of Abraham to beſtow upon you; *I will bleſs thee, and thou ſhalt be a bleſſing,* Gen. xii. 2. If you own that the reins of providence are in his hand, as well as all things elſe, then come to him, and employ him in all things that pertain to life and godlineſs both.

5. Direction is, ſince the *Father hath given all things into Chriſt's hand,* then, in coming to him, not only come that he may GIVE *all things to you,* that you need, but that he may BE *all things to you* that you want. Not only that he may give you life; but that he himſelf may be your life: not only that he may give you ſalvation; but that he himſelf may be your ſalvation: not only that he may bring you to reſt and happineſs; but that he himſelf may be your reſt and happineſs, both by the way here, and at the end of the way hereafter. Look to Chriſt,

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not only to *give* you all, but to *be* your all; for he is not only the *way* to life, but the *life* itself: *I am the way, the truth, and the life.* "As I de- "fire, says one, never to be happy, if Christ "be not able to bring me to happiness; so I "desire no greater, no better happiness, than "what Christ is, and can be to me." O Sirs, he is all, and there is all in him; all to justify, all to sanctify, all to glorify, all to fill and satisfy, all to delight and solace the largest faculties of the immortal soul: *In his presence there is fulness of joy.* The highest happiness here is, *Christ in us the hope of glory;* and the highest happiness hereafter is, *Christ*, even *to be for ever with the Lord.* The thief on the cross had this preached to him, *This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise;* to be in *Paradise*, is not happiness; to be with *angels* there, is not happiness; but to be with *Christ* there, this is heaven and happiness. The more distinct that faith is in choosing Christ to be the supreme rest, the more complete is that faith. The language of faith comes to maturity; "O! since God and all his "fulness is in Christ: it is Christ alone that is "my life, all my salvation, all my hope, all "my righteousness, all my strength, all my "comfort, all my confidence, all my hap- "piness, and all my heaven: *Whom have I in "heaven but thee? and there is none in all the earth "whom I desire besides thee.*"

6. Direction, for regulating faith is, since all things are given into his hand, and are unchangeably and eternally in his hand, then let *coming* to him, through grace be your *continual exercise*, your daily trade; the fountain is ever full and overflowing; and the oftener you come with your empty vessels, so much the better. Think not faith lies in one single act; if you would be very sure of Christ, you should believe in him, and embrace him every day; yea, and as oft as, through grace, you can, every day. Having once come to Christ, your life should be a life of *coming* closely and constantly to him, 1 Pet. ii. 4. It is not only to be acted at the table of the Lord, when you sit there; it may be acted, perhaps, as profitably and pleasanly before you go to the table, or afterwards, in hearing, or singing, in public or in secret; and, as the second edition corrects the errors of the first, so after acts of believing many times correct the defects of the first act. We are told, John v. 13. *The man that was healed wist not who it was that healed him;* and the man cured of his blindness, John ix. 36. *knew not who he was*, till the Lord met with him again: and, indeed, the longer a man hath Christ's company, the longer and sweeter are his manifestations of himself: ever day's renewing of our application to Christ by faith, and closing with him, would make every day to be a *day of espousals;* and every day of espousals would be a *day of the gladness of his heart*, and of yours too. I think there is ground for this in that promise, *I will betroth thee unto me for ever*, Hos. ii. 19. What is that? I suppose we may take this view of it, not only shall the marriage-relation be indissolveable; but also the marriage-solemnity shall be perpetual; I will be for ever betrothing thee unto me; the manifestations of my love shall never fade, never languish, but be always fresh and full, like that of the day of espousals; and every new manifestation thereof like a new espousals.——So much for *directions* in this matter.

Now, my friends, to come to a close, may I ask, What entertainment have you given to the Son of God, who hath *all things given into his hand?* Or, what room hath he made for himself into your hearts? If you should hear of a sovereign water, that could cure all diseases, what flocking of people would there be to that water? Here is that sovereign water, Christ alone, that can cure all diseases; yea, and supply all wants; and he is the great ordinance of God, the great institution and appointment of the Father for the relief of sinners, in all cases: *Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you*, John vi. 27. There is the hand from which you may have it. But how shall I get it from him? Why, it follows, *Him hath God the Father sealed:* Him hath God the Father appointed. He is the great ordinance and appointment of the Father for the very things you want: *God hath set him forth to be a propitiation*; set him forth to be a righteousness for guilty sinners; set him forth to be a robe for naked sinners; set him forth to be a laver for filthy sinners; set him forth to be a ladder between heaven and earth, that sinners may get up to the everlasting enjoyment of God. He hath set him forth to be all things; to be *wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, redemption*, and all things for us; and this in infinite love to him and us: *The Father loves him, and has given all things into his hand.* Why, say you, but I cannot see his hand with all things in it. Why, man, by this gospel, which you hear, he is reaching down his hand, with all things in it, that you may take hold of it in this word of grace. Will you tell me, what way would you have the invisible God to put out his hand towards you? Infinite wisdom has thought this the best way; and if you be not so grossly ignorant as to think of seeing the infinite invisible God, with bodily eyes, what better way can you conceive for him to stretch out his arm, and reach out his hand to you? Would you have him speaking to you by some glorious angel of heaven? Why, this way hath been tried, and their appearance was terrifying. Would you have him putting out his hand in a flame of fire? Why, this was once done to Moses in the bush; but the poor man fell a quaking. Or, again, would you have God putting out his hand, or uttering his voice to you by thunder and lightening, and thick clouds, and darkness? Why, this was the way he took at mount Sinai, and all the camp of Israel fell a trembling and crying, O! let not God speak, but Moses; if he will speak to us, let him do it by a man like ourselves: and, O Sirs, if you knew God, this is just the very way you would have him speaking to you; and behold it is just by a poor mortal worm like yourselves, that you may not be frightened at his words. It is true, it may be, the devil and the world have been busy to fill your hearts with prejudices against the poor feeble instruments, who preach this gospel to you; but whatever you think of us, and, for Christ's sake, I beg you reckon no more of us than of poor earthen vessels, bearing a treasure to you; only, never let the view of the baseness and insignificancy of the vessel make you to despise and reject the treasure we are bearing to you; a treasure worth ten thousand, thousand, thousand worlds; and wo is me, if you be only staring upon the poor

poor preacher, and have not your eyes open, your underſtandings enlightened to ſee the treaſure of unſearchable riches brought to your hand by this goſpel, and brought to the very door of your heart! Rom. x. 8.

My friends, I look upon you, as I do upon myſelf, to be a company of dying worms; and am dealing with you in the name of the living God, the living Jeſus, that you may live for ever in him. We are all going to the grave; where our neareſt friends and forefathers have gone before us. I ſuppoſe there are few here but have either a father or a mother, a huſband, a wife, a brother, a ſiſter, a child, a near and dear friend, lying in the cold bed of the grave; and, in a few years, or days, theſe bodies of yours will ly rotting in the duſt with them. Now, O man, woman; when your body is to be laid in the duſt, would you have your ſoul laid in the boſom of Chriſt? Behold he is now opening his boſom, and opening his heart, that you may enter in: and if your heart were opening to let him in this day, it might yield ſuch a joyful reflection in the hour of death, "O! I think glorious Chriſt drew "out my heart to him at ſuch a communion "in Dunfermline; and therefore, *O death*, "*where is thy ſting?* I hope to live for ever in "ſpite of thee."

My dear friends, it is not only a door of utterance to ſpeak to you that we have been ſeeking to have at this occaſion, but a door of entrance; and Chriſt's entering into your heart by the power of his eternal Spirit. And, O is he come? Is he come; yea, or not? Are you welcoming the Father's Beloved, that hath all things in his hand; ſaying, *Bleſſed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord?* When he is welcoming you to come to him, are you welcoming him to come to you? Can you ſay, *He hath perſuaded me, and I am perſuaded?* Have you found him riding in this chariot of the word of grace; riding into your heart, and making it fly open to him, ſaying, "None but Chriſt, none but "Chriſt; O! a thouſand worlds are not to be "laid in balance with him." Is there never a heart here ſet a burning and glowing in your boſom towards a precious Chriſt? I am confident there is ſome; but, wo is me, that all the hearts in this houſe, are not ſet in a fire of love towards a lovely Jeſus! O what a joyful ſound may this be in the ears of poor ſinners! Chriſt, and all things in his hand, as a pledge of his Father's love to him and you! and this bleſſed bargain offered freely to you! *Ho! every one that thirſteth, come to theſe waters; he that hath no money come; Come without money, and without price!* O Sirs, the beſt penny-worth, the nobleſt bargain that ever mortal ears heard tell of! All things for nothing! all things for nothing! and this to be had by you, ſinner, who are leſs than nothing, and worſe than nothing! Though you have an empty purſe; yet you need not be a baſhful merchant here; for the more poor and empty that you are, the welcomer to him that hath all things in his hand. Chriſt requires nothing as a price of his fulneſs, but want, and worthleſſneſs, and miſery: It is for the ſupply of ſuch that he hath this fulneſs. Say not then that you have no right to it; for God offers it to you, and you need it; and there is right enough. If you ſay, Was he able, in his humbled ſtate, when he came in the fleſh? And is he not able in his exalted ſtate, when he comes in the *Spirit, to deſtroy the works of the devil?* I am not only poor, but perverſe; and am afraid of hell, becauſe I have ſinned to the uttermoſt. Why, he that hath *all things*, hath *all power*, and is *able to ſave to the uttermoſt:* your uttermoſt is great, but God's uttermoſt is infinitely greater. Say not, Satan hath confirmed his right to you by your long trade of ſinning; for, Chriſt owns no preſcription of that kind; and it is his errand here this day to come and *deſtroy the works of the devil: for this cauſe was the Son of God manifeſted.*

Is any here thinking, "Yea, but I am an a-"poſtate; guilty of many relapſes; may not "I deſpair?" No, no, man; he that hath all things in his hand, has a plaiſter for all ſores; and one for a falling ſickneſs among the reſt: *I will heal your backſlidings, and love you freely. Though you have played the harlot with many lovers, yet return;* though you have run to the devil, to your luſts and idols, yet come to me. "But "is it poſſible that there is a door of hope for "me when, notwithſtanding, all that you have "ſaid, I find all things wrong with me?" Why, man, will you tell me, what ſtate were all things into, when the Father put them in Chriſt's hand? I ſuppoſe all things were wrong by the fall of Adam; the devil was rejoicing, ſin was raging, death was reigning, juſtice was flaming, hell was gaping, and all things were wrong; and then the Father put them all in Chriſt's hand, that he might ſet them right. Why, then, did the *Father love the Son, and give all things into his hand*, even in that ſtate? Then, for the love of Chriſt Jeſus, put all things that are wrong with you, into his hand, that he may right them, for well can he do it. And as the Father did put honour upon him by doing ſo, and glorified his Son; ſo this is the way for you to honour and glorify Chriſt: and as in this way you ſhall have everlaſting life by him, ſo he ſhall have everlaſting honour by you, 2 Theſſ. i. 13.

If after all, you ſay, "You cannot receive him, "you cannot believe, you cannot come to him." "Well, it is true, you can do nothing; but there is ſomething I would aſk, if you can do, and that is, "Can you refuſe him? Can you reject him? "Can you ſtand out againſt him? Can your "hearts ſay, for all that you have heard of him, "that you care not for him, that you are better "pleaſed with the world, and your luſts?" If you cannot for your heart do theſe things, then I hope you ſhall be able to believe in him; for faith does not ly in your doing any thing, but in your employing Chriſt to do all, and ſaying, "He, that hath all things in his hand, "muſt do all things for me." Faith is never truly acted under a ſenſe of ability to believe, but under a ſenſe of utter inability; and therefore, if you can ſay, "Though I find my own "weakneſs and inability to believe, yet, I think, "by this revelation of Chriſt, made to me, "God hath made me willing, that Chriſt, who "hath all things in his hand, ſhould be all "things to me, and do all things for me; will-"ing, with a thouſand good wills, that he "ſhould put all things that are evil out of "me, and put all things that are good with-"in me; and willing that he ſhould be all "things that relate to wiſdom, and illuminate "all things that relate to righteouſneſs and "juſtification; all things that relate to holi-"neſs and ſanctification; and all things that "relate

" relate to happineſs and complete redempti-
" on." Is is ſo with you? Then you have got a heart to join hand with him that hath *all things in his hand;* and you may gladly go to a communion table, and get the bargain ſealed between him and you; and you may boaſt and glory in your all-ſufficient Head and Huſband, whom God hath furniſhed in this manner. *The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.*

SERMON LVI.

The *Law* of GOD's Houſe. *

EZEKIEL xliii. 12.

This is the law of the houſe; upon the top of the mountain, the whole limit thereof round about ſhall be moſt holy: behold, this is the law of the houſe.

IT is moſt ſuitable and neceſſary, that theſe who have been making a ſolemn profeſſion of their being of the *houſhold of faith;* who have been eating and drinking in God's houſe, as *fellow-citizens with the ſaints,* and of the *houſhold of God,* ſhould know the order and *law of the houſe:* and, therefore, I lay before you a ſhort ſum of it, very emphatically here expreſſed; *This is the law of the houſe; upon the top of the mountain, the whole limit thereof round about ſhall be moſt holy: behold, this is the law of the houſe.*

In the beginning of this chapter we have an account of the glory of God *filling the temple,* particularly ver. 5.; and then a promiſe of God's continuing his preſence in his church, ver. 7, 8. to the purging them from their idolatry, corruption, and defilement, which here they are put in mind of, for their conviction and humiliation. From ver. 10. and downward, we have Iſrael exhorted to faith and repentance; *Shew the houſe to the houſe of Iſrael, that they may be aſhamed of their iniquity.* The temple was a token of God's kindneſs, and ſymbol of his preſence, as well as a type of Chriſt the true temple, and of the New-teſtament church. And when he injoins to *ſhew the houſe to the houſe of Iſrael, that they may be aſhamed,* we may remark, that the way wherein a gracious God ſhames people for their ſin, is to ſhow them his kindneſs and gracious preſence: thus he puts them out of countenance, and ſets them a-bluſhing, chap. xvi. 63. *That thou mayſt remember and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more becauſe of thy ſhame, when I am pacified towards thee, for all that thou haſt done, ſaith the Lord God.*—Again, ver. 11. *If they be aſhamed of all that they have done, then ſhow them the form of the houſe, and the faſhion thereof, and the goings out thereof, and the comings in thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and all the laws thereof: and write it in their ſight, that they may keep the whole form thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and do them.* When his kindneſs makes them aſhamed of their ſin, then he ſhows them more and more of his kindneſs, and grants them more and more of his gracious preſence. In the cloſe of ver. 11. *Write it in their ſight, that they keep the whole form thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and do them.* Here remark, that the privileges of God's houſe and people do not ſuperſede their duty, but bind them more ſweetly and ſtrictly thereunto; and therefore, obedience is here enjoined, and thereupon here is the rule laid down, *This is the law of the houſe; upon the top of the mountain, the whole limit thereof round about ſhall be moſt holy: behold, this is the law of the houſe.*

In which words we may notice the four following particulars.

1. What is the *matter* of the law of God's houſe, namely, *holineſs;* that all the inhabitants be *holy:* for, *holineſs becometh God's houſe for ever.*

2. The *degree* of that holineſs which becometh his houſe, *viz.* that it be MOST *holy:* the perfection of holineſs is required.

3. Notice the *extent* thereof, *from the top of the mountain, the whole limit thereof round about.* Formerly, only the ſanctuary was moſt holy; but now in the goſpel-times, to which this prophecy hath a reference, the whole mount of the houſe ſhall be ſo, and the whole limit thereof; all the courts, all the chambers, and every part of the houſe, ſhall be as the moſt holy place.

4. The *double aſſurance* given us concerning this ordinance of God's houſe, *This is the law of the houſe;* and again, *Behold, this is the law of the houſe.*

By the *moſt holy* in the text, we are to underſtand, either the *privilege* of the houſe of God in the goſpel-times, namely, that all believers in Chriſt have *acceſs unto the holy of holies,* and *boldneſs to enter into the holieſt,* Heb. x. 19: they being all *ſpiritual prieſts,* a *royal prieſthood,* they have acceſs, not in the virtue of the blood of bulls and goats, but in the virtue of the blood of Jeſus; and with this advantage alſo above the high-prieſt under the law, that, whereever we are, we have acceſs through Chriſt to the Father: or, by the *moſt holy,* we are to underſtand the *duty* of the church of God, or children of his houſe, that they be *moſt holy;* and indeed the former privilege lays the ſtrongeſt foundation for, and brings them under the ſtricteſt obligation to, the duty. According to the view we have here of the *moſt holy,* accordingly we are to underſtand what is to be meant by *the law of the houſe.*

If by *moſt holy,* we underſtand the *privilege* of acceſs to the moſt holy place; then, by *the law of the houſe,* we are to underſtand the law of

* This ſermon was preached on the Sabbath evening, immediately after the celebration of the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper, at Dunfermline, July 16th, 1732. It hath undergone two impreſſions.

grace,

grace, the law of faith, the gospel, or God's act of grace towards us, expressed in the promise.

Again, if by the *most holy*, we understand the *quality* of the church, and the duty of all the children of the house, that they be *most holy*; then, by *the law of the house*, we are to understand the *precept* of the moral law as a rule of holiness, duty, and obedience toward God. Both these, I suppose, may be included; and the former as the means of the latter. Gospel-privileges making way for gospel-holiness, according to the order of the covenant of grace, in opposition to that of works, where *Do*, and *Live*, made duty go before the privilege; whereas here, *Live*, and *Do*, makes the privilege the foundation of duty, and the strong basis on which all gospel-holiness stands.

By *the top of the mountain*, and *the whole limit thereof round about*, we are to understand the *universality* of this holiness, and the extent both of that privilege of admission to the holy place, and of that obligation upon the privileged to be a holy people.

OBSERV. *That universal holiness is so much the established law of God's house, that the whole family, being privileged with access to the most holy place, are thereupon under the strongest obligation to be the most holy people.*

The proof of this doctrine I refer to the prosecution of it in the following method, as the Lord may assist.

I. I would speak a little of *the house of God.*
II. Hint at the *nature* of that holiness that is peculiar to the house of God.
III. Show that this is the *law of the house*; and why it is said to be so, again and again.
IV. Touch at the *extent* of this holiness required by the law of God's house, *upon the top of the mountain, the whole limit thereof round about.*
V. Consider a little the *privilege* of access to the most holy place.
VI. Show that this privilege *obliges* the whole to be the most holy people. And then,
VII. Make *application* of the whole in several uses.

I. I am first to speak a little of *the house of God.* The *church* is the house of God; *If a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?* 1 Tim. iii. 5. And it is so called on several accounts;

1. God is the *builder* of it; *He that built all things is God*, Heb. iii. 4. The church is as glorious a piece of work as the building of heaven and earth; yea, more glorious. It is the work of glorious Omnipotence, to make life out of death; he makes these that were dead in sins to be *living stones*, 1 Pet. ii. 5. *What shall one answer the messengers of the nations? That the Lord hath founded Zion, and the poor of his people shall trust in it*, [or, BETAKE THEMSELVES TO IT,] Isa. xiv. 32.

2. Because God is the *repairer* of it; it is he that *repairs the waste places, and the desolations of many generations*, Isa. xii. 4. And this is also a glorious work; *When the Lord shall build up Zion, he will appear in his glory*, Psal. cii. 16. It is too glorious for a creature; he that is God as well as man hath the honour of it ascribed to him; *He, even he shall build the temple of the Lord, and he shall bear the glory*, Zech. vi. 13. He may raise up instruments, but he himself is the principal agent. Saints may weep for Zion, but the Lord must rebuild and repair it.

3. Because God is the *dweller* therein: he dwells there where he sets up his ordinances, though he confines not himself to places; *In all places where I record my name, I will come to thee, and bless thee*, Exod. xx. 24. God is known by his ordinances, as we are known by our names; *The Lord hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation. This is my rest for ever; here will I dwell, for I have desired it*, Psal. cxxxii. 13, 14.

4. Because God is the *governor* thereof: He alone gives laws of everlasting consequence, to destruction or salvation; *There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy*, James iv. 12. *The Lord is our Lawgiver.* Popes and patrons may usurp a government of the church; but the Lord alone is the *God of conscience*; and the *government is on his shoulders.*

QUEST. *Who are the* MEMBERS *of this house of God?*

ANSW. The church is either *visible* or *invisible.* To the *visible* church on earth, belong all that have a visible and credible profession: and *it is meet for* us to judge that they are saints, as the apostle speaks to the Philippians, chap. i. 7. But we may be deceived; we know not the heart: therefore it concerns every professor to examine himself. — The *invisible* church is known to God only; *Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knows them that are his*, 2 Tim. ii. 19. Well, but how shall I know myself to be one of them? Why, it follows, *Let every one that nameth the name of Christ, depart from iniquity.* To be of the *household of God*, is not to be a member of the *Presbyterial* government, nor a *communicating* member of such a congregation; but to be a *member of Christ.*

QUEST. *What sort of a* HOUSE *is the church unto God?*

ANSW. As it is, 1. His *dwelling-house*; of which already: so,

2. It is his *pleasure-house*; *The Lord taketh pleasure in his people.* O wonderful!

3. It is his *treasure-house*; for, *The Lord's portion is his people, and Jacob the lot of his inheritance:* though he cannot be enriched therewith, yet he reckons them his riches, his *jewels*, which he will make up at the last day.

4. The church is also his *magazine-house; built for an armoury, whereon hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men.* God's church is his castle; and, *Salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks.* Again,

5. It is his *vessel-house*, wherein all the vessels of mercy are hung; and Christ is the *nail fastened in a sure place*, on which they hang, Isa. xxii. 23, 24. Weak and strong are there.

6. It is also his *banqueting-house*, Song ii. 4. where he and *they feed together; he feeds among the lilies, till the day break:* and *he sups with them, and they with him*, Rev. iii. 20.

II. The next thing proposed, was, To hint at the *nature* of that *holiness* that is peculiar to *the house of God.* HOLINESS, in the ordinary sense wherein it is attributed to the church and children of God, may be viewed,

1. In its *definition.* And, I think, it may be thus defined, "A full renovation of our na-"tures, into the image of God, through Jesus "Christ, by the holy Spirit." It is called a *new birth*, a *new creation*, a *new creature: If any man*

be

be in Chriſt Jeſus, he is a new creature, 2 Cor. v. 21. *We are his workmanſhip, created in Chriſt Jeſus unto good works.* It is the *image of God*, who is holineſs itſelf. It is a *grace*; yea, the conjunction and conſtellation of all the graces. It is a *duty*, and the ſum and ſubſtance of all duty.

2. We may view it in its *ſpring*; it is neither natural nor acquired. It is not to be taken up by the ſtrength of reaſon, nor the power of free-will, nor by the force of conviction and reſolution from within or without: nay, *He that hath wrought us to the ſelf-ſame thing is God.* It is not to be aſcribed to the virtue of ordinances, nor the worth of the inſtruments, but to the powerful efficiency of the holy Spirit of God; the ſanctifying Spirit. Art, nature, education, can do nothing here; it is *not by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit of God*, 1 Cor. vi. 11.

3. We may view it in the *ſubject* of it, and that is the *believer in Chriſt*, his whole man; *The God of peace ſanctify you wholly; ſoul, body, and ſpirit*, 1 Theſſ. v. 2. If ye aſk, Where is the *ſeat* of holineſs, in the head, or the heart, or the conſcience; in the inward or outward man? We reply, The ſeat of holineſs is not in any *one* of them, but in *all* of them: it is a leaven that leavens the whole lump. The holy man hath a ſanctified enlightened underſtanding, to diſcern ſpiritual things, which before he underſtood not; a ſanctified will, inclining to ſpiritual things, which before he hated; a ſanctified memory, to mind heavenly things, which before was only earthly; a ſanctified conſcience, awakened to check for ſin, and excite to duty; a ſanctified lip, to ſpeak of God, and to ſpeak to him, and for him; a ſanctified life, to glorify God.

4. We may view it in the *parts* of it, which are two; a *ceaſing to do evil*, and a *learning to do good*. The former is the privative, and the latter the poſitive part of it.—There is the *privative* part of holineſs, which is called *mortification*; that is, a heart purged from the love of every ſin, and a life purged from the practice of every ſin: ſin is left in the heart, but is not loved nor liked; nay, it is hated and diſliked: it may remain, but it cannot reign where holineſs is.—There is the *poſitive* part of holineſs, which is called *vivification*, or a *living unto God*, by a life of dependence on him, and a life of obedience to him. The man not only *ceaſes to do evil*, but he *learns to do well*. It is, in ſhort, a *walking with God*, a *walking in Chriſt*, and a *walking in the Spirit*.——After this hint of the nature of holineſs, I proceed,

III. To the *third* thing, which was, To ſhew that this is *the law of the houſe*; and why it is here ingeminate and doubled, with a *behold, this is the law of the houſe*. For clearing this head, you would conſider three things; 1. What *law* it is that is called *the law of the houſe*. 2. How *holineſs* is *the law of the houſe*. 3. The *reaſon* why this is redoubled.

1ſt, What *law* it is that is called *the law of the houſe*. For the clearing of this, ye would conſider *three laws* that the houſe of God hath always had ſome concern in.

1. There is a *law* from which the houſe is *delivered*; that is, the *law of works*, or the covenant of works: this is the law they are delivered from, *Ye are not under the law, but under grace*, Rom. vi. 14. They are not under it, to be either juſtified or condemned; they are neither under the *command* of it, to be juſtified by their obedience; nor under the *threatening* of it, to be condemned for their diſobedience. Their title to eternal life ſtands upon Chriſt's doing and obedience; therefore they have nothing to do with the *Do* and *Live* of that covenant: their ſecurity from eternal death ſtands upon Chriſt's dying and ſuffering; therefore they have nothing to do with the penalty of that covenant, *If thou do not, thou ſhalt die*. Chriſt has *delivered them from the curſe of the law, being made a curſe for them*. The law of works required holineſs, indeed, in perfection; but in ſuch a form, and under ſuch a penalty, that, if there were no other law but this, we ſinners and breakers of this law, would be irrecoverably loſt. By this law, holineſs is loſt, becauſe the law is violated; and therefore, by *the deeds* thereof, *no fleſh can be juſtified* in God's ſight: for ſinners to be juſtified by works, or by the law, is a contradiction; the law can never juſtify a breaker of it, unleſs he hath a perfect righteouſneſs from another quarter and ſource than himſelf: Therefore,

2. As there is a law from which the houſe is delivered, *viz.* the law of works; ſo there is a law by which the houſe is *recovered* and relieved, namely, the *law of faith*, or the covenant of grace. Of both theſe laws, which are clearly diſtinguiſhed by the apoſtle, you read, Rom. iii. 27. *Where is boaſting then? it is excluded; By what law? of works? nay, but by the law of faith.* This *law of faith* is nothing elſe but the *covenant of grace*, and the *doctrine of the goſpel*. In a word, it is the *promiſe*, Gal. iii. 21. And it is called a *law*, both in oppoſition to the covenant of works, to ſhow, that believers are not under the *law of works*, but the *law of grace*; and alſo to ſhew, that the free promiſes of the goſpel are a law that God makes to himſelf in the behalf of ſinners, or an act of the parliament of heaven. Acts of grace paſt there require no condition on the ſinner's part, but only of the Surety, whoſe blood and righteouſneſs is the condition of all the promiſes of God; which, therefore, are ſaid to be *Yea and Amen in Chriſt, to the glory of God*. And it is called a *law of faith*, becauſe the goſpel, properly, is not a law to be obeyed; but a law to be believed. It is not a law of commands, to be fulfilled by us; but a law of promiſes, to be fulfilled upon us, in a way of free grace: and therefore, here nothing is to be wrought or expected by works, but all things to be expected by grace, or believed upon the faithfulneſs of a promiſing God; *To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that juſtifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteouſneſs*, Rom. iv. 5.—This *law of faith* is ſo much the law of God's houſe, that this is the very law that erects the houſe: it ſtands upon the law of faith; I mean, upon the free promiſe of God, which is the object and ground of faith. —All the privileges and immunities of the houſe are owing to the law of faith.—By the law of faith, or goſpel-promiſe, ſinners are warranted to come into the moſt holy place, and ſo they come to be made the moſt holy people.—In this law, holineſs is promiſed; by it, holineſs is wrought.—In this law of faith, faith itſelf is promiſed, or grace and ſtrength to believe; *Thy people ſhall be willing in the day of thy power*, Pſal. cx. 3. *When I am lifted up, I will draw all men after me*, John xii. 32. This abſolute promiſe is indefinitely diſpenſed to ſinners, that they may look unto and rely upon this conquering

quering power and drawing grace of God.—— By this law of faith, I say, the house is delivered. Again,

3. There is a *law* by which the house is *governed;* namely, the *law of love:* I mean, the *moral law*, as it is a rule of life and holiness, not a rule of acceptance, (this were to make it a covenant of works) but a rule of obedience, in the hand of Christ. This is the law, which, by Moses, is reduced to ten words, ten commandments: and I call it a *law of love*, because our Lord Jesus reduced it into two words; namely, *love to God*, and *love to our neighbour:* And the apostle reduced it to one word, *viz. Love; the end of the commandment is love*, 1 Tim. i. 5. And again, *Love is the fulfilling of the law*, by which the house is governed. It may be called a *law of love*, because, as love is the *cord*, by which God draws his household to obedience; so love is the *motive* that engages them to obey it: they obey, not from slavish fear, like these that are under the yoke of the law, as a covenant; but love, which *casts out fear.* Christ's *yoke is easy*, because it is a loving yoke; not driving by violence, but drawing them kindly by the cord of love in every duty; not requiring rigorously, under pain of death and damnation, but constraining sweetly with delight to do the will of God. It is not a grievous law, requiring obedience, but giving no strength, and seeking brick without straw; but a gracious law, lined with love and grace, promising strength to obey, *working in them both to will and to do.* Hence his *commandments are not grievous;* duties are not gravamenous; ordinances are not a heavy burden; but rather like a *chariot paved with love for the daughters of Jerusalem.*——This is the law by which the house is governed pleasantly and peaceably; for he that hath *the government upon his shoulders, is the Prince of peace.*

The consideration of these three laws may clear your view about the *law of the house:* the law, from which the house is delivered, is the law of works, or covenant of works; the law, by which the house is delivered and recovered, is the law of faith, or covenant of grace; and the law, by which the house is governed, is the law of love, or moral law, as a rule in the hand of a loving Jesus. Now, by the violation of the first of these, holiness was lost; by the publication of the second, holiness is restored; and by the promulgation of the third, holiness is required and established as a rule, for directing the household in the way of holiness. This leads me,

2dly, To the *second* question here, *viz. How* HOLINESS *is the law of the house?* For clearing this, it is necessary to remember, that the threefold law that I have mentioned, is fitly presented to us in the word of God. For, by the *first*, we are *convinced* of our unholiness; *By the law is the knowledge of sin.* By the *second*, we are *enlightened* to see where holiness is to be had, namely, in the holy covenant, the holy Jesus, whom God hath given to be the *covenant of the people*, as the gospel declares. By the *third*, we are *directed* in the way of holiness. The *first* is not the *law of the house*; for, they are delivered from it; only God makes use of it as a mean subservient to bring sinners to Christ, or to bring them to his house, where the only law is the two last; the *law of faith*, and the *law of love.* Now, the spiritual house of Christ is a holy building, where holy faith, and holy obedience, comprehend all the holiness of the house: and, because it is to be built up in the *most holy faith*, therefore the *law of faith*, or covenant of grace, is *the law of the house*, discovering the object and the ground of faith: and, because it is to be built up in a *most holy obedience*, therefore the *law of love*, or moral law, as a rule, is the *law of the house*, directing and binding them to this obedience: in the former, holiness is promised; in the latter, holiness is injoined.

1. As to the *law of faith*, or the gospel, holiness is to be considered as the *privilege* of the house; and by this law of faith it is viewed as a purchased privilege, as a promised privilege, as a privilege freely conferred, and a privilege freely continued.

2. As to the *law of love*, or moral law, holiness is to be considered as the *duty* of the house: for, holiness is the matter of the law; holiness is the end of it; holiness is the sum of it: it forbids nothing but unholiness, it requires nothing but holiness; *As he that has called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy*, 1 Pet. i. 15. The law of love must be a holy law; for, as all unholiness is comprised in enmity to God and man, so all holiness is comprised in love to God and man.

3dly, The *third* question here was, *Why is it* INGEMINATE *and doubled? This is the law of the house; Behold, this is the law of the house:* Why is it twice proclaimed in the text?

1. It imports, That *this law of the house* respecting holiness, is an *indispensible* law: therefore it is notified; and again notified with a *behold*, that none may pretend ignorance. The moral law, materially considered, is eternally binding.

2. It imports, That ye are *deaf* and *dull* of hearing; or, *hearing, we do not hear; but, like the deaf adder, stop our ear at the voice of the charmer:* and at the best are ready to forget that *this is the law of the house.* Therefore we are assured of it again and again.

3. It imports, That there is *danger* in neglecting this advertisement; and, in being remiss and slack in the study of holiness, it endangers the house; for, though the household of faith are all well intitled to heaven, and well secured from hell, yet the *law of the house* hath a sanction suitable to the children of the family; *If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments: then will I visit their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes*, Psal. lxxxix. 30,—32. The rod of God is terrible, even to his children.

4. It may import, That this is the *beginning* and the *end* of true religion: therefore, that *this is the law of the house*, is both at the beginning and the end of the text. Here is the preface, *This is the law of the house;* here is the conclusion of the whole matter, *Behold, this is the law of the house.* This boundary is set round about the house of God; and, HOLINESS TO THE LORD, must be the motto of the house, from the top to the bottom thereof. This leads,

IV. To the *fourth* thing proposed, namely, The *extent* of this law of holiness, *Upon the top of the mountain, the whole limit thereof round about shall be most holy.* I think, in general, this speaks out the *universality* of that holiness God calls for IN *his house.*—It should be universal *subjectively*, the whole heart, and all the faculties of the soul,

should

ſhould be engaged in the ſtudy of holineſs; we are to *love the Lord our God, with all our heart, ſoul, ſtrength, and mind.*—It ſhould be univerſal *objectively*, with reſpect to all the commands of God; *Then ſhall I not be aſhamed, when I have reſpect to all thy commandments*, without exception, without limitation.—It ſhould be univerſal *intenſively*, with the utmoſt intenſeneſs of ſoul, *Following the Lord with full purpoſe of mind: I ſaid, I will take heed to my ways: I have ſworn, and I will perform it, That I will keep thy righteous judgments.*—And it muſt be univerſal *extenſively*, with reſpect to all times and ſeaſons, companies and occaſions, places and circumſtances.——*The law of the houſe* binds to holineſs univerſal in all theſe reſpects.

But more particularly, the *extent* of this holineſs in the houſe of God, as here expreſſed, *Upon the top of the mountain, the whole limit thereof round about*, ſeems to me to import an univerſality, reſpecting every thing that relates TO *the houſe of God*, the church of God: the expreſſion ſuits the Old-teſtament diſpenſation, while the material temple ſtood upon the top of the mountain; but the goſpel-meaning thereof, as it reſpects the New-teſtament church, ſeems to be, that every thing about God's houſe, from the *top to the bottom, ſhall be moſt holy, as becomes the ſpiritual temple of God.* It ſays,

1. That all the *officers* ſhall be moſt holy; miniſters, elders, deacons; all that bear any veſſels in God's houſe; *Be ye clean, ye that bear the veſſels of the Lord*, Iſa. lii. 11. And hence, when God comes to purge and purify his church, he is ſaid particularly to *purify the ſons of Levi*, Mal. iii. 3. Surely we, whoſe office is to go up to the top of the mount, ought to have holy feet to tread ſuch a holy place; that it may be ſaid of us, *How beautiful, on the mountains, are the feet of them that preach the goſpel of peace!* Alas! many officers in God's houſe among us, that have moſt of the beauty of holineſs about them, God is faſt taking them away. He ſeems to be taking away the gold and ſilver, and leaving the droſs: and, when he is taking down ſuch as were props and pillars in the houſe, what ſhall we think, but that the houſe is like to fall about our ears, and heavy judgments at the door, when the *righteous are taken away from the evil to come!* But,

2. It ſays, that all the *members* of the houſe ſhall be moſt holy, all the children of the family; *Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy ſalvation cometh; and they ſhall call them the moſt holy people, the redeemed of the Lord*, Iſa. lxii. 11. Every inhabitant of the houſe, every believer, every member of Chriſt, every profeſſor of Chriſt, *every one that nameth the name of Chriſt, muſt depart from iniquity.* It ſays, that, not only *miniſters* ſhould be holy, but *people* ſhould be holy; not only *the top of the mount*, but *the whole limit thereof round about.* All that enter within the walls of Zion muſt be holy, otherwiſe they are not indwellers, like children; but only incomers, like dogs; that ſhall be baniſhed out with diſgrace, and never admitted to the higher houſe.

3. It ſays, That all the *courts* and *judicatories* of the houſe ſhould be moſt holy; Synods moſt holy, and General Aſſemblies of the houſe, moſt holy; *Upon the top of the mount, the whole limit thereof round about.* When theſe courts and judicatories of the houſe, or Aſſemblies of the church, whether inferior or ſuperior ones, are moſt holy, and purged with the ſpirit of judgment, and ſpirit of burning, then they are intitled to Heaven's protection; *The Lord will create upon every dwelling-place in mount Zion, and upon her aſſemblies, a cloud and ſmoke by day, and the ſhining of a flaming fire by night*, Iſa. iv. 4, 5. But when in days of degeneracy, corruption, and defection, like ours †, they become moſt unholy, then they are expoſed to ruin and deſolation.

4. It ſays, That all the *acts* and *ſtatutes* of the houſe are to be moſt holy. And indeed the acts of Aſſemblies and Judicatories of the church are to be regarded only according to their holineſs, and agreeableneſs to the holy word of God; *To the law and to the teſtimony; if they ſpeak not according to this word, it is becauſe there is no light in them*, Iſa. viii. 20. Acts iſſued even from the top of the mountain, if they be not according to the law of the houſe, are to be rejected, oppoſed, and proteſted againſt, as the commandments of men, and not the commandments of God; *In controverſy they ſhall ſtand in judgment, and they ſhall judge it according to my judgments; and they ſhall keep my laws and my ſtatutes in all mine aſſemblies*, Ezek. xliv. 23, 24. And, indeed, it is but a diſmal time, when the children of Zion are obliged to * *plead* with their mother, and even *proteſt* againſt her acts and ſtatutes.

5. It ſays, That all the *forms* and *ordinances* of the houſe be moſt holy; I mean, the form of doctrine, the form of worſhip, the form of diſcipline, the form of government, that they be according to the ſcripture-pattern; as it was ſaid to Moſes concerning the form of the tabernacle, *Look that thou make it after the pattern that was ſhewed thee in the mount*, Exod. xxv. 40. compared with Acts vii. 44. Heb. viii. 5. The doctrine, ſound and lively; worſhip, pure and ſpiritual; diſcipline, pure and impartial; and

† At the time when this Sermon was preached, matters, both in the church and ſtate, were in a moſt deplorable condition: error in principle, and immorality in practice, every where abounding; a reliſh for true religion, and genuine piety, much upon the decline; a deviating from attained-to Reformation-purity, and a falling from firſt love, greatly upon the increaſe.

* This was a very remarkable year in the church, and gave æra to a very memorable event, *viz.* the SECESSION. Our Author here has his eye upon the conduct of the Aſſembly this year, [*viz.* 1732.] He uſually noticed any remarkable tranſactions that occurred at the time when he compoſed and delivered his diſcourſes: And therefore, as a key to this, and ſome other ſimilar paſſages, both in this and ſome ſubſequent diſcourſes, it may not be improper briefly to open up the matter. The church was, at this time, in imminent danger; for, not only a pernicious ſcheme of Arian, Arminian, and Socinian doctrine was prevailing, but ſeveral arbitrary Acts and Deciſions had been framed and paſſed in the Supreme Judicatory, and the Lord's heritage much oppreſſed and grieved, by the ſettlement of reclaiming and diſſenting congregations. To clear up the paſſage now before us, we may obſerve, that the Aſſembly's conduct this year was very ſingular and extremely arbitrary, in a double reſpect.—Several Miniſters, [forty-two in number] among whom our Author was one, gave in a ſubſcribed *Repreſentation* to the Aſſembly, for the redreſs of many of the ſteps of defection which the church had gone into. This Repreſentation, though juſt in itſelf, was refuſed ſo much as a hearing by the Aſſembly; whereupon ſuch of the Miniſters as were preſent, offered a proteſt for their exoneration, which was alſo refuſed to be marked. There was a petition of the ſame nature, ſigned by many hundred Elders and Chriſtian people given in to the ſame Aſſembly, and ſhared the ſame fate.—The Aſſembly did not ſiſt here, but paſſed an Act concerning the *planting of vacant churches*, which lodged the deciſive power of electing Miniſters, in a conjunct meeting of elders and heritors, (and ſo depriving the Chriſtian people of their juſt right) no other qualification being required of ſaid heritors but their being *Proteſtants*, however much diſaffected to the government both in church and ſtate. This was matter of deep regret to many, and truly afflicting to ſeveral Miniſters, who accordingly *proteſted* againſt the Aſſembly; ſome of whom were afterwards ſeverely ſentenced for their faithfully teſtifying againſt theſe corruptions and incroachments.

government,

government, beautiful and orderly, is the outward glory of the church: and God hath said, *Upon all the glory there shall be a defence*, Isa. iv. 5. But in so far as the *fences are taken away*, in as far is the *glory departed from Israel*, and *the ark of God taken by the Philistines*, within or without the house. The holiness of doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of the house, comprehending the *top of the mount, and the whole limit thereof*, ought to be defended, and contended for, that it be not spoiled, corrupted, and defaced by these who make themselves *famous for lifting up hammers and axes upon the carved work*; and the rather, that the church of Scotland, particularly, has been so often in our Reformation-days solemnly sworn, by National Covenant, to the defence thereof, against all antichristian, unscriptural, and unholy forms and orders whatsoever.

6. It says, That all the *chambers* and *rooms* of the house should be most holy; I mean, all the ordinances of the house, whether public, or private, or secret; which are like so many chambers and rooms of the house to be kept clean and most holy; for, *He will be sanctified of all them that come nigh him*, Lev. x. 3. The outer rooms and public chambers of solemn ordinances, word and sacraments; the more private chambers of spiritual conference and family-worship; and the secret chambers of retired devotion, the chamber of meditation, the chamber of prayer, shall all be most holy, and occupied in the most holy manner. Not only all the public rooms, but all the secret closets of the house, shall be most holy; not only *the top of the mount*, but *the whole limit thereof round about*; whatever part of the house we enter, is to be most holy, in the exercise of faith, love, and all the holy graces of the Spirit, and in spiritual endeavours, through grace, to get all that are about the house made holy, and all things that are within the house, and without the house, and round about the house, *the top of the mount, the whole limit thereof round about; this is the law of the house.* The Lord knows how little it is observed now!

V. The next thing proposed, was, To touch a little at the *privilege* of *access to the most holy place.* This being a special part of the gospel that lies in the text, hid under this Old-testament phrase; I would open it up in these two or three remarks.

1. "That *access to the most holy place*, is nothing "else but access to the *most holy God*; and, there-"fore, it is the most glorious privilege that a "sinner can be advanced unto." The sanctuary, or holy of holies in the Old Testament temple, was a symbol and type of the gracious presence of God; and to come to that, was to come to God: and the *holy of holies* is, in the New Testament, called *a throne of grace*, Heb. iv. 16. And what is it to come to the throne of grace, or mercy-seat, but just to come to a merciful God, a gracious God in Christ? Therefore it is there said, *Let us come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.* Where will we find mercy or grace, but with a merciful and gracious God? This is then the most holy place to which there is access.

Remark 2. "That access to the most holy "place is by the *blood of Jesus.*" The priests, under the law, went into the holy place with *blood of bulls and goats*; but *Christ, our High-priest, having entered, by his own blood, into the holy place*, Heb. ix. 12. *We have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus*, Heb. x. 19. that is, in the faith of his blood; a justice-satisfying blood, and sin-expiating blood: even we guilty sinners have freedom to come to a just and holy God, and boldness to expect grace and glory, as the purchase of that blood; even that blood which is God-glorifying, sinner-sanctifying, heaven-purchasing.

Remark 3. "That access to the most holy "place is the *privilege* of the whole church." The whole family, all within the house, have access either proclaimed or obtained: All within the visible church, though but in the outer court, have access proclaimed; *Whosoever will, let him come.* And all within the church invisible, *viz.* Believers, being in the inner-court, have access obtained, and daily admission to the holy place. Only the high-priest under the law had access to the holy place, and that once a year only; but now all believers being a *royal priesthood*, and *made kings and priests unto their God*, have access, not once a year, Heb. ix. 7. nor once a month, but, perhaps, once a-week, once a-day; yea, several times a-day; perhaps, twenty times in one communion-day; even as oft as they get grace to act faith upon a God in Christ. This privilege of the whole church is here represented by *the top of the mount, and the whole limit thereof round about*, having the privilege of the holy place.

Remark 4. "The privilege of access to the "most holy place, is not only now extended to "*all persons* within the house, but also *every* "*where*, in all places where the church or chil-"dren of God are." Not only *the top of the mount*, but the *whole limit round about*, is the most holy place. Under the law, only the *sanctuary* was the most holy, but under the gospel the whole *mountain* shall be so, and the *whole limit thereof round about*; in as much as, where-ever the believer is, in public or in secret, there he hath access to the most holy place, the most holy God; according to what our Lord said to the woman of Samaria, John iv. 21. *Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father; but the true worshippers every where shall worship him in spirit and in truth.* The holy place was formerly hid in a corner of the temple; for, the holy God hid himself in a corner, as it were, under the dark dispensation: but now the holy place, the holy God, is every where to be seen, and enjoyed in Christ. The *vail of the temple is rent in twain*, by the death of Christ; and the *holy of holies* is exposed, that whosoever will may come and see, come and partake, come and enjoy God through Jesus Christ, through whom the door of access is opened to us Gentiles, as well as it was to the Jews; *Through him we both have access, by one Spirit, unto the Father*, Eph. ii. 8. The most holy place is not now confined to the *top of the mountain*, where the temple stood, but extended to the *whole mountain*, and *the whole limit thereof round about. This is the law of the house*, the privilege of the house according to the law of faith, or covenant of grace, *wherein the grace of God, that bringeth salvation, hath appeared unto all men.* O has it so appeared unto you this day, as that you find that you have got access to the most holy place! Then surely you are obliged to be the most holy people. Hence,

VI. The

VI. The *fixth* head propoſed, was, To ſhow, that this privilege of acceſs to the moſt holy place, *obliges* the whole houſhold of God, that are thus privileged, to be the *moſt holy people*. This grace of God that hath appeared to all men, does not, cannot, lead to licentiouſneſs, but *teaches to deny all ungodlineſs and worldly luſts; and to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent world*, Tit. ii. 11, 12. This privilege of acceſs to the moſt holy place brings us, not only under greater obligations to holineſs than *Pagans*, that are far from the moſt holy place; not only under greater obligations to holineſs than *profeſſors*, who only are admitted to the outer-court, and not to the moſt holy place; and not only under greater obligations to holineſs than *Jews*, who were only admitted, by their high-prieſt, to the holy place in the material temple; but alſo it lays us under greater obligations to holineſs than *Adam* in a ſtate of innocency, ſuppoſe we were as innocent as he was before the fall, and that the covenant of works were on the field, promiſing life to our perfect obedience; for, when you are admitted to the moſt holy place, then you ſee everlaſting righteouſneſs, and perfect obedience wrought to your hand, and eternal life purchaſed to your hand; and therefore are obliged, by the law of love and gratitude, to ſerve the God that hath ſaved you, and not to work hard for your life. And which of theſe are the ſtrongeſt ties to love and obedience, namely, to find God ſaying, *Do*, and do perfectly, and you ſhall have eternal life for your pains? Or, to find God *giving* you life, ſalvation, righteouſneſs, and all in Chriſt; and, from the faith thereof, kindling love in your ſoul, and conſtraining you to ſerve him in gratitude? If this be the ſtrongeſt obligation to holineſs, then believers in Chriſt are under ſtronger obligations to holineſs than ever Adam was in a ſtate of innocency.

Acceſs to the moſt holy place obliges us to be the moſt holy people, both effectively and argumentatively.

1. *Effectively* and *powerfully*; for, when one hath acceſs to the moſt holy place, then he ſees the glory of God; and, *Beholding this glory, he is changed into the ſame image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord*, 2 Cor. iii. 18. Thus, what the law teaches preceptively, the goſpel teaches effectively. It is ſaid of theſe that are mounted to the upper ſtory of the houſe of God, to heaven, *they are like him, becauſe they ſee him as he is*. Being come to the moſt holy place, they ſee the moſt holy God, and are made like him in holineſs. This privilege is commenced in the lower houſe: the more that believers ſee the moſt holy God in the moſt holy place, or the glory of God in the face of Chriſt, the more they are like unto him. When they *come boldly to the throne of grace*, or to the *holy of holies*, then they *obtain mercy, and find grace to help them*, and grace to ſtrengthen them in all the duties of holineſs. All their holineſs comes from that moſt holy place, to which they have acceſs. And thus it obliges them to holineſs, ſweetly, powerfully, neceſſarily, and effectively.

2. *Argumentatively*, it obliges them to be the moſt holy people; for, acceſs to the moſt holy place furniſhes them with an argument drawn from *equity*; *What! ſhall we, that are dead to ſin, live any longer therin?* Rom. vi. 2. Have we, by acceſs to God, got a dead ſtroak given to the tyrant ſin? and, ſhall we return to ſlavery? *God forbid.* Acceſs to the moſt holy place furniſhes with an argument drawn from *gratitude*; *Shall I thus requite the Lord, O fooliſh and unwiſe? Is not he my Father that hath bought me?* Deut. xxxii. 6. Has he allowed me acceſs to him, and ſhall I ſpurn at ſuch bowels, and ſpit on the face of ſuch love?—At the moſt holy place the man ſees that there is *mercy with God that he may be feared* and obeyed, and ſo is encouraged to duty; and there he ſees that it is God that *worketh in him both to will and to do:* there he ſees that the law he is under, is not a law of works, but a law of love, where all the commands are love-commands; *If ye love me, keep my commandments:* and the threatenings, love-threatenings, not of vindictive wrath, but of fatherly diſpleaſure. The law-threatening of hell, and vindictive wrath, works wrath and enmity, which is the height of diſobedience; while the man fears that God will damn him, he flees from God as an enemy: but goſpel-threatenings, if we may ſo call them, work upon love, and inflame it, while the believer fears, in a filial manner, ſaying, "O! ſhall I incur my Father's "diſpleaſure, and provoke him to hide his face, "and deny me that gracious preſence of his, "which is even a heaven upon earth to me?"—At the moſt holy place, the believer ſees God *clothed with a garment of ſalvation*, compaſſed with love and grace, and riding, as it were, in the chariot of a free gracious promiſe; not a promiſe of life upon our doing, but a promiſe of grace to do, and of glory to crown our doing; and of grace and glory both, as the reward of Chriſt's doing all.—In a word, when we have acceſs to the moſt holy place, we ſee the place *encircled with blood*, the mercy-ſeat ſprinkled with blood, and that by this blood the infinite juſtice of God is fully ſatisfied, and that we have to do with him as a reconciled God and friend; and therefore our obligation is not under the authority of an angry Judge, but the authority of a loving Father, teſtifying his everlaſting love to us, by drawing with loving-kindneſs: and ſhall we not kindly run, when thus kindly drawn?—Why then, this privilege of acceſs to the moſt holy place, lays us under the ſtricteſt and ſtrongeſt obligation to be the moſt holy people. *And, behold, this is the law of the houſe*: the bond of love is the ſtrongeſt bond.

VII. I come now to the *application* of the ſubject. And we ſhall apply it, in the firſt place, by deducing a few inferences for *information*. Is it ſo, *that univerſal holineſs is ſo much the eſtabliſhed law of God's houſe, that the whole family, being privileged with acceſs to the moſt holy place, are under the ſtrongeſt obligation to be the moſt holy people?* Then,

1. Hence ſee, that God's houſe is not a *lawleſs houſe*, and believers in Chriſt *are not without law to God, but under the law to Chriſt*; as the apoſtle expreſſes it. The *doctrine of grace* is no doctrine of *licentiouſneſs*; though many reproach goſpel-doctrine with a flouriſh of words, in their harangues on morality, under pretence of putting honour upon the law, while yet they neither underſtand law nor goſpel, but miſerably confound and blend them together. *Do we make void the law through faith?* Are we lawleſs *Antinomians* *, becauſe we declare the freedom of the houſe from the law of works?

* It was formerly noticed, p. 78, 149, 178, 196. that a legal turn of mind, and ſtrain of preaching was much upon the increaſe in Scotland: and the patrons and promoters hereof, boldly accuſed and virulently lampooned the champions for, and defenders of, the doctrine of grace, as enemies to the law, and friends to licentiouſneſs.

Alas! many, in their ignorant zeal for this law, discover their little acquaintance with the law of the house.

2. Hence see, that if *universal holiness* be the *law of the house*, because of the *universal access* there is to the *holy place*; then, how *few appear to be of the household of God* in our day, which is a day of universal unholiness, universal wickedness, universal profanity and impiety. Oh! how few in our day go in to the most holy place, since few appear to be a most holy people! Where there is no access to the most holy place, there is no holiness: where little access, little holiness.

3. Hence see, the difference betwixt the *covenant of works* and the *covenant of grace*, in respect of the place that holiness hath in the one and the other. The former, being *Do*, and *live*; therein duty opens the door to privilege, and man behoved first to be holy, before he could be admitted to the holy place: but the latter, being *Live, and do*; therein privilege opens the door to duty, and men must first have access to the holy place, before they can be a holy people; for they must first come to Christ, or to God in Christ, which is the holy of holies, and from hence bring all their holiness. That is one of the reasons why gospel-ministers preach so much upon gospel-privileges, and upon faith in Christ entering into the holy place, because this faith works by love, and is the root of all true holiness; for, when faith looks into the most holy place, there it sees the law hidden in the ark, Jesus Christ, and safely kept there; and the believer finds, that, by lying in the warm bosom of Christ, it is turned into a law of love.

4. Hence see, That it is not *safe to be without the church of God*: for, as it is the house where God dwells, and it is best dwelling where God dwells; so there is access to the most holy place to be found there, *upon the top of the mount*, and *the whole limit thereof round about*. As long as God dwells in a church, and gives evidence of his presence in these ordinances, let us bless him for *the day of small things*, and *wait upon him, who* yet *hides himself*, in many respects, *from the house of Jacob*. Let us pity those who are without the church: for, *without are dogs*, and they can have no view of the holy place; and, *where no vision is, the people perish*. And pity these who are only within the outer walls of the church, in the outer court, and never got grace to enter into the most holy place; and also these who have been within, and have gone out, and separate from the church; I mean, even separatists from the church of Scotland, some upon a kind of *Independent* footing, and others affecting novelties, betaking themselves to English popish ceremonies, and new modes of worship. At the same time many true friends to Presbytery are on the very borders of separating from this established church, upon a disgust at the defections of the day; and it is to be lamented that many stumbling-blocks have been laid in peoples way: and it is sure, when a particular church, like Romish Babylon, comes to be wholly corrupt, then that rule for separation will hold, *Come out from among them, my people*. This was what justified our glorious Reformation from Popery. In this case, it is not a sinful separating from the church of God, but a dutiful separating from the chapel of the devil. And I own, that, as matters stand at present in the church of Scotland, we seem to be on the very brink of a schism: but, whatever tenderness I desire to show to weak consciences, in many circumstances, I have never, as yet, seen ground to preach separation *, whatever ground I see to testify against the corruptions and defections of the day, I hope God hath not yet left the house; he is yet to be found in these galleries of his house, the ordinances of his worship. Mean time, I have a concern particularly for these that are mourning over the defections and defilements of the house, and keeping the cleanest rooms they can find therein, and whose lot is to have officers obtruded upon them, and have not the gospel, but the law, or mere moral harangues, preached to them; and I desire to pray they may be directed to their duty in an evil day. This leads me to

A word of *lamentation*, which is the next use I would make of the doctrine. Even on a communion-day, when we are holding communion in the house of God, we may lament the disorders and irregularities therein, contrary to the *law of the house*. Surely the house of God in our day is a ruinous house, and needs to be repaired and reformed. If this be the law of the house, that every member, every part, every room of the house be *most holy*; then surely the law of the house is broken and violate in our day; for we may see the reverse of this law, even unholiness, *upon the top of the mountain, and the whole limit thereof round about*. Behold, this is the sad state of the house: and, since you cannot be duly concerned without knowing the circumstances of it, I shall hint a little at the visible defects of the visible part of the house among us.

1. Oh! where is *personal* holiness (to begin at home) among the visible members of the house! The law of faith, or the covenant of grace, proclaiming access to the most holy place, is the law of the house; and yet, alas! how little faith is in the house! how little believing or *entering into the holiest by the blood of Jesus!* The law of love, or moral law, as a rule of obedience, is the law of the house; but, Oh! how little love to God or man issuing from that faith! Does not *iniquity abound, and the love of many wax cold?* There is little to be seen of faith's working by love, but much to be seen of hatred working by unbelief.—It is the law of that house, that we *love one another*; but, behold, how many are devouring one another, through malice, envy,

* Our Author, at this time, was not so clear for withdrawing from the present Judicatories, as he afterwards came to be. And, indeed, all the habile methods had scarcely as yet been used within doors, by Representations, Petitions, Remonstrances, Expostulations, and Protestations: but when all these were used to no valuable purpose, and a deaf ear lent to them; nay, sentences inflicted for so doing, he saw just ground to withdraw from the present corrupt Judicatories, while carrying on a course of defection; but never did separate from the church of Scotland in her Constitution. We have his full sentiments on this head, in his Secession from the Judicatories, about five years after this: in which, after stating the nature and grounds of his Secession, we have these words; "So that, (says our "Author, adopting the sentiments of an eminent Light in this church) here is no separation from the church of Scotland, either in her "doctrine, worship, discipline, or government; but rather a cleaving more closely thereto, by departing or going forth from her back-"slidings and defections, as we are commanded by the Lord, and from some Judicatories, because of these; and only a negative, passive, "and conditional withdrawing; not importing any resolution never to join with them in any circumstance, but a present refusing to "follow the declining part of the church, while carrying on these defections, and a choosing rather to stand still and cleave to that part, "though smaller, that is endeavouring to retain and maintain a covenanted Reformation."

pride,

pride, and contention!—It is the law of the houſe, more particularly, that we *have no other god but the moſt holy God*; that we perform no other worſhip, but moſt holy worſhip; that we reverence his name, as the moſt holy name; that we ſanctify his Sabbath, for a moſt holy reſt all the day.—It is the law of the houſe, that we be moſt holy in every *relative capacity* and *ſtation*; that we be, according to our place, holy magiſtrates, holy miniſters, holy parents, holy children, holy maſters, holy ſervants.—It is the law of the houſe, that there be no murder in thought, word, or deed: no whoredom, in thought, word, or deed: no falſe witneſſes, no covetous heart in the houſe; nothing but the moſt holy place, and the moſt holy people: but, ah! where is the ſpirit of holineſs? Where is the exerciſes of holy graces, holy faith, holy love, holy penitency? Where is holy preaching, holy hearing, holy ſinging, holy praying, holy communicating, holy walking? I ſuppoſe, when matters are thoroughly canvaſſed, and ſeriouſly conſidered, there is little to be found among us, but unholy thoughts, unholy words, unholy actions; and little holy lamenting over our unholineſs. Again,

2. If we look to the *public*, may we not find matter of lamentation? While it is the law of the houſe of the God of heaven, that *nothing be done* therein *but according to the will of the God of heaven*; yet many things are done contrary to his will.—It is the law of the houſe, that the houſe be kept in *repair*, and do not ly waſte; but, behold, the walls are broken down, and the carved work demoliſhed.—It is the law of the houſe, that none be reckoned *members* of the family but theſe that are a *holy nation, a royal prieſthood, a ſpiritual people*, 1 Pet. ii. 9.; at leaſt, with reference to the viſible church, that they have a viſible and credible profeſſion: it is not theſe that have worldly lordſhips, lairdſhips, and heritages, that have, upon this account, any title to the members of Chriſt's ſpiritual houſe and kindom; for, *His kingdom is not of this world*; his houſe is diſtinct therefrom: ſuch may be members of God's houſe, but not as they are lords, lairds, heritors, gentles, nobles; ſome ſuch may be called of God into his houſe, but, *not many noble, not many great men are called*, 1 Cor. i. 26. Not many ſtocked with worldly riches or worldly wiſdom: yet ſuch, under the name of heritors, if they be but proteſtant in profeſſion, though they were pagans in practice, ſeem, in our day, to be declared members of God's ſpiritual houſe. But, notwithſtanding, it is the law of the houſe of God, Acts. i. 15, 26. vi. 3. iv. 23. as the original word here demonſtrates, that only the true members of the family, wherein every member is a *maſter*, a *king*, and a *prieſt* to his God, ſhould chuſe out from among them, by *common ſuffrage*, the *ſervants* and *officers* of the houſe. And, indeed, it is the law of every houſe, that no ſervant be obtruded upon them by foreigners, againſt the mind of the houſe, or againſt the will of the family; much more is it the law of God's houſe, that neither prince, patron, nor heritor, as denominate only from their temporal eſtate, ſhould have power over God's ſpiritual houſe, in chuſing and electing of their ſpiritual ſervants and officers, to the excluding of the voice and vote of the proper members of the family; yet this law of the houſe is manifeſtly violated by ſome late acts in our day*.—Again, it is the law of the houſe, that the *doctrine of the goſpel* be maintained with zeal, and damnable doctrine be rejected with indignation; yet, how much goſpel-doctrine hath been condemned and darkened in our day †; and damnable doctrine, ſuch as that of Arianiſm, ſlenderly cenſured ‡; and many corruptions in doctrine either looked over and tolerate, or not ſufficiently teſtified againſt, and that in a time when the houſe within is polluted with a boundleſs toleration of errors without doors?—It is the law of the houſe, that the *oath of God* be inviolably maintained, and nothing contrary to it be admitted or allowed; yet, how have our ſolemn oaths to the great God and maſter of the houſe, *viz.* our Covenants, both national and ſolemn league, been ſolemnly violate, broken, burnt, and buried, and a multitude of ſinful and unneceſſary oaths received and allowed in the room thereof?—It is the law of the houſe, that the *worſhip of God* be moſt holy, and agreeable to the word and will of God; and that no *threſhold be ſet up beſides his threſhold, and poſts by his poſts*, Ezek. liv. 8. And yet behold abjured ſuperſtitious worſhip, and Engliſh popiſh ceremonies ſet up in ſeveral places of the nations; and the guilt hereof is chargeable upon the houſe, in as far as it is not duly regreted, and ſo far as poſſible remedied.—It is the law of the houſe, that the *diſcipline* therein do not degenerate into *cruelty* towards the children of the family; and yet, what ground to complain, in our day of eccleſiaſtical tyranny exerciſed towards the people of God, in ſettling many congregations? And thus Chriſt, in his members, is wounded in the houſe of his friends, and his poor deſpiſed people obliged to ſay of the watchmen, *They ſmote me, they wounded me, they took away my vail from me.*— It is the law of the houſe, that the *government* therein be beautiful, orderly, and holy; and that the ſeveral under-governors of the houſe have an orderly walk and converſation, both in their private families and in their public managements; and that they be *clean that bear the veſſels of the Lord*: yet, how many officers and elders in the church live very looſly, and neglect the worſhip of God in their families? And ſome of them ſit in our national aſſemblies, that yet join with the church of England in their ſuperſtitious worſhip, when in that nation, to the reproach of the preſbeterial profeſſion.—It is the law of the houſe, that *faſts* and *thankſgivings* be appoined therein, when providence calls for it; and yet, how is this turned into deſuetude, and the church loſing ground, and ſeeming to give up with, inſtead of aſſerting and exerting her intrinſic power; and ſeemingly ſurrendering it to the hand of the civil magiſtrate, whoſe power ought not to be privative, but cumulative, in

* Our Author here, without doubt, has his eye upon the act of parliament made in the tenth year of Q. Anne's reign, *Reſtoring Patronages* and the act of aſſembly, 1732. concerning the *Planting of Vacant Churches*. Though it be conſonant both to ſcripture and reaſon, and the practice of the church of Scotland, ſince the Reformation, that the Lord's people, or multitude of diſciples, have a right to chuſe their ſpiritual guides, yet theſe acts denudes the Chriſtian people of this liberty to elect their ſpiritual overſeers; the firſt, by lodging [illegible] power ſolely in the hands of the patron; and the next, by veſting heritors and elders with the alone right of election.

† It is probable, our Author means the acts of aſſembly, *annis* 1720, 1722. condemning the doctrine of the Marrow of Modern Divinity. See above, p. 70, 149.

‡ This hath a reference to the proceſs againſt profeſſor Symſon, formerly briefly cleared up, p. 322, 454.

this

this matter? Secular power, and ſpiritual, in a Chriſtian land, ought to be ſweetly ſubſervient one to another, but ought not to be blended or confounded together, nor deſtructive one of another.—It is the law of the houſe, that the *Lord* and *King* of the houſe be *exalted*, and that his royal headſhip and ſovereignty be aſſerted, in oppoſition to all that aſſume to themſelves a ſovereignty, in all cauſes, civil or eccleſiaſtical†; yet this duty hath been fearfully neglected, and the Lord of the houſe many ways affronted in his own family.—It is the law of the houſe, that ſince God orders his own children to *plead with their mother*, when any confuſion takes place in the family, in order to the redreſſing of what is grievous; that the mother *regard the pleading*, and *redreſs* accordingly: and yet, when the children have done ſo in our day, ſhe hath given a *deaf ear*, and *deeper wounds**, inſtead of favourable anſwers. O if this may ſet them a-pleading with their Father in heaven, who hath ſaid, *When* he *builds up Zion, he will appear in his glory, and he will regard the prayer of the deſtitute, and not deſpiſe their prayer: this ſhall be written for the generations to come, and the people which ſhall be created ſhall praiſe the Lord.*—In a word, it is the law of the houſe, that there be no *ſchiſm* nor *diviſion* there, becauſe *a houſe divided againſt itſelf cannot ſtand;* and yet, how many diviſions take place? and, how many grounds are daily laying down for ſchiſm, and matter of offence given by multiplied receſſions from reformation-principles and practices? *Offences muſt come, but wo to them by whom they come.*——It were endleſs to ſpeak of all the particulars wherein the law of the houſe is *violate;* only theſe are ſome of the moſt obvious to me, which I ſpeak of as matter of lamentation, that ye may know on what account you need to be concerned for the houſe of God, and to pray for the welfare of Jeruſalem, and the reparation of her walls.

This is the ſtate of the houſe viſible in our day, *Upon the top of the mountain the whole limit thereof*, is become moſt unholy: behold, this is the ſtate of the houſe. And yet for all this there remains ſome good thing in the church of Scotland, notwithſtanding all the evils that take place: As,

1. There is a goodly number yet of worthy, faithful, and able *miniſters* of the goſpel, whereof ſome, perhaps, are but betrayed by the power of temptation, and the ſtrength of carnal reaſoning, to fall in with theſe meaſures in the Lord's houſe, which, after calm and ſedate conſideration, they will be loth to juſtify, and will be ſorry for: therefore,

2. There are not a few yet, who are, and will be *witneſſes* for God, againſt all the corruptions of the Lord's houſe, and ready to give their teſtimony againſt the defections of the day wherein we live.

3. There are *pure ordinances* adminiſtered in the houſe: the word and ſacraments adminiſtered according to the goſpel-inſtitution; and the doctrine of the goſpel preached in purity.

4. There are ſome ſigns and evidences now and then of the *Lord's preſence* in theſe ordinances, and of his power in the ſanctuary, reviving and ſtrengthening the hearts of his hidden ones, and bringing them to the chambers of the King, even to the holy of holies, under the covert of the blood of Jeſus.

This leads me to an uſe of *examination*, for trying whether or not ye be ſuch members of the houſe of God, as have been privileged with acceſs to the inviſible part of the houſe, the *moſt holy place;* and what effect this has wrought upon you, to make you holy, as the Lord your God is holy.

1*ſt*, Have you been *admitted* to the moſt holy place? Have you got *boldneſs to enter into the holieſt by the blood of Jeſus*, at this occaſion, or formerly? If ſo, then I will tell you,

1. You have loſt *all boldneſs and confidence in the fleſh*, Phil. iii. 3.; all confidence in yourſelf, all confidence in your own righteouſneſs and worthineſs: nothing keeps you in countenance before God, but your view of the worthineſs and righteouſneſs of Jeſus. Again,

2. What *way* got you into the holy place, or into the preſence of the moſt holy God. Surely it is not *without blood*. Can you ſay, that you was carried into the holieſt, as it were, in a *chariot paved with love*, and the *covering thereof was purple?* Can you ſay, I ſaw ſomething like a *rainbow about the throne* of grace, and not only a purple covering over my head, but alſo a purple pavement under my feet; a pleaſant pavement, laid partly with the white marble of the love of God, and partly with the red marble of the blood of Chriſt; and, upon this pavement, laid before me in the goſpel, my heart went forward to the moſt holy place; and I ſaw that the moſt holy God was a reconciled God in Chriſt, a well-pleaſed God in Chriſt.

3. Have you ſeen that the *holy of holies* is nothing elſe but *a throne of grace*, having grace above it, and grace beneath it, and grace round about it; and that, therefore, the moſt holy place is a place meet for you to come to, meet for you to reſt in; for you, unworthy you, that cannot be ſaved any other way but by grace, free grace, venting through that blood of Jeſus?

4. Have you ſeen, in that holy place, that the *promiſes of God* are all *Yea and Amen in* Chriſt; that they are *the New Teſtament in his blood;* and that, therefore, every promiſe is ſure, being dipt in blood, ſealed with blood, with juſtice-ſatisfying blood; and that, therefore, juſtice requires, as well as mercy, that they be accompliſhed?

2*dly*, What *ſanctifying effect* hath this acceſs to the moſt holy place had upon you? Do you find yourſelf more ſweetly bound to univerſal holineſs? Why, ſay you, I find myſelf under an obligation to be a moſt holy perſon; becauſe, I think, I have been admitted, in ſome reſpect, to the moſt holy place: but I tremble to think of what you are now to ſay, becauſe I find the lamentable want of holineſs, and cannot think

† Alluding to the wicked Act of *Supremacy*, made Anno 1661, after Charles II's Reſtoration, declaring him head over *all perſons*, and in *all cauſes*, civil and eccleſiaſtic. Inconſiſtent both with the Scriptures and our Standards. See Conf. Faith, ch. 30. §. 1, 2. ch. 25. §. 6. ch. 23. §. 3. with the ſcriptures quoted.

* Our Author here, no doubt, alludes both to the conduct of the aſſembly, Annis 1720, 1732.—By the firſt, [*viz.* 1720.] the aſſembly, by their fifth act, concerning the *Marrow*, condemn a bundle of propoſitions, containing doctrines of the greateſt importance. Which conduct, induced ſeveral miniſters, among whom our Author was one, to give in a *Repreſentation* to the Aſſembly 1721, ſetting forth, That it appeared to them, that the foreſaid condemnatory act and ſentence wounded many goſpel truths; yet the aſſembly 1722, though partly convinced of the fact, were ſo far from repealing the Act 1720. that they, by their ſeventh act, rather farther explained corroborated, and confirmed the ſaid fifth act, and ſo gave a *deeper wound* to truth. See above, p. 70, 149.—The aſſembly 1732, not only lent a *deaf ear* to the Repreſentations and Petitions that were preſented to them, for the Redreſs of Grievances, but utterly rejected them; and gave *deeper wounds*, by their act lodging the ſole power of election of miniſters into the hands of a conjunct meeting of heretors and elders. See above p. 631.

you

you will give me a mark that will argue my being holy; and therefore fear my acceſs to the holy place, that ſometimes I thought I had, to be but deluſion. I muſt tell you,

1. If you have been in the moſt holy place, and got ſome holy impreſſions there, then ye will ſee yourſelf to be *moſt vile;* when Job was let in to the moſt holy place, then he cries out, *Behold, I am vile*, chap. xl. 4. It is a ſight of the holy God that makes us to ſee ourſelves to be unholy creatures. You that value yourſelves as good and holy, you have never ſeen a holy God in the face: but thou that hateſt thyſelf, and lotheſt thyſelf as an unholy creature, ſaying, *Truth, Lord, I am a dog; ſo fooliſh I am, and ignorant; I am as a beaſt before thee;* thou art a holy perſon.

2. Try your holineſs by a queſtion or two: What is your *deſire?* Is it, O to be holy! O to be like unto Chriſt!—What is your *hope?* Do you love to think of getting to heaven, becauſe there you will be like him, by ſeeing him as he is?—What is your *delight* and *love?* Can you ſay you love the law, becauſe it is a holy law, and becauſe it is a law of love?—What is your *lamentation?* Is it, Oh! unholy ſinner that I am? *O wretched man that I am! who ſhall deliver me from the body of death?*—What is your *how long?* Is it, *O how long ſhall I ſojourn in Meſech, and dwell in the tents of Kedar!*—What is your regard to the *law* of the houſe? Are you grieved to ſee that it is violate by yourſelf and others?—What is your regard to the *members* of the houſe? Do you love the ſaints, becauſe they are holy? Some chuſe a drinking club and cabal before the company of the godly that lay them under a reſtraint; but is your *delight with the ſaints, the excellent ones of the earth?*—Again, what is your regard to the *Lord* of the houſe? Can you ſay, from the bottom of your ſoul, that, however unholy you are, yet you love him becauſe he is holy, and can rejoice in him as a holy God that hates ſin? This is a ſweet mark that you have been in the holy place, and got the print of God's holineſs ſtamped on your ſoul. A hypocrite may love God becauſe he is good and merciful; but I do not think he can love him, becauſe he is a holy God that hates ſin. Is that the language of thy ſoul, *O give thanks at the remembrance of his holineſs?*—In a word, what is thy *reſolution* through grace? Is it, that you will endeavour, in his ſtrength, to glorify God by a holy walk, and yet are you feared to reſt on your reſolutions, and therefore turn your reſolutions to prayers, ſaying, *Lord, let thy hand be upon the man of thy right-hand, the Son of man whom thou haſt made ſtrong for thyſelf, and henceforth we will not go back?* After trial, ſee your duty.

My laſt uſe, therefore, ſhall be by way of *exhortation.* 1. To theſe who are without the houſe. 2. To thoſe who have been admitted into the holy place.

1*ſt*, To you that are *without the houſe*, that are no members of God's family, but are unbelievers. I exhort you to come into the houſe of God; *For without are dogs*, unholy dogs, Rev. xxii. 15. Why, may ſome think, are you calling us to come into the houſe, where there are ſo many diſorders, as you have been mentioning? It is beſt to ſtay without doors: why, man, woman, when I call you to come into the houſe of God, it is, not only to the outer houſe, but to come in to the moſt holy place, and to enter into the holieſt by faith; that is, *Come to God in Chriſt.* The outer houſe is only the viſible church, and the viſible glory is indeed much defaced in our day; but there is an inviſible part of the houſe, the moſt holy place, that we call you to come to: not to an outward viſible profeſſion only; not to outward ordinances only; for, by your being within the walls of the houſe, you are ſeemingly come there already: but you may be viſible church-members, and come to ordinances and ſacraments, and yet ſtrangers to God, if you have never come in to the moſt holy place by coming in to God in Chriſt. And, Oh! why ſtand you without doors, contrary to the law of the houſe, inviting all to *come in!* Rev. xxii. 17. Let me tell you, while you ſtay without doors, you are *without hope, and without God in the world*; neither fellow-citizens with the ſaints, nor of the houſhold of God, in a ſpiritual ſenſe: and the viſible outward advantages we enjoy, while you are only in the outer court, will aggravate your condemnation if ye come not in. I muſt tell you, while you are not within the houſe, in a ſpiritual ſenſe, you are not under the law, *The law of the houſe;* I mean, the law of faith and love, but under the law of works, and ſo under the curſe; for, *Curſed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them.* The wrath of God abides on you, while you abide in unbelief, without coming in to the Surety, and cloſing with his law-biding righteouſneſs. While you come not in to the moſt holy place, you remain in a moſt unholy ſtate and way; for, it is this holy place that makes a holy people: Chriſt is the true temple, the holy place, the houſe where God dwells; and how can you ſee God, if you come not to his houſe? How can you ſpeak with God, if you come not to his houſe? How can you draw up acquaintance with him, or attain conformity to him? If you do not behold the glory of God in the face of Chriſt, you can never be *changed into his image, from glory to glory.* Without coming to Chriſt, you ſhall never have holineſs; and without holineſs, you ſhall never ſee God in heaven.

Conſider, O ſinner, *The law of the houſe*, with reference to you that are without.—It is *the law of the houſe*, that the *door* be open for all comers; *Whoſoever will, let him come.*—It is *the law of the houſe*, that all *comers* ſhall be welcome; *He that cometh, I will in nowiſe caſt out.*—It is *the law of the houſe*, that all that come in ſhall be *children* of the family; *We are the children of God by faith in Chriſt: without are dogs*, but within are children.—It is *the law of the houſe*, that no *objection* be ſuſtained as lawful againſt your coming into Chriſt, or to the moſt holy place; for the law of grace is calculate, of infinite wiſdom, for anſwering every objection: it is not lawful to object any thing againſt coming into the holy place. Fear of God's infinite juſtice is no lawful objection; for, here is a ſacrifice, ſatiſfying juſtice. Your great ſin and guilt is no lawful objection; for, here is guilt-expiating blood. Your total want of all good in yourſelf, is no lawful objection; for, here is all fulneſs to ſupply you. Your unworthineſs is no lawful objection; for, the worthineſs of the Lamb is the only thing that is regarded in the moſt holy place. Your poverty is no lawful objection; for, here are the unſearchable riches of Chriſt, both to pay your debt,

and bear your charges. Your rags and nakedneſs is no lawful objection; for, here is the rob of righteouſneſs to cover you, that *the ſhame of your nakedneſs may not appear*. Your fear of God's having ſome ſecret purpoſe againſt you, is no lawful objection, but a horrid thought; for, *The law of the houſe* makes nothing but God's revealed will your rule. Your weakneſs and inability is no lawful objection; for, *Strength and beauty are in his ſanctuary; ſtrength is within his holy place*, to which you are called to come; and drawing power is put in the promiſe, ſuch as that, *When I am lifted up, I will draw all men after me*, that you may take his help, and look to his promiſed power and grace. Your unholineſs is no lawful objection; for, you are invited to come to the moſt holy place, that you may be incorporated amongſt the moſt holy people. In a word, diſtance is no lawful objection; for, the moſt holy place is at hand; ſince you cannot go up to the holy of holies, the holy of holies is come down to you: it is on *the top of the mountain*, and *the whole limit thereof round about*. *Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men*. And the queſtion is, Do you welcome a Jeſus, that is come to you in the goſpel, to make you holy as well as happy for ever? Can your heart ſay, *Bleſſed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord?* It is one good way of coming to him, to welcome his coming to you. Is there an echo in your heart? When he ſays, Sinner, come thou to me; does your heart ſay, Lord, come thou to me, for I cannot come to thee without I be drawn? When he cries, *Come*; and you cry, *Come*; ye are not far from meeting together. Well, ſinner, the door is open, O tarry not till the door be ſhut. *Now is the accepted time, now is the day of ſalvation*. Say not, *To-morrow*, thou fool, leſt this night thy ſoul be required of thee, and then to all eternity you ſhall never have another offer. O may the arm of power accompany the offer of grace in the evening of a communion-day!

2*dly*, I would cloſe with a word to you that have been, either now or formerly, *drawn in to the moſt holy place*: ſurely it is your duty to be a moſt holy people; for, univerſal *holineſs is the law of the houſe; on the top of the mountain, the whole limit thereof round about*. I ſhould exhort and direct you in a word.

O Sirs, are you come into the ſanctuary of God? O then, *put off your ſhoes; for the place whereon you ſtand is holy ground!* Put off your filthy ſhoes, for the room of the houſe you have entered into is a clean room, a holy place; the Lord of the houſe is moſt holy. Holineſs is the *name* of God; he is the *Holy One of Iſrael*. Holineſs is the *will of* God; *This is the will of God, even your ſanctification*. Holineſs is the *work* of God; and *you are his workmanſhip, created in Chriſt Jeſus unto good works*. Holineſs is the *nature* of God; and you are *made partakers of the divine nature*. Holineſs is the *glory* of God; and he is *glorious in holineſs*.

Conſider, the *houſe* of God is a holy houſe, and the church is not God's houſe, but in ſo far as it is holy. His *word* is a holy word; his *ordinances* are holy ordinances; his *table* is a holy table; and *holineſs becometh his houſe for ever*.

Conſider the *beauty* of holineſs: the beauty of faces is but ſkin-deep, a rotting beauty; the beauty of clothes and ornaments is but a patch upon a ſore, a ſkreen to cover your nakedneſs; but the beauty of holineſs is what makes a man all glorious within and without. All *pleaſure* without holineſs is but grief; for the pleaſure of ſin is what man muſt either repent of here, or be damned for hereafter. All *profit* without holineſs is but loſs; *For, what ſhall it profit a man, to gain the whole world, and loſe his own ſoul? But godlineſs is great gain*. All *honour* without holineſs will end in ſhame and diſgrace.

Conſider the *oppoſite* of holineſs, namely, SIN; that ſin is a reproach to any people, much more to ſuch a profeſſing and privileged people as you are. The profane world, that ſee your works, and not your faith, if you be vile, vain, wanton, and profane in your walk, they will ſay, There is your religion; and thus you will bring a reproach upon your holy religion. And who, that ever was admitted to the moſt holy place, would not bluſh and be aſhamed to bring it under ſuch undeſerved reproach.

Conſider what *regard* is owing to the glory of God, the honour of Chriſt, the work of the holy Spirit, and the credit of our holy religion.

Conſider what is the *end* of God in all his great works toward you: this is the end of election; *He hath choſen you, that you ſhould be holy*: this is the end of redemption; *That he might redeem you from all iniquity, and purify to himſelf a peculiar people, zealous of good works*: It is the end of ſanctification by the Spirit, that you ſhould be holy.

What is the end and deſign of ordinances, but to be means of holineſs? What is the end of merciful providences, but that you may *fear the Lord and his goodneſs?* What is the end of croſſing and afflicting providences, but to purge away your droſs, and make you *partakers of his holineſs?* What is the end of all the graces of the Spirit, if you have the faith of Chriſt, or the hope of glory in him? Why then, faith *purifies the heart*; and *he that hath this hope, purifies himſelf, even as he is pure*.

Conſider what *obligations* you are under beyond all perſons in the world to be the moſt people, in the midſt of this unholy age.

All the *direction* I offer is, See that you be much *in the exerciſe of faith*, entering again and again into the moſt holy place; for this will, as I ſaid, have both an operative and argumentative, both a phyſical and a moral influence upon your holineſs. When you come to the moſt holy place, and ſee the moſt holy God, you will find yourſelf under the ſtrongeſt obligation to be holy, and ſuch bonds laid upon your heart, as will bind you ſweetly and ſtrictly to holineſs, even the bond of love conſtraining you. In the moſt holy place you will ſee ſomething wonderful, even your ſalvation and juſtification, lying between two everlaſting breaſts, Rom. iii. 24.; between the everlaſting grace of God, and the everlaſting righteouſneſs of Chriſt; *Being juſtified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Chriſt Jeſus*. And what do you think of ſeeing yourſelf lying, as it were, between theſe two everlaſting breaſts of God; and, at the ſame time, his everlaſting arms holding and embracing you in his boſom? This is the notable ſight of faith to be ſeen in the moſt holy place; and when you come to ſee this great ſight, the warm boſom of God's everlaſting love will give you a warm heart, and will leave a ſtrong impreſſion of the law of love and holineſs upon you. *This is the law of the houſe*. If you get to *the top of the mountain* with Moſes,

Moſes, O how ſhould your face ſhine, even when ye come down to the bottom of the mount, and go into the company of others round about the mount! Not only a communion-table, but your common tables ſhould be holineſs to the Lord. In every company, in every place, let this be your motto, HOLINESS TO THE LORD. *This is the law of the houſe; upon the top of the mountain, the whole limit thereof round about ſhall be moſt holy: behold, this is the law of the houſe.*

SERMON LVII.

The LITTLE CITY beſieged, and delivered: or, the *Deliverance* of the Church by CHRIST, and the *Ingratitude* of Men to the glorious REDEEMER, repreſented *.

ECCLES. ix. 14, 15.

There was a little city, and few men within it; and there came a great king againſt it, and beſieged it, and built great bulwarks againſt it: now, there was found in it a poor wiſe man; and he, by his wiſdom, delivered the city: yet no man remembered the ſame poor man.

IT is queſtioned, amongſt interpreters, whether this be a hiſtory, or a parable: I am not here to diſpute the matter, but take it to be parabolical; and reckon the Spirit of God hath left the application thereof for us to make, which I would eſſay to do, both in an agreeableneſs, I hope, to the analogy of faith, and in a ſuitableneſs to the preſent occaſion.

The verſes contain news from heaven; and particularly, 1. Here is a city *deſcribed; There was a little city, and few men within it.* 2. The city *beſieged; There came a great king againſt it, and beſieged it; and built great bulwarks againſt it.* 3. The city *delivered*, and the ſiege *raiſed; Now, there was found in it a poor wiſe man; and he, by his wiſdom, delivered the city.* 4. The *ingratitude* of the citizens, *Yet no man remembered the ſame poor man.*

1ſt, Here is a *city deſcribed*, both from the *quality* of it, a *little* city; and from the *paucity* of its inhabitants, *few* men within it. Now, what are we to underſtand by the *city?* Why,

1. If by the city we underſtand the *world* in general, it might ſeem ſtrange that the world ſhould be called a little city; but he that *walks with God*, as Enoch, and as the prophet Iſaiah expreſſeth it, *dwells on high*, ſees this world to be nothing but ſome ſhadow; yea, before God, *All the nations of the earth are as nothing:* and as it is little, ſo there are *few men* within it; becauſe theſe we call *men* cannot, according to ſcripture, be diſtinguiſhed from beaſts, and vipers; *a generation of vipers*; and of theſe there are many: but a very few men are to be found in the world; none but theſe that are transformed, and turned from beaſts to men; *The beaſts of the field ſhall honour me, the dragon and the owl. This people have I formed for myſelf, they ſhall ſhew forth my praiſe*, Iſa. xlvi. 20, 21.

2. By the city we are to underſtand the *church of God* in particular. The *name* of the city is JEHOVAH-SHAMMAH, *the Lord is there:* the *wall* of the city is SALVATION, *which God hath appointed for walls and bulwarks:* the *food* of the citizens is the *word of God*, and the *bread that came down from heaven.* But in what reſpect the church is compared to a city, ſo frequently in ſcripture, we may afterwards conſider. It is but a *little city*, and a *few men in it*, in compariſon of her enemies, and all the reſt of the world, that are without the church.

2dly, Here is the city *beſieged.* Where we may notice,

1. The greatneſs of the *beſieger; There came a* GREAT KING *againſt it, and beſieged it.* Whether we take this great king for God, in one reſpect; or for the devil, in an other reſpect; and for ſin and death that attend him, theſe, in various reſpects, lay ſiege to the city.

2. Notice the greatneſs of the *ſiege; He built great bulwarks againſt it.* God, in his awful juſtice; the devil, in his deſperate malice; ſin, in its deſtructive ſubtilty; and death, in its dreadful terrors. A great king raiſing great bulwarks againſt a little city, and few men in it, they muſt be in a very diſmal ſituation. But,

3dly, Here is the little city *delivered*, and the ſiege *raiſed; There was found in the city a poor wiſe man; and he, by his wiſdom,* DELIVERED *the city.* Where notice alſo two things, namely, How the deliverer is deſcribed; and how the city was delivered by him.

(1.) How the deliverer is *deſcribed; There was found in the city a* POOR WISE MAN. I think it is not only highly agreeable to the analogy of faith, but very probable to be the intent of the words, to give a deſcription of Chriſt, the Deliverer and Saviour of his church; whom we may here view as deſcribed,

1. By his *humanity*, a MAN; for, *He was a man of ſorrows: The Word was made fleſh.*

2. By his *divinity*, a WISE *man:* for, he was, and is, the *eſſential Wiſdom of God.*

3. By his *humiliation; a* POOR *man:* for, *Though he was rich, yet for our ſakes he became poor.*

4. By his *deſtination* to this work; he was FOUND *in the city:* Who found him? God, who ſays, *I have found a ranſom; I have found David my ſervant.* Where was he found? Even *in the city*, among men: *I have laid help upon One that is mighty*, ſays God; even *One choſen out of the people*, Pſal. lxxxix. 19.

* This ſermon was preached at the Queen's-ferry, on Monday, Oct. 8*th*, 1732. after the celebration of the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper there. *Never before publiſhed.*

(2.) How

(2.) How and in what *manner* he delivered the city, even by his WISDOM; *He by his wiſdom delivered the city*: By his Deity; for, if he had not been the infinitely wiſe God, he could never have relieved the city; even he who, by his *wiſdom, ſtretched out the heavens*, when he made the world; by his wiſdom, fulfilled the law, and appeaſed the wrath of God; by his wiſdom, outwited the old ſerpent, and *deſtroyed the works of the devil*; by his wiſdom, *finiſhed tranſgreſſion, and made end of ſin*, and *vanquiſhed death*: and ſo by his wiſdom delivered the city from juſtice, Satan, ſin, hell, and death; in his wiſdom he delivers the church, the city of God, by the price of his blood, and by the power of his Spirit.—Thus the city is delivered, and the ſiege raiſed.

4*thly*, And laſtly, Notice in the words the *ingratitude* of the citizens; or the citizens *upbraided* for their unkindneſs; *Yet* NO MAN *remembered the ſame poor man.* Where you have,

1. The *nature* of their fault, and the *aggravation* of their ingratitude; they were ſo far from requiting him kindly, ſaying, *What ſhall we render to the Lord, for his benefits towards us?* that they did not *remember* him: they never ſo much as minded him. Their diſeaſe was that of ſinful oblivion; they forgot him, and his kindneſs: *They ſoon forgot his works.*

2. The *univerſality* of this ingratitude, NO *man remembered the ſame poor man*; none remembered, *no not one*: they are *altogether become ungrateful.*—Thus you have the hiſtory opened, and a ſhort hint at the myſtery contained in it.

From the words, thus opened, we may lay down this doctrinal propoſition.

OBSERV. *That though the work of redemption, or the deliverance wrought by Chriſt for ſinners, be a very great and memorable work, like the raiſing of a great ſiege againſt a little city; yet there is a proneneſs in man to forget the Redeemer or Deliverer, and all his work of kindneſs toward them.*

We need go no further for the confirmation of this doctrine, than the inſtitution of the Lord's ſupper, which you have been celebrating, *Do this in rememberance of me*; as if it had been ſaid, Ought you not to remember me, your Redeemer; me, your Deliverer, that hath raiſed the great ſiege that was laid againſt you; yet you are prone to forget me, and all the kindneſs that I have done to you; therefore, I have inſtituted this ordinance to keep you in mind, *Do this in rememberance of me.* But I ſhall refer the farther confirmation, to the proſecution of the doctrine, in the following method, according to the former diviſion.

I. I would ſpeak ſomewhat concerning the *little city*, and the *few men in it.*
II. Concerning the *great ſiege* laid againſt it.
III. Of the *deliverance* thereof, and the reaſons of the ſiege.
IV. Of the *ingratitude* of the citizens, and their proneneſs to forget the Deliverer.
V. Make *application* of the whole.

I. I am to ſpeak of the *little city; There was a little city, and few men within it.* There are four things remarkable concerning the church, which this part of the text preſents to us.

Remark 1. "That the church of God is compared to a *city*, and often compared thereto "in ſcripture, Pſal. xlvi. 4. *There is a river, the "ſtreams whereof make glad the city of God**." The church, in alluſion to a city, is, a place of *ſecurity* and *defence*; *We have a ſtrong city, ſalvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks*: and it hath watchmen upon the walls.—It is a place of *ſociety*; where the ſaints have fellowſhip one with another, exhort and comfort one another.—It is a place of *unity*; where they are to maintain the *unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace.*—It is a place of *trade* and *traffick*; where we may trade with heaven, and *buy gold tried in the fire*; *white raiment*, and *eye-ſalve* expoſed freely there to ſale.—It is a place of *freedom* and *liberty*; where all the true citizens are freed from the law, as a covenant; from the curſe of the law, the wrath of God, and all ſubjection thereto; alſo from the guilt of ſin, and the rule of it.—It is a place of *order* and *regularity*; where men are regularly entered burgeſſes, and are to come in by the gate of the city, even by Chriſt, who is the door.—It is a place of *reſt*, commodious to live in; and there is no reſting-place for the ſoul but here.—It is a place of *pleaſure* and *joy*; *Beautiful for ſituation, the joy of the whole earth.* There is the joyful ſound, through the ſilver trumpet of the goſpel; and the ſong of Zion.—It is a place of *pomp* and *ſplendor*, the ſeat of the King; where is the King's court, the King's throne, the throne of grace, and daily acceſs to *ſee the King in his beauty.*—It is a place of *privileges*, a privileged place; where there are privileges belonging to the church *viſible*; they have the fountain open to them; they have a ſealed right in baptiſm to the covenant; having the promiſe, they have right to the ſeal of the covenant of promiſe; and thus a ſealed warrant to come to Chriſt, a general adoption, and thereon many fatherly acts of pity ſhewed to them: God inſtructs them, by his word; corrects them, by his rod; reproves them, by his ſervants; and, when they go aſide, directs them, by his word, ſaying, *This is the way.* They have ordinances, ſacraments, miniſters, and a right to chooſe the miniſters and officers of the city: this is the privilege of every city, much more of the city of God; and if the city want this it is ſo far a city robbed and ſpoiled. There are privileges belonging to the church *inviſible*; ſuch as, pardon of ſin, peace with God, ſanctification, eternal life, acceſs to the King's table, the Lamb, the light of the place, and the temple; the Lord himſelf is the temple they come to; they have a title unto the new Jeruſalem, the King's paſs for heaven; *I appoint unto you a kingdom.*

Remark 2. "That the church is a *little* city, it "is a *little flock*, Luke xii. 31. It is but a ſmall "ſpot, compared with the vaſt wilderneſs of "this world; it is an *incloſed garden*, Song iv. "12." The church is compared to a little city, in compariſon of this world; and but a little city in the eyes of the world; little and contemned. And, indeed, the true citizens are but little in their own eyes; *Leſs than the leaſt of all ſaints; leſs than the leaſt of all God's mercies*; yea, *nothing*, in their own account; and *leſs than nothing*; worſe than nothing. The church is a

* See the Author's ſermon on this text, Vol. II. where he, at length, ſtates the compariſon, and runs the parallel, between the church and a city.

little

little city; *a little ſtone cut out of the mountain;* yet many great cities and kingdoms have fallen before it. This little city has outlived the great city Nineveh; the magnificent Tyrus; and trampled upon the graves of many famous and remarkable cities, becauſe, though it be a little city; yet it is the *city of the great God*; and, *Glorious things are ſpoken of this city of God*, Pſal. lxxxvii. 3.

Remark 3. "That it is a city of *men;* a *little* "*city and* MEN *in it.*" The infinite wiſdom of God hath ſeen fit to make this famous little city conſiſt, not of fallen angels, but of fallen men; *Wiſdom cryeth at the gates, at the entry of the city, ſaying, To you, O men, do I call, and my voice is to the ſons of men*, Prov. viii. 3, 4. And happy we the men whom wiſdom determineth and prevaileth to enter themſelves burgeſſes of this little city, by coming not only into the ſuburbs thereof, by a profeſſion of Chriſt; but *enter in through the gates into the city*, while the King of the city ſtands at the door of our hearts, and knocks, and aſſures us that he is the door of the city; *I am the door, by me if any man enter in, he ſhall be ſaved, and ſhall go in and out, and find paſture*, John x. 9. It is a city of men, a city for mankind, a city of refuge for mankind ſinners; therefore, let none ſtand without, ſaying, It is not the like of me that God is calling to come in. If you be of the poſterity of Adam, and of the children of men, Chriſt is offered unto you, and you are called to accept of the grant of freedom and liberty; the grant of all the privileges and immunities of God's city, and of being free men there: O Sirs, *If the Son make you free, then are ye free indeed.* But yet we have it to remark,

4. "That this little city hath but *few men* in "it, even the viſible church." I mean, theſe that have a viſible and credible profeſſion of faith are few in compariſon of the reſt of the world; and the inviſible church, who have the power of religion, and the truth of faith, are but very few in compariſon of the bulk of profeſſors. This little city, then, has but a *few men within it*, as the text ſays; many are without the city, and many are about the city, but few are within the city, and they only, are ſafe; for, *Without are dogs, and ſorcerers, and whoremongers, idolaters, murderers, and whoſoever loveth or maketh a lye*, Rev. xxii. 15.: Without are drunkards, ſwearers, ſabbath-breakers, profane perſons; yea, beſide the openly profane, without are formaliſts, hypocrites, unbelievers: but within are ſaints, believers, lovers of God; *Many are called, but few are choſen.* Yea, we may ſay, there are many bycomers, but few indwellers; many incomers, like dogs, that go out again; *They go out from us, becauſe they are not of us*, 1 John ii. 19.: but few indwellers, like *children of Zion*, and *fellow-citizens with the ſaints*, Eph. ii. 19. The reſt of the world, whether they be bycomers or not; they are not to be reckoned men, but rather *dogs and beaſts;* for thus, all that are out of Chriſt, and ſo out of the city, are called, Iſa. xliii. 20. Thus, in the vaſt populous city of Jeruſalem, a man could not be found; *Run ye to and fro through the ſtreets of Jeruſalem, and ſee now, and know, and ſeek in the broad places thereof, if you can find a man.* Why, not a man? No: they were only to be reckoned men *who execute judgment*, and *ſought the truth*; but ſuch could not be found: they were all degenerate into beaſts; all transformed through brutiſh affections into unreaſonable creatures: yet, of Zion it ſhall be ſaid, *This man and that man was born there;* but they are but here and there one; a *little city, and few men within it.*

II. The *ſecond* thing in the method, was, To ſpeak of the *great ſiege* laid againſt the little city.

I ſhall here conſider both who the *great king* is, that came againſt the city; and what are the *great bulwarks* built againſt it. And here, according to the view I gave in the explication,

1. By the *great king* we may underſtand the *Great God*, in his awful juſtice; who, upon the ſin of man, became an inraged enemy to the whole city of mankind; and to whoſe wrath the little city, which he choſe out of the world, is by nature as much expoſed as the reſt; for, being all *children of diſobedience* they are *by nature children of wrath even as others*, Eph. ii. 2, 3.; and therefore, his firſt appearance to them, even when he has a mind to make them a city for himſelf to dwell in; his firſt appearance, I ſay, to them, is in *terrible majeſty;* laying ſiege to their ſouls, and building great bulwarks againſt them.

What bulwarks? Even the great bulwarks of *law-curſes* and *law-threatenings:* for, in a work of conviction, and compunction, and legal humiliation, which uſually precedes any goſpel-work, and ſaving change, he applies the curſe and threatenings of the law to their conſcience, ſaying, *Curſed is every one that continues not in all things, written in the book of the law to do them*, Gal. iii. 10. In ſo much, that the ſoul finds itſelf to be an accurſed creature, a condemned creature; and is put in fear of everlaſting damnation. The reſt of the world, who ſhall eternally feel this heavy wrath of God in another world, yet ly ſleeping without fear of it in this world; but the little city, that ſhall for ever be delivered from it, are now in this world awakened and alarmed with the fear of it mercifully, that they may prize the Saviour and Deliverer of the city. The great God he ſtorms the city with his terrible artillery, like great waring cannons, ſurrounding a little city; he thunders from Sinai, and builds great bulwarks againſt it: the great bulwark of a broken law; the great bulwark of a threatened curſe; the great bulwark of offended holineſs; and the great bulwark of inraged juſtice: and, in a word, all the infinite perfections of God injured and diſhonoured by their ſin, appear planted about the city in battle array. When the great God himſelf appears an enemy, breaking them with breach upon breach, and running upon them like a giant ſometimes, and ſaying, as Deut. xxxii. 40. *Who can deliver out of my hand? for, I lift up my hand to heaven, and ſay, I live for ever. If I whet my glittering ſword, and my hand take hold of judgment, I will render vengeance to mine enemies;—I will make mine arrows drunk with blood.* Yea, not only in the firſt awakening-work doth God thus appear formidable to them, for their humiliation and conviction; but even afterwards; he ſometimes appears formidable to them for their trial and correction. Thus Job found the great bulwarks of God's terrible majeſty built up againſt him, when he ſaid, chap. vi. 4. *The arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poiſon whereof drinketh up my ſpirits; the terrors of God do ſet themſelves in array againſt me.* Thus Heman, *While I ſuffer thy terrors, I am diſtracted:*

ſtracted: thy fierce wrath goes over me; thy terrors have cut me off, Pſal. lxxviii. 15. But,

2. By the *great king* we may underſtand the *devil* in his deſperate malice againſt the little city: he is called a prince, *the prince of the power of the air*, [or, of darkneſs,] *that rules in the hearts of the children of diſobedience*, Eph. ii. 2. This mighty and malicious prince, in the beginning of the world, came againſt the little city of mankind, when there was but few men in it; yea, when there was but one man, and one woman, in the city, in a literal ſenſe; and he beſieged it, and built great bulwarks of flattering falſhoods, and lying temptations againſt it; and conquered the city, and deſtroyed it; as you read. Gen. iii. concerning the ſin and fall of our firſt parents, through the powerful ſubtilty of the ſerpent: and he continues ſtill to beſiege and deſtroy ſinners by his malice and ſubtilty, force, and fraud; and eſpecially he raiſes great bulwarks againſt the little city.

What bulwarks? Why, even his manifold *temptations*, *devices*, and *fiery darts*; *We are not ignorant of his devices*, 2 Cor. ii. 11. We are called *to take, above all things, the ſhield of faith, that we may be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked*; for, *We wreſtle not againſt fleſh and blood, but againſt principalities and powers*, Eph. vi. 12, 16. The devil attacks the city both by high bulwarks, and deep mines; we read of the *depths* of Satan, Rev. ii. 24.; and being the *prince of this world*; for ſo he is called, John xii. 31. and elſewhere. He has thouſands of wicked inſtruments by which he batters and beſieges the little city. He has a deceitful party for him within, as well as without the little city; within the church, as well as without it: within the church viſible he has his treacherous Judaſes, to betray the city into his hand, and to betray the intereſt of the city, and the liberties and privileges thereof. We read of the devil's armour, Luke xi. 22. where he is called *the ſtrong man armed, keeping his palace*; but when a ſtronger than he comes upon him, and overcomes him, he takes from him all his armour. And what that armour is, we may partly know, from 2 Cor. iv. 4. *The god of this world blinds the minds of them that believe not*, helliſh darkneſs excluding and oppoſing goſpel-light: the darkneſs of ignorance, the darkneſs of error, and the darkneſs of deluſion. This is a great part of the devil's armour, together with *high imaginations*, carnal reaſonings, pride, prejudices, and exalting thoughts, mentioned, 2 Cor. x. 5. Theſe are part of his armour and his great bulwarks.

3. By the *great king* we may underſtand *ſin*; ſin is the great king that reigns in, and over, us naturally; therefore ſays the apoſtle, Rom. vi. 12. *Let not ſin reign in your mortal bodies*. Sin and Satan are always confederates together; and their power is very great, in ſo much, that all men are ſubject to the rule and government thereof; and as all the children of men are ſlaves unto ſin, as their king; ſo all the children of God, in this world, are many times captives to it; *I ſee another law in my members, warring againſt the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of ſin that is in my members*, Rom. vii. 3. The power and authority of ſin is called a *law*, even the *law of ſin and death*, which nothing can free us from, but *the law of the Spirit of life in Chriſt Jeſus*, Rom. viii. 2.

Now, *What bulwarks doth this great king build againſt the little city?* Indeed, ſin has the ſtrongeſt bulwarks in the world.—It hath *ſelf* for a bulwark; and hence, for a man to deſtroy ſin, is to deſtroy himſelf in effect, and the beſt and moſt uſeful parts of himſelf, his *right-hand*, his *right-eye*, his *members*. Col. iii. 5. *Mortify therefore your members that are upon the earth*. When a man deſtroys his luſts, he denies himſelf. And ſelf is ſo mighty, that it competes with King Jeſus, and fights for the throne, even after Chriſt has taken poſſeſſion of the heart. Self-eaſe, ſelf-pleaſure, ſelf-will, ſelf-wiſdom, ſelf-love, ſelf-eſteem, ſelf-righteouſneſs, are the bulwarks of ſin.—It hath alſo the *law* for a bulwark; *The ſtrength of ſin is the law*, 1 Cor. xv. 56. The law of ſin is ſtrengthened by the law of works; the ſtrength of ſin being a grand part of the curſe of the law of works, in ſo much, that no power can deſtroy that bulwark, but the power that can give full ſatisfaction to the law; hence the ſtrong bulwark of ſin is never broken down, till a man has, by faith, cloſed with the law-ſatisfying righteouſneſs of Chriſt. Again,

4. By the *great king* we may underſtand *death, the king of terrors*, Job xviii. 14. Death is a mighty king that all the ſinful race of Adam are lawful captives unto; and ſuch is the conſtant battle that death gives, even to the true-born children of Zion, the little city, that when all other enemies are defeat and deſtroyed, death is the laſt upon the field; *The laſt enemy to be deſtroyed, is death*, 1 Cor. xv. 26. Now,

What bulwarks does this king build againſt the little city? There are two great bulwarks it builds; the one before, and the other behind it. *Before* death, there ſtands the bulwark of *terror and fear*, becauſe of ſin, which is the *ſting of death*; and hence many within the little city are *kept long in bondage, through fear of death*, Heb. ii. 15. The *terrors of death* ſometimes compaſs them about, and the *fears of hell* on the back of death.—Again, *behind* death, there is an other bulwark, and that is *ſeeming victory*. When death gets ſoul and body ſeparate, and the body made death's priſoner in the grave, where the worms deſtroy it, and rottenneſs ſeems to ride in triumph over it: and this is the reaſon why it is ſaid to be the *laſt enemy* that ſhall be deſtroyed; becauſe it has a ſeeming victory over the viſible part of the believer, till the laſt trumpet ſound, and the dead be raiſed *incorruptible, immortal*, &c.

III. The next thing was, To ſpeak of the *deliverance* of the city, and the *raiſing of the ſiege*. And here we are led, by the text, to conſider, 1. How the Deliverer is *deſcribed*. 2. How the deliverance is *effected*.

1ſt, Conſider how the Deliverer is *deſcribed*; *There was found in the city, a poor wiſe man*. And here he is ſet before us, ſo as we may conſider him,

1. In his *humanity*, as a MAN. Our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the glorious Saviour and Deliverer, was a man; he was propheſied of before, that he ſhould be the *ſeed of the woman*; the *ſeed of Abraham*; and in the fulneſs of time he was *made of a woman; born of a virgin*; *the Word was made fleſh*: and he became man, a true man; he went through all the ſtages of man, conception, childhood, youth, riper age: he was a diſtreſſed man, *a man of ſorrows, and acquainted with grief*. He was a mortal as we are; and actually died as we muſt; he died a painful, ſhameful, and ignominious death, which we were commemorating at this occaſion.

2. We

2. We may consider the Deliverer in his *divinity*; as a WISE *Man*. Wisdom dwells not with fallen men; they had all their heads cracked by the fall of Adam, and were become fools, having folly bound up in their nature: therefore the man, who is the Deliverer, must be a man that never fell in Adam; a wise man; that is, God as well as man: one that, with the nature of man, hath the wisdom of God; yea, and is the *Wisdom of God*, 1 Cor. i. 24. It is he that says, *I Wisdom dwell with prudence*, Prov. viii. 12. And it is of him the Father says, *My Servant shall deal prudently*, Isa. lii. 13. And it is by his infinite wisdom that he delivered the city; of which more afterwards. He is essentially wise, being *Wisdom* itself; the God whose *understanding is infinite*. He is communicatively wise; having all the *treasures of wisdom and knowledge hid in him*, and the Spirit of wisdom to give.

3. We may view the Deliverer in his *humiliation*, as a POOR *Man*; poor in outward respects: *Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet, for our sakes, he became poor; that we through his poverty might be rich*, 2 Cor. viii. 9. He had all the riches, and all the fulness of the Godhead in him, yet he became poor. Many are poor against their will, but he became poor voluntarily: he became a poor servant; though *he thought it no robbery to be equal with God, yet he took upon him the form of a servant*; taking on our nature, not in its best condition, but the lowest state of our nature. He became poor in his birth, poor in his life, and poor in his death. He was born, not of a queen, but of a mean virgin; born, not in a palace, but in a stable, laid in a manger; *The foxes had holes, and the birds of the air had nests; but the Son of man had not where to lay his head.* He had nothing to pay tribute withal till he ordered a fish to bring it. He was ministered unto, in his life and in his death, by reason of his real extreme poverty. He was poor as a man, and yet wise as God. The poverty of men, and the wisdom of God met and centred in him.

4. We may consider the Deliverer in his *destination* to this work; he was FOUND *in the city*. He was found of God, who says, *I have found a Ransom; I have found David my servant*, Job xxiii. 24. Psal. lxxxix. 20. He was found in the city among men; *and was chosen out of the people*, Psal. lxxxix. 19. He was found *in fashion as a man*, Phil. ii. 8. He was found willing and chearfully ready to undertake this work of redemption and deliverance, Psal. xl. 6. Heb. x. 6. *Lo I come, I delight to do thy will.* He was found able and well qualified for the work, Psalm lxxxix. 19. *I have laid help upon One that is mighty.* And as he had a personal fitness, being God as well as man, and God-Man in one person; so he that found him did also fit him by the supereminent unction of the Holy Ghost, Psalm lxxxix. 20. *I have found David my servant, with my holy oil have I anointed him.* Thus, *Him hath God the Father sealed* for this work, John vi. 27. And this is what Christ acknowledges of himself, Isa. lxi. 1. *The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because he hath anointed me, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God*; to deliver the city.

2*dly*, How the deliverance is *effected*. Here two things are to be a little opened, 1. The *matter* of his work; *He delivered the city*. 2. The *manner* of the deliverance; *By his wisdom*.

[1.] In general, the *matter* of his redemption work, *He delivered the* LITTLE CITY; he raised the siege. Here we are to view how he manages the work, in opposition to the great kings, that built great bulwarks against the little city.

1. If we view the siege as formed by the *Great King*; that is, the Great God, when the great bulwarks built against the city are, the broken law of God, cursing the sinner; and the injured attributes of God, justice, holiness, and truth, all standing in battle array against the sinner, behold, the poor wise man, he comes and fulfils that law that we had broken, and bears the curse that we had incurred. *When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his son made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law*, Gal. vi. 4. *Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us*, Gal. iii. 13. And, in this way, he satisfies the justice of God, vindicates the holiness of God, and clears the truth of God; *Christ hath loved us, and hath given himself a sacrifice of a sweet smelling savour to God*, Eph. v. 2. He is become *the Lord our righteousness*; and *the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believe*: and in him *mercy and truth have met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other*, that God might save, and shew mercy on the little city, in a consistency with the honour of his injured attributes, which are now glorified more by his obedience and satisfaction than ever they were dishonoured by our sin and rebellion. Thus he brake down the great bulwarks that the great King of heaven and earth had built against the little city, and that by the King's order and allowance, and according to his command and will; *This commandment have I received of my Father.*

2. If we view the siege as formed by the devil, the great king of hell, *and prince of the power of darkness, that rules in the hearts of the children of disobedience*, we will find him raising this siege partly by the price of his blood, that he shed for us; and partly by the power of his Spirit, which is given to us.—By the *price of his blood*, he delivers from the devil's kingdom; for, *By death he destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil*, Heb. xi. 14. And, *For this purpose the Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil*, 1 John iii. 8. And he was thus manifested, according to the original promise, Gen. iii. 15. *The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent.* Christ took a wooden cross, as it were, a tree in his arms, and therewith beat down the great bulwarks that Satan built against the little city. As by means of a tree the devil built his battering engine; so, by means of a tree, Christ demolished his building. For, upon the cross, Jesus Christ *spoiled principalities and powers, and made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it*, Col. xi. 15. —Again, by the *power of his Spirit* he destroyed the devil's bulwarks, when he gives spiritual armour to the citizens, the *shield of faith*, and the *sword of the Spirit*, and the rest of that spiritual artillery, mentioned, Eph. vi. 11,—17. Whereby they quench the fiery darts of the devil, demolish his bulwarks, resist the devil, and overcome by the power and strength of the Captain of their salvation. Though they constantly fight while here; yet they gradually defeat the devil and his instruments, that

oppose

oppoſe themſelves to Chriſt and his people, to his cauſe and intereſt. Truth prevails always at laſt; and the friends of truth *overcome by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their teſtimony*, Rev. xii. 11.

3. If we view the ſiege as formed by the great king *Sin*, which naturally reigns in our mortal bodies. How doth the poor wiſe man deſtroy the great bulwarks thereof? Why, this he doth, both *meritoriouſly*, giving himſelf a ſacrifice for ſin, John i. 29. *Behold, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the ſin of the world.* Heb. ix. 26. *But now once in the end of the world, has he appeared to put away ſin, by the ſacrifice of himſelf.* And then he doth it *efficaciouſly*, and that, partly by the actual imputation of his righteouſneſs, for removing the guilt of ſin in juſtification; and partly by the effectual operation of his Spirit, for removing the rule of ſin in ſanctification.—In *juſtification*, he deſtroys the *legal* power of ſin; for, *The ſtrength of ſin is the law:* but when the righteouſneſs of God is imputed and received, and Chriſt is *become the end of the law for righteouſneſs* to the perſon, then the law, being ſatisfied, has no more power to keep the perſon under the curſe, whereof the power of ſin is the leading part.—And, again, in *ſanctification*, he deſtroys the *actual reigning* power of ſin. Both theſe are imported, I think, in that word, Rom. viii. 2. *The law of the ſpirit of life, in Chriſt Jeſus, hath made me free from the law of ſin and death:* and both are particularly ſpoken of in the following verſes, 3, and 4. *For what the law could not do, in that it was weak though the fleſh, God ſending his own Son in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh, and for ſin condemned ſin in the fleſh; that the righteouſneſs of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the fleſh but after the Spirit.* Here is the legal power of ſin deſtroyed: and ver. 13. *If ye through the Spirit mortify the deeds of the body you ſhall live;* there is the deſtroying of the actual reigning power of ſin. Thus, by his pardoning and purifying grace, he demoliſhes the bulwarks of ſin, and all by the means of the goſpel, as it is the power of God to ſalvation; *The weapons of this warfare being not carnal, but mighty, through God, to the pulling down of ſtrong holds, caſting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itſelf againſt the knowledge of God; and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Chriſt*, 2 Cor. x. 4, 5. Again,

4. If we view the ſiege as formed by the great king *Death*. Behold, our king Jeſus, the poor wiſe man, delivers the city, by overturning the great bulwarks that death built: and this he doth by removing both the ſting of death and the victory of the grave; *The ſting of death is ſin*, which he removes as I have been juſt now ſaying, both meritoriouſly and efficaciouſly, till it be perfectly removed in glory, where *we ſhall be like him*, by *ſeeing him as he is*. The victory of the grave, which is corruption; the corruption of the body, he is to remove at the great day, when *this corruptible ſhall put on incorruption, and this mortal ſhall put on immortality*. And that ſaying ſhall be brought to paſs, *Death is ſwallowed up in victory*. Hence in the faith of all this, the believer may ſing that triumphant ſong, *O death, where is thy ſting? O grave, where is thy victory? The ſting of death is ſin, the ſtrength of ſin is the law; but thanks be to God, that has given us the victory, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, 1 Cor. xv. 54,—57.——Thus you have a view of the deliverance in the *matter* of it. But then,

[2.] In particular, we are led here to conſider the *manner* of it. It was in *infinite* WISDOM; *He by his infinite wiſdom delivered the city.* As it is ſaid of his works of creation, *In wiſdom hath he made them all;* ſo of his work of redemtion, *In wiſdom hath he delivered the city. He made the earth by the word of his power, eſtabliſhed the world by his wiſdom, and ſtretched out the heavens by his diſcretion*, Jer. x. 12. And it is even he who, by his wiſdom, delivered the city. Particularly,

1. By his wiſdom he removed all the *impediments* that ſtood in the way of our ſalvation, while he gave himſelf a ranſom for many, ſatisfied the law and juſtice of God, defeated the devil, deſtroyed ſin, and conquered death. And thus, except one great king, whom he brings to peace and reconciliation with the city, he deſtroyed all the other great kings, and their great bulwarks, in ſo much that we may ſay, *He ſmote great kings, for his mercy endureth for ever; and ſlew famous kings for his mercy endureth for ever!* O the infinite wiſe Captain of ſalvation, who could, by his wiſdom, deliver a little city, ſo powerfully beſieged!

2. By his wiſdom he united the moſt *diſtant* and *contrary extremes*, while God and man are joined in one perſon. The infinite and eternal God, with a bit of clay; which is a myſtery ten thouſand times greater than if an angel had become a worm. He became a poor man, that he might deliver the poor city: *Great is the myſtery of godlineſs, God made manifeſt in the fleſh.*

3. By his wiſdom he united the moſt *contrary intereſts*, God's intereſt, and man's: the intereſt of his glory, and our ſalvation; they are quite different, after the fall. In ſome reſpects, (when man came to have no other intereſt but that of the devil) God's intereſt and glory ſeemed to require man's deſtruction; and yet it was man's intereſt to be delivered: God's intereſt, in infinite wiſdom, is made to agree with the intereſt of the little city, while Chriſt is ſet forth to be a propitiation, that the glory of God's juſtice and righteouſneſs might be reached, as much in ſaving the city, as it can be by deſtroying them who are without the city, and more.

4. By his wiſdom he united the moſt *contrary affections*, namely, God's hatred and love; his hatred of ſin, and his love to the ſinner. Nothing more hateful to God than ſin, and yet nothing more dear to God than the ſinner that is in Chriſt, in *whom God is well-pleaſed*. Infinite wiſdom contrived the reconciliation of the oppoſite-like affection in God, that the city might be delivered by the *wiſdom of God in a myſtery;* the *manifold wiſdom of God.*

5. By his wiſdom he brings about the *greateſt things* by the moſt *unlikely means*. In delivering the city, who would have thought that the *ſeed of a poor woman*, that was deceived, ſhould *bruiſe the head of the ſerpent*, the deceiver; that a poor woman ſhould bring forth a poor man child; and poor man ſhould conquer all the armed legions of hell; and that *by his ſtripes we ſhould be healed*; and by his blood we ſhould be waſhed; and this blood ſhould ſap the foundations of all the great bulwarks that were raiſed againſt the little city?

6. By his wiſdom he brings the *greateſt good* out of the *greateſt evil*. Could there be any thing worſe than ſin? Yet out of this, wiſdom brings greater glory to God, and greater happineſs to man. God had built the fabric of the old covenant

venant with brick, as it were; the devil, and our first parents, pulled it down. But, says God, I will build with cedar; and all the devils in hell shall not bring it down: *Mercy shall be built up for ever*, Psal. lxxxix. 2. O here is wisdom! And we may say, *To the King eternal, immortal, the only wise God, be glory and honour for ever and ever. Amen*, 1 Tim. i. 17.

IV. The *fourth* general head proposed, was, To speak of the *ingratitude* of the *citizens*, their pronness to forget their deliverer; *yet no man remembered the same poor man.* This is the sin that God has challenged in his church many times; Deut. xxxii. 18. *Of the rock that begat thee, thou hast been unmindful, and hast forgotten God that formed thee.* Psal. cvi. 21. *They forgot God their Saviour, who had done great things in Egypt. They soon forgot his work.*

I might here speak a little to these four things. 1. Of the *nature* of their unmindfulness or forgetfulness. 2. The *object* thereof; they forgot the POOR *wise man*, and his work. 3. The *universality* of this oblivion, NO *man remembered the same poor man.* 4. The *reason* of this forgetfulness.

1. We are first to view the *nature* of this oblivion. For understanding thereof you would know, that forgetfulness of Christ is either total or partial. A *total* forgetfulness takes place in the wicked, of whom it is said, *God is not in all their thoughts.* A *partial* forgetfulness is coincident to believers themselves, who may, in a great measure, forget what God hath done to their souls. *Actual* forgetfulness is what the godly may be guilty of, as David after his gross sin of adultery, when he was contriving the murder of Uriah. But there is an *habitual* forgetfulness peculiar to the wicked, who desire not the knowledge of God; and never remember God till they be driven to it with a vengeance, as it is said of these, *When he slew them, then they sought him; they remembered that God was their rock, and the high God their Redeemer.* They never remember till God bring a mortal stroke.—But now, this forgetfulness imports the want of a spiritual view and discovery of God; and the want of that lively impression of him which the right view of him doth require. We cannot rightly remember God, if we see not his perfections shining in his work, as David did, when he says of God's works, *In wisdom hast thou made them all.* When we see the wisdom and power, and other attributes of God, shining in his works, particularly in his delivering the little city, the church, then and not till then, do we rightly remember them; and when we see his great end in all is the glory of these perfections; and entertain due impressions hereof so as to remember not only in a speculative, but in a practical and appropriating manner; and when we remember his delivering us, in particular from the power and policy of the great things that were against us, and render to him the praise due to his name.

2. The *object* of this forgetfulness: *No man remembered the same* POOR WISE MAN. We are apt, and naturally prone to forget our Creator, to forget our Redeemer, and Saviour, and Protector, and Benefactor, our best friend.—We forget the *Deliverer* himself, the poor wise man found in the city. We forget his *humanity*, that he is a *man*; his *divinity*, that he is the *wisdom of God*; his *humiliation*, and *poverty*, that *for our sakes he became poor:* and his *destination* to this redemption work; all is forgotten. We forget all the deliverances he hath wrought, the redemption he hath accomplished.—We forget his works of *creation*, though yet *the heavens declare his glory.*—We forget his works of *providence*, both prosperous and adverse; both ordinary and extraordinary, as Israel did, of whom it is said, *Jesuran waxed fat and kicked: he forgot God that made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation.* They forgot the plagues of Egypt; the drowning of the Egyptians; the solemn appearance of God on Sinai, when the hill trembled under the weight of God; and the flames ascended to the middle heaven.—We forgot his works of *redemption.* He redeems from the fury of justice, the curse of the law, the bondage of sin, the slavery of Satan, the sting of death; from the wrath of God; that terrible wrath, that intollerable wrath, that interminable wrath, that powerful and eternal wrath, that ever-coming wrath; he *delivers from the wrath to come:* and yet we are apt to forget the Deliverer, and the deliverance! We forget this redemption, and the necessity of it; the sufficiency of it; the excellency of it; the efficacy of it; the fulness of it; the acceptableness of it; all is forgotten.—We forget also his work of *regeneration*, the work of *conviction*, and *humiliation*; the work of *conversion* and *sanctification.* Though this work of grace effectuates a real change, a sensible change, an universal change; yet all may be forgotten, in so much, that we may pose the believer himself, have you a regeneration frame, the same temper of spirit you had in the day of believing? *Where is the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals?*—Yea, communications and manifestations, and communion experiencesmay all be fearfully forgotten.

3. The *universality* of this oblivion; NO MAN *remembered the same poor man.* That this unbelieving forgetfulness of Christ, the Redeemer, is universal, appears evident from two arguments.

(1.) From the *instances* of all ages of the world.—The *first man* that ever was, began his apostacy from God by his sin; he forgot the favour of God in giving him such an excellent being, and such excellent benefits; forgot the covenant that God entered into with him, forbidding him to eat of the tree that was in the midst of the garden upon peril of eternal ruin to himself and his posterity; yet the hissing of the serpent drove all out his mind.—How quickly did *Noah* forget the great deliverance from the deluge, when all the rest of the world was overwhelmed in the midst of the waters; he was no sooner saved from water, than he was drowned in wine.—How quickly did *Lot* forget the deliverance from the flames of Sodom, and fell into the fire of lust.—*Solomon* forgot the God that appeared to him thrice, and turned to idolatry.—*David* quickly forgot the Lord's delivering him from Saul, and fell into the sin of adultery and murder.—*Israel* forgot God and all his works of wonder.—The *ten lepers*, all but one, forgot to return and give praise to God that healed them.—The *disciples* of Christ, quickly forgot the miracles of the loaves; they got sweet communion with Christ, yet Judas and his party soon drove all out of their minds. *No man remembered the poor wise man.*

(2.) It appears from the many *remembrancers* and *memorials* that the Lord Jesus has set up of himself, and his works, as preservative against this forgetting him.—God's works of *creation* are his remembrancers, while the *heavens declare his glory*.—God's works of *providence* are his remembrancers. *He hath not left himself without a witness*, even among the heathen, giving them rain and fruitful seasons: every drop of rain is a memorial of God.—God's *ordinances* are his remembrancers; why has he given us Sabbaths and sacraments, but to be memorials of the works of Christ, and the death of Christ? *Do this in remembrance of me*.—In a word, the *Holy Ghost* is given to be a remembrancer, John xiv. 26. *I will give the Comforter, and he shall bring all things to your remembrance*. I have been long preaching among you, might Christ say, and given you many a sermon; but all is gone, you forget all; therefore, I will send the Holy Ghost to be your remembrancer.——These things evidence the universality of this sin: *No man remembered the poor wise man*. Now consider here,

4. The *reason* of this forgetfulness. And there is these four reasons we shall assign for it.

(1.) It flows from the *universal depravation* of our nature: the memory, with all the rest of the faculties of the soul, got a dash by the fall of Adam; our heads were dashed to pieces when we fell from such a height of happiness to such a depth of misery.

(2.) It flows from the little *esteem* and *value* that people have for the poor wise man, and his great works of redeeming and delivering us. It is strange to think, how much the works of men will be admired, and the works of God slighted. If a physician shall perform a cure upon a man that is desperately diseased, and dangerously ill, the man will be more taken up with the physician's work than with God's work; he will pay his physician, but never thank his God. Many will read the works of men with admiration, and read history with rapture, but will read the history of the life and death of Christ without ever being moved.

(3.) It flows from this that the memory is *stuffed with other things*, even with the trash of hell; there is no room for Christ and his works of wonder: it was a base treatment of Christ when he was sent out to the stable, laid in a manger, no room for him in the inn. But it is a thousand times worse, when your heart is so full of the world, lusts, and idols, that there is no room for Christ.

(4.) It flows from the *little impression that Christ and his redeeming work takes upon us*. Naturalists give this as a reason of remembrance, when a thing makes a mighty impression on the brain. But, alas! the works of God flee over our heads, like a shadow, and so are forgotten. The best thing for the memory is the Spirit of God coming with life and power to the soul: *I will never forget thy words*, says David; why? *for by them thou hast quickened me*. It left an impression, and therefore abode. When the word of God, the works of God, have no impression, no wonder they are soon forgotten: there is a fowl of the air, the *prince of the power of the air*, the devil, he picks away every thing you hear, if your hearts be not closets for Christ. If he were your treasure, your hearts would be the cabinets; *Where the treasure is, there the heart is also*.

V. The *fifth* and *last* thing proposed, was, The *application* of the subject. And this we shall essay in an use of information, lamentation, trial, and exhortation.

We are, *first*, to deduce some inferences for *information*. Is it so, as has been said, hence see,

1. The *despicable case* of the church of God in this world; it is but like a *little city*, and a *few men* in it. It is a despised city. The world calls it an outcast, saying, *This is Zion whom no man seeks after*, Jer. xxx. 17. As Christ was despised and rejected of men; so are his friends and followers: they are a *little flock*, and a *despised flock*. Whatever be the state of the church visible; sometimes when it appears *fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners*; and when her visible glory, the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government is not defaced; yet the church invisible, in this world, is, for ordinary, a poor, small, despised company; of whom it is said, Zeph. ii. 12. *I will leave in the midst of thee, an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord*.

2. Hence see the *dangerous circumstance* of the church of God in this world. It is a city *besieged by a great king*, building *great bulwarks* against it. The church is like a *bush burning* in the midst of the flames: it is in a dangerous militant state. The church of God is the *man-child*, which the red dragon stands ready to devour, as soon as it is born, Rev. xii. 4. What a helpless case is the church of God into, in outward appearance! A *great city* cannot stand out well against a *great king*, and *great bulwarks*; far less a *little city*, and *few men* within it.

3. Hence see the *marvellous grace* of God in finding out a Saviour, and a great one, to save the little city; and, behold, *The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was* great and *rich, yet, for our sakes he became poor*; and in the capacity of a poor man, though yet infinitely wise, being God as well as man, he delivered the city, and raised the siege. O see and admire his wisdom, by which he delivered the city!

4. Hence see the *matchless ingratitude* of the visible church, where such a great deliverance is wrought; that *no man* should remember the poor wise man; that they should be guilty of such universal oblivion. Unbelief discovers itself by unmindfulness; the life of faith is a life of spiritual rememberance: but unbelief appears by forgetfulness: by faith we remember Christ, but by unbelief we forget him, and all his acts of kindness and love, though a standing ministry be appointed to help our memory; and, Oh! what a horrid ingratitude is it to forget him that minded us? Forgetfulness is the spring of that deluge of atheism and wickedness that over-runs the world, and the present generation; people forget God and Christ. If men did but remember there is a God in heaven, that notices what they do, they could not practise as they do: men have their minds so sunk in a present world, that they mind no other world; they forget him that came to *redeem from this present evil world*, and to provide a better: while we mind only earthly things we neglect the great salvation, and the great Saviour and Deliverer.

5. Hence see what is here inferred, ver. 16. that *wisdom is better than strength*: Christ is frequently here, and in the Proverbs represented under the name of *Wisdom*; and surely the wisdom of Christ is better than the strength of man;

man; better than the ſtrength of carnal policy; better than the ſtrength of human reaſon; better than the ſtrength of armies: yet the poor man's wiſdom is deſpiſed, and his words are not heard; Chriſt is deſpiſed, and his goſpel neglected and rejected.

Uſe 2. Let us then apply this doctrine for *lamentation* over the beſieged city; particularly the church of Scotland. Let us take a view of the church, and then of the profeſſors therein.

Firſt, Of the church of Scotland, more generally as a city *beſieged*, and a city *delivered*; and yet a city moſt *ungrateful* and *unmindful* of the Deliverer.

1*ſt*, As a city many times, and many ways *beſieged*, eſpecially by the devil and his inſtruments; whom God, in righteouſneſs, ſuffered to vex and diſturb the city, and build great bulwarks againſt it.

I might here begin with the *firſt foundation-ſtone* laid in the church of Scotland, more than 1600 years ago, even a few years after Chriſt's aſcenſion, when God, by means of perſecution, ſent Chriſtians and goſpel-profeſſors firſt among us; and we were in a literal ſenſe, a *little city* and *few men* in it. How many great bulwarks of *pagan darkneſs*, and *heathen idolatries*, were built in oppoſition to the little city, and the little flock, that were the followers of Chriſt, when there was here a temple for Apollo, and there a temple for Diana; one for Jupiter, and another for Juno; one for Mercury, and another for Venus; one for the Sun, and another for the Moon; one for this god and goddeſs, and another for that; and all ſo many temples for the devil, for offering ſo many bloody inhumane ſacrifices upon? We may think, how could the little city ſtand when ſurrounded with ſuch great bulwarks againſt it.

I might go forward to the *fifth* century, when the little city was firſt formally beſieged, and the great bulwark of *popiſh darkneſs*, and antichriſtian ſuperſtition built againſt it. When Palladius was ſent from the Pope of Rome to Scotland, the little city did hold out againſt Rome, for a long time, but the ſiege continued againſt the city for no leſs than ten centuries; for, from the time of Palladius, to the Reformation, was about a thouſand years; for, till the *fifteenth* century, the little city was covered with that dark cloud, over-run, oppreſſed, and almoſt wholly deſtroyed; only amidſt theſe diſmal days, God had his witneſſes, from time to time, that teſtified againſt Rome, and hell, even when they were carrying all before them.

Again, I might deſcend to later times, when the little city was again attacked, and had the great bulwark of *prelatical tyranny*, and *arbitrary power* built againſt it; when the inhabitants of the city were hunted, purſued; yea, perſecute to death, impriſoned, fined, confined, baniſhed, martyred and murdered, becauſe of their adhering to the rights and royalties of the glorious Lord and King of the city. Once and again the city was thus moleſted before the late Revolution; and many witneſſes are yet living, that can atteſt the grievous trials of the late reigns.

Further, I might here obſerve how the city has been beſieged and attacked ſeveral ways in our *own time*, and within our rememberance, as well as at this preſent time; partly *without* doors, by late foreign invaſions, and a late unnatural rebellion *, wherein a popiſh faction have attempted to ruin the city in all her moſt valuable and ſacred concerns; and theſe attempts favoured, underhand, by parliamentary acts, tollerating errors, and reſtoring patronages; and partly *within doors*, while unnatural citizens ſeek in a manner to ſap the foundation thereof.

QUEST. *Who are theſe within the little city that* DISTURB *the peace, and deſtroy the foundations of the city?*

ANSW. Surely, if there be any party within the city, that are *thieves* and *robbers*, not coming in by the doors and gates of the city, but climbing up ſome other way; if there be who ſeek *themſelves*, and not the welfare of the city; or, that lift up *hammers* and *axes* againſt the carved work, the doctrine, worſhip, diſcipline, and government of the city; if there be any that ſtand not to *condemn goſpel-truth*, and *tolerate damnable errors*; if there be any that ſtand not to *offend the generation of the righteous*, and to wound the citizens, and ſmite them, and take away the vail from them; if there be any that *violently thruſt in paſtors upon congregations*, or officers upon the city over the belly of the citizens, and that diſcourage a holy and pious ſet of officers, and encourage a looſe, legal, erroneous, and ſcandalous ſet; theſe are ſurely the *diſturbers* of the peace of the city; theſe are building up great bulwarks againſt it.

2*dly*, Take a view of the church of Scotland not only as a city beſieged, but as a city *hitherto delivered* by the wiſdom of the poor wiſe man, the glorious Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

By his wiſdom he delivered the city, firſt from *paganiſm*: not only did he make the goſpel take footing in Scotland, in theſe early times of Chriſtianity, ſo quickly after the reſurrection of Chriſt, that ſome reckon he was not fifteen years in heaven, till he ſent the goſpel to Scotland; and about fifteen thereafter ſent another drove of Chriſtians, flying before the ſecond primitive perſecution to our land, becauſe they heard the goſpel was received there: But alſo, in the two hundred and third year of Chriſt, ſet up a Chriſtian king, Donald the firſt, who eſtabliſhed Chriſtianity by law; and broke down the bulwarks of paganiſm, that were ſupported by the Bards, and Druids, and Pagan prieſts. This deliverance he effected by little and little, till heathen idolatry was aboliſhed.

Again, By his wiſdom he remarkably delivered the city, at the *glorious Reformation* from *Popery*, and black *antichriſtian ſuperſtition*. He turned back our long thouſand years *captivity*, *as ſtreams in the ſouth*, and *made light to ſhine out of darkneſs*, by raiſing up burning and ſhining lights, holy, wiſe, and zealous inſtruments, for beginning, carrying on, and advancing that glorious work, and that in a way of Solemn, National Covenanting, from time to time; in which courſe, the Lord gave ſignal evidences of his gracious preſence and countenance.

Again, By his wiſdom he mercifully delivered the city at the late *remarkable Revolution*, wherein he gave us more than a little reviving in our bondage, that we were under unto *Prelacy* and *tyranny*; and put an opportunity in our

* Our Author here has his eye probably upon the intended invaſion by France, in favours of the Pretender, Anno 1708, and upon the actual invaſion and Rebellion in the year 1715.

hands

hands of advancing reformation work, more than we had heart and courage to do, at that period. But yet, *though the glory of the ſecond temple, was not equal to the glory of the firſt*; I mean, the Revolution far inferior to the Reformation; yet, it was ſuch a glorious work of God, in delivering the city from theſe that ſought the utter ruin thereof, that multitudes in this generation, have ſeen the glory of God in his ſanctuary, and been brought to enjoy the privileges and immunities of the city of God; in ſo much, that ſome have thought, that as many have ſhared of the bleſſed fruits of this happy Revolution, within theſe forty years paſt, though in a more diffuſed way through the whole nation, as ſhared formerly of the bleſſed fruits of the former Reformation, in a more confined way at remarkable times and places, when the ſpirit was poured out upon great multitudes at once. Whatever be in this, yet we have reaſon to put a remark upon the wiſdom, power, and grace of our glorious Deliverer.

Finally, By his wiſdom he has from time to time, and even hitherto, delivered the city, not only from *invaſions* and *inſurrections* that threatened the ruin of church and ſtate, and reducing of us unto popiſh bondage, and antichriſtian darkneſs: but ſo far has he delivered the city alſo, even from *diſturbers* and *deſtroyers* within the city, that goſpel light is yet ſhining among us, and we have yet acceſs to pure goſpel ordinances: we are yet allowed, in peace, to keep our ſolemn feaſts; we have Sabbath upon Sabbath, ſermon upon ſermon; *Precept upon precept, and line upon line;* and whatever diſorders have been, and do take place in the city, hitherto ſome teſtimony has been kept up; and, I hope, he has reſerved to himſelf a wreſtling remnant in Scotland, both miniſters and people, that have occaſion to ſay, by reflection, on all the deliverances he has hither granted, as it is, Pſal. cxxiv. 1,—4. *Had not the Lord been on our ſide, when men roſe up againſt us, they had ſwallowed us up quick: the waters had overwhelmed us, and the proud waters had gone over our ſouls.*——Thus we may view it as a delivered city.

3*dly*, We may look upon this church as a city moſt *ungrateful* and *unmindful* of her Deliverer: and this is the great cauſe of all the diſorders, diviſions, and confuſions, all the troubles and diſtreſſes, that befal the city; *No man remembered the ſame poor man.* We are univerſally unbelieving and unmindful; forget to render the praiſes due to the Deliverer: we have no due conſideration of what God has done for us; no deep impreſſion of his wonderful mercy; no practical remembrance of his favour; his goodneſs has not led us to repentance. No wonder that many deſolations are to be ſeen in the city; for, many times Chriſt has ſaid to us, as to Jeruſalem, *How often would I have gathered thy children under my wings, as a hen doth her chickens, and ye would not; therefore, behold, your houſe is left deſolate. No man remembered the poor wiſe man*, who is the great Deliverer of the city.

Where is the man that remembers duly the great deliverance that God gave to Scotland at the *firſt plantation* of the goſpel, when he payed ſuch an early viſit to us, when we were nothing but a pack of blind pagans, when we were worſhipping nothing but ſtocks, and ſtones, and devils? Where is the man that remembers the great deliverance he wrought for us at the *glorious Reformation*, when he threw down the bulwarks of popery ſo many ages after he demoliſhed the bulwarks of paganiſm? Where is the man that remembers the merciful deliverance wrought for us at the *Revolution*, (for, I confine myſelf to the moſt known and remarkable periods) the fruits of which deliverance we yet enjoy (under the influence of a peaceful prince, whole royal family's ſucceſſion to the throne was interwoven with that remarkable period;) which goodneſs and mercy of our great and glorious Deliverer, we ought to remember as long as we enjoy theſe goſpel ordinances in peace and freedom, and without fear of outward hoſtile diſturbance, ſuch as the followers of Chriſt met with in former reigns, before the ſaid merciful Revolution? Again, where is the man that remembers the many, many other particular deliverances, former and later, that this land has been favoured with? And, how many a time he has beat down the great bulwarks of hell, againſt the little city?

Oh! ungrateful Scotland! How have we forgotten our *ſolemn covenanted allegiance* to our glorious Deliverer. We, again and again, ſwore with uplifted hands to be for him and his truth, and to defend the doctrine, worſhip, diſcipline, and government of his houſe, according to the ſcripture pattern, in oppoſition to all errors and antichriſtian corruptions whatſoever. What evidences have we given of our ungratitude and forgetfulneſs, that, inſtead of remembering theſe national engagements, we have, in many inſtances, contradicted our covenanted allegiance, and deſerted our covenanted principles, broken, burnt, and buried our covenants! *Do we thus requite the Lord, O fooliſh and unwiſe?* What ingratitude appears towards our Deliverer in the encroachments made upon the rules of God's word, which we ſwore to walk by? and to the conſtitution of this church, which our reformers declared to be founded thereupon, in the robbing God's people of the right to chuſe their own paſtors; a right to which our church, by her books of diſcipline, aſſert to belong to them, by the warrant of God's word? But our defection and receſſion from the good old way in that matter, has come to a height, by ſeveral ſteps: to me this receſſion ſeems to have been commenced in the aſſembly 1649, confirmed and advanced in the parliament 1690, and now ſome way conſummate and compleated in the preſent year 1732, ſo as it never was before by any deed of the church*.

Again, what ingratitude do we manifeſt towards our Deliverer in our forgetting and neglecting

* That the origin of Patronage flowed from the papal chair, is granted by every one; that it hath been a heavy burden on the church, and productive of the moſt direful conſequences, is abundantly notour; that it never did comport with preſbytery, but was always incompatible thereto, is evident, from its being frequently aboliſhed when preſbytery had the aſcendant; that it hath always, ſince the Reformation, been looked upon as an intollerable yoke and inſupportable grievance in the church of Scotland, is manifeſt, from the many appearances ſhe hath made againſt it, and attempts uſed to get rid of it. This is not at all ſurpriſing, ſeeing it is contrary to the ſacred Volume, and inconſiſtent with our Standards. That Patronage is neither agreeable to the rule of God's word, nor apoſtolic practice, is apparent from Acts i. 15. vi. 2. viii. 14. xiii. 3. xiv. 23. xvi. 9. 1 John iv. 1. 2 John ver. 10. That it is inconſiſtent with our Standards, is plain from the Second Book of Diſcipline, Chap. xii. Par. 10, 11.——How criminally guilty then muſt both the *Preſenters* and *Accepters* of preſentations be?—The PRESENTERS of preſentations muſt be highly culpable, ſince they are diametrically oppoſite to the ſacred canon, contrary to reaſon itſelf, the practice of the primitive and pureſt ages of the church; a plain incroachment upon

glecting to appoint *national thankſgiving days*, for the many mercies and deliverances that God, from time to time gave, and national faſt-days and humiliation-days for our national guilt; particularly, in this univerſal ſin of not remembering our Deliverer and deliverance, but caſting all his goodneſs behind our backs? What ingratitude are we chargeable with in not improving goſpel light yet continued with us?

How guilty are we in not remembering *God*, and the *righteouſneſs* of God, amidſt all the evils that befel the little city? for, *Is there evil in the city, and I have not done it, ſaith the Lord?* Though we cannot juſtify any treacherous Judas, who betrays Chriſt and his truth; nay, nor vindicate any timorous Peters, who, under ſome temptation, may deny Chriſt and his cauſe at a time; nor ought to juſtify any wicked inſtruments of the diſpeace, deſtruction, and diſturbance of the city; yet we ought to juſtify God in all that does befal us, and acknowlege his righteouſneſs; for, *Have we not procured theſe things unto ourſelves, in that we have forſaken the Lord our God*, the Deliverer of the city? Jer. ii. 17. *Our own wickedneſs doth correct us, and our backſlidings reprove us.* We have not rightly improven the liberties and privileges of the city, that ſometimes we have enjoyed; therefore, God juſtly ſuffers us to be a city robbed and ſpoiled, rent and diſturbed. Let us not, therefore, rail upon miniſters, aſſemblies, judicatories, or inſtruments. We ought not to bring a railing accuſation againſt the devil himſelf, but rather ſay, *The Lord rebuke thee*: the Lord rebuke the devil and his inſtruments; the Lord rebuke an erroneous ſpirit; the Lord rebuke a backſliding ſpirit; the Lord rebuke the inſtruments of the church's calamity. The Lord is righteous, for we have ſinned. Say not ſuch and ſuch perſons have brought ruin upon the church; for, it is you and I, by our ſins, that have provoked God to do it, and will provoke him to more terrible wrath, if we be not humbled for our ſins; and particularly for our not remembering duly our Lord Jeſus, the Deliverer of the city. But now,

Secondly, To forbear any farther about the public, and cloſe with what more particularly concerns *every one of us*, how may we lament our *forgetfulneſs of Chriſt?* Though his name be as *ointment poured forth*, we do not remember his love, his precepts, his promiſe, providence, and ordinances. How is this evident? Alas! when do we ſit down and *admire* him, and his works of *redeeming love?* If you ſee a curious piece of art, how are you aſtoniſhed? and yet how little filled with wonder at what God has done! We may poſe the conſciences of ſome, whether they ever ſat down, a quarter of an hour, all their life-time, full of wonder at the great deliverance Chriſt hath wrought for ſinners?— Again, when do you *trumpet forth* the *deliverance* that Chriſt hath wrought, and declare to others what Chriſt hath wrought for you, or for his church? This is the exerciſe of the ſaints, with a charming accent, to cry out, *Thou art glorious in holineſs, fearful in praiſes, excellent in working, doing wonders.*— Again, when do you *meditate* upon him, and upon what he has done for you, and the church, the little city? This is the exerciſe of the ſaints that remember him; *My meditation of him ſhall be ſweet.* Alas! we all want conſideration; *The ox knoweth his owner, and the aſs his maſter's crib, but my people do not know, Iſrael doth not conſider.* Conſider how ſinful and provoking this evil of forgetfulneſs is, and the hurtfulneſs of it: it is a manifeſt contempt not to remember or regard the operation of his hand. If a ſkilful artiſt ſhould ſpend half his time in making a curious piece of work, and bring it to you, and you ſhould undervalue it, how highly might the man be offended? How much more may God be offended when you forget his works! God has ſpent ſix days in the work of creation, near ſix thouſand years in the work of providence, and as much time, yea, an eternity itſelf, in the work of redemption; and ſhall we forget and undervalue all? What a manifeſt contempt is this of God, and his Chriſt! It is alſo horrid unthankfulneſs, that he ſhould work for us, and work in us, and we never think upon it. It is a defeating the deſign of his work. His deſign is, that we may ſee his attributes ſhining in his works of grace and mercy, in which ſo many wonders ſhine: wonderful wiſdom, wonderful power, wonderful holineſs, wonderful juſtice, wonderful mercy, wonderful truth. His deſign is, that his doings may be incentives to duty in us, and that we may publiſh his doings to poſterity; but, by forgetfulneſs, we endeavour to defeat all his deſigns. This forgetfulneſs is the mother of apoſtacy. If we forget our duty, we forſake our duty; if we forget God, we forſake God, and depart from him. This forgetfulneſs provokes God: when the city forgets what he hath done for it, this provokes God to do no more for the city. It provokes God, inſtead of works of deliverance and mercy, to work ſome work of judgment, and to perform a ſtrange work. If we forget God, we provoke him, by the law of retaliation, to forget us: yea, total forgetfulneſs of God brings on univerſal ruin; *The wicked ſhall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.*

Uſe 3. We might apply this doctrine for *trial*. Hence you may try your ſtate. If you be in a ſafe ſtate, then,

1. You will be like a *little city*; you will be *very little in your own eyes*; a poor helpleſs creature in your own eſteem.

2. You have *ſeen yourſelf beſieged*; you have

upon the natural rights of mankind, and the laws of free ſocieties; a cruel oppreſſion upon ſocieties of men, who duely value their immortal ſouls; and opens a door for a corrupt and lax miniſtry to enter into the church.— The ACCEPTERS cannot but be highly guilty becauſe, if the *Patron* is guilty of a ſinful uſurpation over the church of God, and ſpoiling and robbing her of her juſt rights and privileges to chooſe her own officers and overſeers, then the *Accepter* becomes partner with him, approving him in his ſin, homologating his uſurped power, encourages and hardens him in his guilt. Beſides, the Accepter acts contrary to the known principles of preſbyterians, and their own engagements; ſadly prejudges the ſucceſs of the goſpel, and their own miniſtry; increaſe the prejudices of the people againſt themſelves; and opens a door to many diſmal evils, as Simoniacal pactions, unchriſtian contentions in judicatories, oppreſſive concuſſions in pariſhes, vexatious proſecutions, and ſcandalous intruſions; which is ſtill the more unaccountable, in regard they have it in their power by an act 1719, to render Patronage abortive, by rejecting the preſentation.—— From the above hint, the conduct of the aſſembly 1732, in appending, by their act, ſuch a ſanction to Patronage, muſt appear vaſtly ſtrange; a ſanction unparalleled by any preceeding aſſembly. That theſe who ſhould be the guardians of the church's rights and liberties, and who ought to contribute the utmoſt of their endeavours to maintain them, and embrace every opportunity, to be quit of any incroachments made upon them, ſhould themſelves wreath a yoke about the necks of diſciples, which neither they nor their forefathers were able to bear, how amazing! how inconſiſtent!— As the arbitrary proceedings in the aſſembly in this matter, was one of the principal grounds that gave riſe to the Seceſſion, it was judged proper to give this ſhort hint, that that affair might appear in its proper light. See above, p. 631.

ſeen yourſelf to be under the wrath of God, under the power of the devil, under the dominion of ſin and death: you have ſeen great bulwarks built up againſt you, which it was impoſſible for you to bring down; and that you were undone for ever unleſs you met with a Deliverer.

3. If your ſtate be ſafe you have a *view of Chriſt*, the Deliverer and Saviour; you have got a view of him as a man, a God-man, a poor man, a poor but wiſe man, a man found out of God for this work. Have you ſeen him to be *the wiſdom of God*, and *the power of God?* And have you ſeen the wiſdom of God ſhining in his delivering the city, by ſatisfying the juſtice of God, deſtroying the works of the devil, giving himſelf a ſacrifice for ſin, and, by death, delivering from the ſting of death, and ſo the wiſdom of God in deſtroying the bulwarks that were built againſt you?

4. Have you been brought to the *believing remembrance* of him, to a daily remembrance of him; and are you afflicted that you remember him ſo little? But your errand to a communion-table was to remember him, and what he hath done for you; and it is your deſire and endeavour to remember him ſtill, and to *remember his love more than wine;* and to remember to live on him, and to live to him?

Uſe 4. I would cloſe with a word of *exhortation.*

1. That you would *come to Chriſt* the Deliverer of the city. O ſinner! while you are without Chriſt you are in a dangerous caſe; you are like a little city, having great kings againſt you, erecting great bulwarks againſt you.—*God's* bulwarks are ſet againſt you; his juſtice, his wrath, his curſe, his vengeance; how can you eſcape? Are you able to fight againſt God?—The *devil's* bulwarks are againſt you; and you cannot ſtand againſt his temptations; he will tempt you to ſin till he turn you to hell, if he get his will of you.—*Sin's* bulwarks are againſt you; the guilt of ſin, the power of ſin you ly under: ſin will preſs you to hell if you be not delivered.—*Death's* bulwarks are againſt you; how ſoon you ſhall die is uncertain; perhaps it may be this night, or to-morrow, or the next day; you know not preciſely: but come death when it will, if it meet you out of Chriſt, it will have a terrible ſting, a terrible train of woes and miſeries to all eternity; the firſt death will be followed with the ſecond death, which is the *lake which burns with fire and brimſtone*, Rev. xxi. 8. And therefore, O ſinner! flee from the *wrath to come;* flee for refuge to Chriſt the Deliverer.

Will you come to the God-man for deliverance? Will you inliſt yourſelf with the poor wiſe man? *Will you go with this man?* You have no wiſdom to deliver yourſelves, no more than you have power; but *he, by his wiſdom, delivers the city.* Though you have been playing the fool all your days, and though you be never ſuch a witleſs fool, this man minds you; here is wiſdom to deliver you: *He is made of God to you wiſdom.* By his wiſdom he ſatisfied God's juſtice; by his wiſdom he defeat the devil; by his wiſdom he deſtroyed ſin; by his wiſdom he conquered death. O take on with the Deliverer, and you have the deliverance; for, he that is the Saviour is the ſalvation of ſinners. Though you can do nothing, it needs be no ſtop to you, for wiſdom can do all for you. O be content that you be nothing, and that he by his wiſdom be all to you, and do all for you. It is a leading part of faith to know that you cannot ſave or deliver yourſelves, and to welcome the Saviour and ſalvation brought to your hand; and believingly to remember what he has done for you, and what he is ready to do to you. Say not, there ſtands ſo many things in the way; darkneſs, deadneſs, hardneſs, unbelief, enmity, and innumerable evils that you need to be delivered from; for it is his office to deliver the city, to deliver the ſoul from all theſe bulwarks of hell; ſince he by his infinite wiſdom offers to deliver, put all the work in his wiſe and powerful hands.

2. I would exhort you to *remember* the Deliverer; let it not be his complaint, *No man remembered the poor wiſe man.* O remember him that remembered you in your low eſtate; that remembered you from eternity; that remembered you when he was upon the croſs; that remembers you now in heaven, when he intercedes for you at the Father's right-hand; for, *he ever lives to make interceſſion;* and is he ever remembering you, and will you never remember him? Remember what he has done for you; believe all that ever he did was for you; his works of creation, providence, and redemption is on your account. You have an intereſt in all his works; therefore, do not forget his works. Conſider, that he remembers you when you forget him. Yea, when you forget yourſelf; *Zion ſaid, The Lord hath forgotten me:* but the Lord ſaid, *Can a woman forget her ſucking child, that ſhe ſhould not have compaſſion on the ſon of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.*

We ſhall now ſhut up the whole diſcourſe by giving you two *directions.*

1. O ſeek the holy Ghoſt to be your Remembrancer; ſome on hearing the word have committed it to the Lord by fervent prayer, that he would keep it for them; and that ſame very word has been brought home to their hearts, with unſpeakable pleaſure in the day of their darkneſs. The Spirit of God is the beſt Remembrancer; ſeek he may *teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance.*

2. Seek for a *new look* of Chriſt: Chriſt looked upon Peter, and then Peter remembered Chriſt and his word. A look of Chriſt will make you remember your ſin with grief and ſorrow. O ſtudy a perpetual remembrance of him, ſo as never to forget him and his kindneſs; and a practical remembrance of him, ſo as though you cannot remember him, ſo as to mind all that he ſays, yet you may remember to do what he ſays, and to glorify your Deliverer with your hearts, lips, and lives. Remember what great things he has done for the little city, and what great things he has yet to do. Wait on him till he finiſh his work.

SERMON

SERMON LVIII.

The LAMB in the midſt of the *Throne* *.

REV. vii. 17.

For the Lamb that is in the midſt of the throne, ſhall feed them.——

WE are met this day to celebrate the memorials of the love of Chriſt, in his death and crucifixion, upon mount Calvary. And that our faith may look to him in the beſt light, and to the beſt advantage, we are to remember, not only where he once was, but where he now is: and we will find, we need not be aſhamed of a *crucified Chriſt* that was once upon the *croſs*, for now he is upon the *throne*. The Lamb that was ſlain, as a ſacrifice to ſatisfy divine juſtice for us, the once dying Lamb in the midſt of the croſs, is now the ever-living Lamb in the midſt of the throne. And from this throne of God, where he reigns, we expect our food and proviſion upon the feaſt-day; according to the words of the text, *The Lamb, which is in the midſt of the throne, ſhall feed them.*

From the 13th verſe of this chapter we have a deſcription of the *honour* and *happineſs* of theſe that ſhall faithfully ſerve, and patiently ſuffer for the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Some interpreters think, that the happineſs of the ſaints militant, even in this world, is here deſcribed; ſome, that it is only the happineſs of the ſaint triumphant in heaven; others, make this place of ſcripture relate to both, and with theſe eſpecially I join; becauſe, whatever honour and happineſs of ſuffering ſaints is here ſet forth, they enjoy the ſame partly in this life, and fully in the life to come, as may appear by the particulars here mentioned.

The happy perſons are ſpoken of, ver. 14th, *Theſe are they that have come out of great tribulation.* Whatever relation ſome think this may have to the church of Chriſt on earth, after they have eſcaped the antichriſtian bloody perſecution; or, as others, to the martyrs in heaven that have ſuffered unto death for the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; yet it may be ſaid of all the militant ſaints, who, through much trouble, enter into the kingdom of heaven, and therein are conformed to their ſuffering Head, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and *bear* about *in their body the dying of the Lord Jeſus. Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers them out of them all.* It may be ſaid of all the ſaints, Theſe are they that have come from trouble to reſt, from bondage to liberty, from death to life, and have *waſhed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.* The perfection of this purity they have in heaven; but even here on earth they are waſhed in the blood of Chriſt, and clothed with the white robe of his imputed and imparted righteouſneſs.

Verſe 15th, *Therefore are they before the throne of God, and ſerve him day and night in his temple: and he that ſitteth on the throne ſhall dwell among them.* This ſeems to be a further deſcription of the happineſs of the ſaints both militant and triumphant; as they are happy,

1. In their *ſtate*, being *waſhed, juſtified, and ſanctified, in the name of the Lord Jeſus, and by the Spirit of their God.*

2. They are happy in their *ſtation*, being always *before the throne of God.* The glorified ſaints in heaven are always in that preſence where there is *fulneſs of joy:* and the ſanctified ones upon earth have this bleſſing alſo beſtowed upon them, they are ſaid to *ſit with him in heavenly places;* and it is their daily work to come *boldly to the throne of grace.* Again,

3. They are happy in their *ſervice;* for, *they ſerve him day and night in his temple.* Though theſe that are in heaven ſerve him without weakneſs or wearineſs, which we cannot here do; yet it is the property of all the true circumciſion to *worſhip God in the Spirit, and in truth,* and to *pray without ceaſing; meditating on his law day and night,* and *going to the altar of God;* to God in Chriſt, the true ſpiritual temple.

4. They are happy in their *company;* for, *He that ſits upon the throne ſhall dwell among them.* This points out friendſhip, fellowſhip, and familiarity between God and the redeemed; which alſo Chriſt allows to the militant ſaints in part, when, upon opening the door of their heart, he *comes in and ſups with them, and they with him,* Rev. iii. 20. And they are in caſe to ſay, *Truly our fellowſhip is with the Father, and with his Son Jeſus Chriſt,* 1 John i. 3. Yea, God ſays, *I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and will be their God, and they ſhall be my people.*

5. They are happy in their *freedom;* they ſhall be freed from all want, and all uneaſineſs. From all *want;* for, *They ſhall hunger no more, neither ſhall they thirſt any more:* for this freedom will be perfected in heaven, as it is commenced on earth; as the prophet ſays, ſpeaking of Chriſt's ſpiritual kingdom, Iſa. xlix. 10. *They ſhall not hunger, nor thirſt,* &c. Hence ſays Chriſt, John vi. 35. *He that comes to me ſhall never hunger, and he that believeth in me ſhall never thirſt;* pointing out the ſpiritual pleaſure and ſatisfaction they ſhall have, and never be altogether deprived of.—From all *uneaſineſs* alſo ſhall they be freed; *Neither ſhall the ſun light on them, nor any heat;* or, as it is in the forcited Iſa. xlix. 10. *Neither ſhall the heat nor ſun ſmite them.* The redeemed above are perfectly freed from all uneaſineſs: and even the redeemed on earth, according to the meaſure of faith, ſuch will be their meaſure of eaſe, even amidſt all things that tend to make them uneaſy. Chriſt ſays

* This ſermon was preached immediately before the celebration of the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper, at Dunfermline, June 10*th*, 1733. It hath undergone three impreſſions.

to

to them, *Fear not, only believe; Fear not, I am with you; Fear not him that can* at moſt *but kill the body; The very hairs of your head are all numbered;* you may be perfectly eaſy. Nothing is more uneaſy than the ſun in the meridian regions; ſo are afflictions and perſecutions to the ſaints, and the temptations they are attacked with from earth and hell: But *God is faithful*, ſays the apoſtle, *who will not ſuffer you to be tempted above what ye are able, but will with the temptation alſo make a way to eſcape, that you may be able to bear it*, 1 Cor. x. 12.

6. They are happy in their *proviſion;* becauſe *the Lamb that is in the midſt of the throne, ſhall feed them:* hence he is ſaid to *feed his flock like a ſhepherd.* The *feeding* here ſpoken of, imports alſo *rule* and *government*, ſuch as a ſhepherd hath over his flock. It is in the believing view of the provident loving Shepherd, the pſalmiſt ſays, *The Lord is my Shepherd, I ſhall not want*, Pſal. xxiii. 1.

7. They are happy in their *direction* and *conduct;* in their director, guide, and conductor: *He ſhall lead them unto living fountains of waters.* Now, of theſe living waters the Lord Jeſus ſpeaks, as they reſpect even his people in this world, John iv. 14. and vii. 38. *The water that I give, ſhall be in him a well of water ſpringing up to everlaſting life;* and, *Out of his belly ſhall flow rivers of living waters.* By theſe they have matter of comfort amidſt all their croſſes. Hence,

8. They are here ſaid to be happy in their *joys;* for, *God ſhall wipe away all tears from their eyes*; that is, all their griefs and ſorrows ſhall be ſwallowed up in the fulneſs of joy and conſolation that ſhall be abundantly allowed them. The commencement of this joy is even here, amidſt all the troubles and trials of the militant ſaints; *For behold*, ſays God, *I create Jeruſalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy, and the voice of weeping ſhall be no more heard*, Iſa. lxv. 18. And hence they are ſometimes *filled with joy and peace in believing;* yea, *with joy unſpeakable and full of glory.*

It is the firſt part of this laſt verſe that I have eſpecially my eye upon; particularly, that deſcription of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, which the commentators, I have conſulted, paſs over more ſlightly than I expected, namely, *The Lamb which is in the midſt of the throne.* Where we have our Lord Jeſus deſcribed, 1. From his *meekneſs* and *humility;* therefore he is called *the Lamb.* 2. From his *majeſty* and *authority;* he is the Lamb *in the midſt of the throne.* What benefit accrues to his church, from his meek and majeſtic government, follows in the reſt of the verſe, which, if I have time, I may a little inſiſt upon. But what I eſpecially propoſe to ſpeak to, as the Lord may aſſiſt, is, from the ſweet account given us here of our Lord Jeſus. And this we ſhall eſſay in the following doctrinal propoſition.

OBSERV. *That our Lord Jeſus Chriſt is the Lamb in the midſt of the throne.*

And, as the pſalmiſt ſays, Pſal. cxxi. 1. *I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence comes my help;* ſo let us lift up our eyes to the throne, from whence comes our food to-day: and we may the more readily and joyfully do ſo, that the Lamb is in the midſt of the throne, to be the feeder. That I may open and apply this doctrine for our benefit, I propoſe the following method,

I. Speak a little of the *Lamb.*

II. Of the *throne.*

III. *How* the Lamb comes to be upon the throne.

IV. What is *imported* in the Lamb's being *in the* MIDST *of the throne.*

V. Conſider the benefit of *feeding*, that iſſues from the Lamb's being in the midſt of the throne.

VI. Deduce ſome *inferences* for application.

I. We are to offer a word concerning the LAMB. This is a name frequently given to our Lord Jeſus in ſcripture: and he is ſo called, both becauſe of his immaculate whiteneſs and innocency, and becauſe of his incomparable meekneſs and patience: he is *a Lamb without blemiſh, and without ſpot*, 1 Pet. i. 19.; and his meekneſs was matchleſs, of which more afterward: he is the *Lamb of God*, the *worthy Lamb*, the *Lamb that was ſlain.*

I ſhall only here mention four periods wherein he is repreſented as a Lamb.

1. In his *deſignation* from the beginning, yea, from all eternity, to be a ſacrifice to ſatisfy divine juſtice: hence, Rev. xiii. 8. he is called *the Lamb ſlain from the foundation of the world:* ſlain *decretively*, in the purpoſe of God, before the foundation of the world was laid; and ſlain *typically*, in all the ſacrifices under the law.

2. In his *manifeſtation*, when he appeared in our nature, he is pointed out as the Lamb that was come to be a ſacrifice for ſin, John i. 29. *Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the ſins of the world:* and again, ver. 36. *Behold the Lamb of God.* To this purpoſe ſays the ſame beloved diſciple, 1 John iii. 5. *You know that he was manifeſted to take away our ſins.*

3. In his *humiliation* unto death, he is repreſented as the meek and patient Lamb, Acts viii. 32. *He was led as a ſheep to the ſlaughter; and like a Lamb dumb before his ſhearer, ſo opened he not his mouth;* which are the words of the prophet Iſa. liii. 7. Thus ſaith the Lord, by the prophet, chap. l. 5, 6. *He was not rebellious, neither turned away back: I gave my back to the ſmitter, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from ſhame and ſpitting.*

4. In his *exaltation*, or in his exalted ſtate, he is in ſcripture repreſented as a Lamb; particularly, Rev. v. 6. *And I beheld, and lo, in the midſt of the throne, and in the midſt of the elders, ſtood a Lamb as it had been ſlain, having ſeven horns, and ſeven eyes, which are the ſeven ſpirits of God ſent forth into all the earth.* This is the ſcripture that our preſent text hath a reference unto: and therefore, concerning it you may obſerve the deſcription given of this Lamb.

(1.) As the Lamb that is in the *midſt of the throne;* of which more afterwards. Only, you ſee, in his exalted ſtate at the Father's right-hand, he is ſtill the Lamb: change of place hath not made him change his name, or nature: he took our human nature along with him; and he is ſtill the meek and lowly Lamb, though he be upon the throne.

(2.) He is deſcribed by being the Lamb *ſlain;* a *Lamb as it had been ſlain.* He appears with the marks of his ſufferings upon him, to ſhew that he interceeds in heaven in the virtue of his ſatisfaction; becauſe he *entered the holy place by his own blood*, Heb. ix. 12. And the virtue of the ſacrifice he offered is always freſh, as if he were newly ſlain.

(3.) He

(3.) He is described as a Lamb having *seven horns*; pointing out the perfection of his *power* to execute all the will of God, and to conquer all his enemies. This Lamb is the POWER *of God*.

(4.) He is described as a Lamb having *seven eyes*; pointing out the perfection of his *wisdom*, to understand all the will of God, and to do it in the most effectual manner. As he is the POWER *of God*, so he is the WISDOM *of God*; for he hath the *Spirit* of God *above measure*: therefore it is said, *The seven eyes are the seven Spirits of God*; not seven in number or in nature, but in respect of the diversity of the gifts and operations of that one and eternal Spirit of God. This Lamb of God, then, is he that hath the *Spirit of the Lord God upon him, for he hath anointed him*; and he is anointed, that he may anoint. And, O may the Lamb, with the seven eyes, look upon this assembly, and give eyes to us to see his glory this day, that our hearts may join issue with the heavenly company, Rev. v. 12. *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.*

II. The next thing we proposed, was a word concerning the THRONE. Here we would consider, what for a throne it is, and why called a throne.

1st, What *kind* of a throne is it which the Lamb is said to be in the midst of? We may answer, It is the *throne of God*, Rev. xxii. 1, 3. There it is called *the throne of God and the Lamb*. The throne of God is the throne of the Lamb, and the throne of the Lamb is the throne of God. It is the throne of *grace*, the throne of *glory*, the throne of his *holiness*, and the throne of his *justice*.

1. It is called the throne of divine *grace*, Heb. iv. 16. *Let us come boldly to the throne of grace.* Why so? because we have a High-priest there; the Lamb is in the midst of the throne. And, indeed, the throne of grace is nothing else than a God in Christ, a God reconciled in Christ, a God upon a mercy-seat, sprinkled with the blood of Christ.

2. It is called the throne of divine *glory*, Jer. xiv. 21. *Do not disgrace the throne of thy glory; remember, break not covenant with us.* The prophet there speaks of the temple, and the ark in it, the symbol of God's presence; which was typical of Christ, in whom the covenant of grace stands fast: and so it is called the throne of glory, because all the glory of God shines about that throne. As the grace of God is the glory of God, so all the glory of God shines in the face of Jesus Christ. Therefore,

3. It is called a throne of divine *holiness*, Psal. xlvii. 8. *God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness.* Holiness becomes his house, holiness becomes his throne, and holiness is his throne: there is nothing there, but the holy God, the holy Lamb, the holy throne; and they that are about it cry, *Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts*, Isa. vi. 3.

4. It is called the throne of his *justice*, Psal. lxxxi. 14. *Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne.* And Psal. xcvii. 2. *Clouds and darkness are round about him, yet righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne.* His glorious and holy throne of grace stands firm upon the base and foundation of justice satisfied for the sinner, and judgment execute against sin, in the blood of the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne. It is therefore no hindrance or impediment to our access to the throne of grace, that it is also a throne of justice; but rather a furtherance and encouragement, because there *grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ*, Rom. v. 21. And, since grace reigns there through justice-satisfying righteousness, why then, there God may with honour meet with sinners, and there sinners may with hope draw near to God.—This is the throne of God and the Lamb.

2dly, Why is it called a *throne?* The place, in the midst whereof the Lamb is, is called a throne, on these accounts.

1. A throne is a place of powerful and majestic *glory*, *honour*, and *dignity*. Jesus Christ, the Lamb, is set in the midst of this place, *crowned with glory and honour*, Heb. ii. 9. His Father crowned him King there, saying, *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever*, Psal. xlv. 6.

2. A throne is a place of *power* and *authority*. Christ, the Lamb, is set in the midst of this throne; for, *All power in heaven and earth is given to him*, Mat. xviii. 18. *All judgment is committed to him*; and *the government is upon his shoulders.*

3. A throne is a place of *height* and *eminency*. Christ, the Lamb, is in the midst of this place; Isa. vi. 7. *I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up; and his train filled the temple.* His Father hath set him on the highest throne; he *hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name*, Phil. ii. 9.

4. A throne is a place of *plenty*; thence the royal bounty is communicated. Christ, the Lamb, is in the midst of this place; hence it is said, Col. i. 19. *It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell*; and again, *In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowlege*, all the treasures of grace; and *out of his fulness we all receive, and grace for grace*, John i. 16.

5. A throne is a place of *beauty*, as well as bounty; it is a beautiful and splendid place. And to see the Lamb in the midst of the throne, is to *see the King in his beauty*, Isaiah xxxiii. 17. *Strength is within his holy place, and there doth beauty shine*; there doth glory shine.

6. In a word, a throne is a place of *pleasure, peace, joy*, and *triumph*. The Lamb is in the midst of this place: having *ascended up on high, and led captivity captive*, Psal. lxviii. 18. He sits triumphant upon the throne, *making all his enemies his footstool.* If he *triumphed over them on the cross*, as it is said, Col. ii. 15. how much more does he triumph over them on the throne, making all believers sharers of his joyful triumph!

III. The next thing I proposed was, To show *how* the Lamb comes to be upon the throne. I shall tell you in a few words, that he *bargained* for the throne, he *wrought* for the throne, he *fought* for the throne, he *died* for the throne.

1. He *bargained* for the throne. In the counsel of peace, betwixt the Father and the Son, it was promised to Christ, that, upon his doing and suffering for his people, he should have a glorious throne, and a numerous retinue: that he should *see his seed*, and *see the travel of his soul, and be satisfied*, Isa. liii. 10, 11. The Lamb cries out, It is a bargain that I chearfully go into? *Lo, I come; in the volume of thy book it is written of me: I delight to do thy will, O my God; thy law*

law is within my heart, Pſal. xl. 7, 8. Hence ſays the Father, *I have made a covenant with my choſen*, Pſal. lxxxix. 3.

2. He *wrought* for the throne. According to the bargain and covenant between the Father and him, he *brought in everlaſting righteouſneſs*, Dan. ix. 24.; he *fulfilled all righteouſneſs*, Mat. iii. 15. And hence he claims the crown and the throne; *I have glorified thee on earth, I have finiſhed the work thou gaveſt me to do: And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own ſelf, with the glory I had with thee before the world was*, John xvii. 4, 5.— Thus he *wrought* for the throne.

3. He *fought* for the throne. You may ſee how he fought, Iſa. lxiii. 1, 2, 3. *Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? This that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatneſs of his ſtrength? I that ſpeak in righteouſneſs, mighty to ſave. Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel? and thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine-fat? I have trodden the wine-preſs alone, and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury, and their blood ſhall be ſprinkled upon my garments, and I will ſtain all my raiment.* And on this account the Lamb ſits upon a triumphant throne, having *ſpoiled principalities and powers; bruiſed the head of the old ſerpent; deſtroyed the works of the devil*; and came off the field like a glorious conqueror. Therefore, *the Lord ſaid unto our Lord, Sit thou at my right-hand*, Pſal. cx. 1. In which pſalm you read both of the bloody battle, and the glorious enthronement of the Lamb.

4. He *died* for the throne. Having *drunk of the brook in the way, therefore did he lift up the head*, Pſal. cx. 7. And, becauſe *he became obedient unto the death, even the death of the croſs; therefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name*, Phil. ii. 8, 9. When he had the croſs upon his back, he had the throne in his eye; *For the joy that was ſet before him, he endured the croſs, deſpiſing the ſhame, and is now ſet down at the right-hand of the throne of God*, Heb. xii. 2. And thus, *for the ſuffering of death, he was crowned with glory and honour*, chap. ii. 9.— Our faith then may ſee and be ſatisfied how he came by the throne. But, for widening and increaſing faith's view of this enthronement, I proceed,

IV. To the next thing propoſed, namely, To ſhew what may be *imported* in the Lamb's being in the MIDST of the throne. And,

1. That the Lamb is in the *midſt* of the throne, ſpeaks forth the *dignity* of his perſon, his ſupreme Deity, and equality with the Father. Though, in his infinite love, he thought it no diſparagement, at his Father's call, to *make himſelf of no reputation, and take upon him the form of a ſervant*; yet, *being in the form of God, he thought it no robbery to be equal with God*, Phil. ii. 6. And his Father thinks it no diſparagement to him, to call even the ſuffering Lamb, the crucified Jeſus, his *fellow* and equal; *Awake, O ſword, againſt the man that is my fellow*, Zech. xiii. 9.; yea, to crown him King upon his everlaſting throne, ſaying to him, *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever*, Heb. i. 8. O Sirs, if the Chriſt-diſparaging and ſoul-damning doctrine of Arians were true, the Lamb would not be worthy of ſuch a throne, far leſs the *midſt* of the throne.

2. That the Lamb is in the *midſt* of the throne, imports and ſpeaks forth the *height of his exaltation*. Beſides the *natural* right as God, that Chriſt hath to the throne, he hath a *donative* right as Mediator: and becauſe, as Mediator, he hath brought in *glory to God in the higheſt*; therefore, he is exalted to the higheſt throne that his Father can give him: *I will make him my firſt-born, higher than the kings of the earth*, Pſal. lxxxix. 27. And now, according to his promiſe, *Let all the houſe of Iſrael know aſſuredly, that God hath made that ſame Jeſus that was crucified, both Lord and Chriſt*, Acts ii. 6. And being now poſſeſſed of the throne, *he hath on his veſture and on his thigh a name written*, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS; and the rather that it is a ſcarlet robe, *a veſture dipt in blood*, Rev. xix. 13, 14. to ſhow, that it is the worthy Lamb that was ſlain that is in the midſt of the throne.

3. That the Lamb is in the *midſt* of the throne, imports, I think, the *perfection of his mediation*, and *exactneſs* thereof. O but this part of the throne be fit for him, and he fit for it! It well becomes him to be there; he is the middle perſon between the Father and the Holy Ghoſt, and the middle perſon between God and man; and it well becomes him to have the middle part of the throne. The Mediator and mids-man having the midſt of the throne, it ſays, he is a perfect Mediator, *a merciful and faithful High-prieſt*, Heb. ii. 17.; faithful to God, and merciful to man; true to both parties, between whom he ſtands in the midſt of the throne.

4. That the Lamb is in the *midſt* of the throne, imports the *beautiful order* and *equity of his adminiſtration*. As the *government is upon his ſhoulders*, ſo it will be a juſt, righteous, and equal government: *Behold, a King ſhall reign in righteouſneſs*; even the *man that ſhall be a hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempeſt*, Iſa. xxxii. 1. *With righteouſneſs ſhall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity, for the meek of the earth. Righteouſneſs ſhall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulneſs the girdle of his reins*, Iſa. xi. 4, 5. His adminiſtration ſhall be ſo righteous and equal, that none ſhall have occaſion to complain that he hath gone too far, either to the right-hand or to the left-hand of the throne: no; he will ever keep the midſt of the throne; and his government, like his covenant, will be *well-ordered in all things*.

5. That the Lamb is in the *midſt* of the throne, imports the *acceſſibleneſs* of the throne of God on every hand. The Lamb is upon the throne of God, and therefore there is acceſs to the throne; for, the Lamb being there, clothed with his veſture dipped in blood, we may come *boldly to the throne of grace*, and have *boldneſs to enter into the holieſt by the blood of Jeſus*, Heb. iv. 16. x. 19. If the Lamb were not there, ſuch guilty ſinners durſt not be ſo bold as to look a juſt and holy God in the face, or approach to his throne: But, O good news and bleſſed tidings! the Lamb being our *Forerunner*, we may boldly go as far forward, as the blood of the Lamb hath run in like a river before us; and that is to the very heart and centre of the throne of God. Yea, not only is the Lamb *upon* the throne, which ſpeaks acceſs thither; but he is in the *midſt* of the throne, which ſpeaks acceſs on every hand, and on every ſide of the throne. If he were only placed at the *one ſide* of the throne, it might be thought there would be no acceſs at the *other ſide*; but, being in the *midſt* of the throne, he is ready to welcome all comers from all quarters, ſaying, *Whoſoever will, let him come*, from eaſt, weſt, north, or ſouth; let him come on this ſide, or that ſide,

or

or directly before the throne; yea, let any poor creature, who bluſhes to be ſeen, come ſliping ſecretly, as it were, behind the throne, like the woman with the bloody iſſue, that came behind him, ſaying, *If I may but touch his garment, I ſhall be whole.* O to get in if it were but behind the throne this day, to get a touch of the royal robes of the Lamb which is in the midſt of the throne! Welcome, ſinner, there is acceſs on every hand of the throne, for the Lamb is in the midſt of it. The Lamb of God, which lies in the midſt of his Father's boſom, he ſits in the midſt of his Father's throne, to welcome and receive all comers, ſaying, *Him that cometh, I will in no wiſe caſt out.*

6. That the Lamb is in the *midſt* of the throne imports, that the Lamb is the *centre* of all the glory that ſurrounds and encompaſſes the throne of God, or the throne of grace.—He is the centre of divine *fulneſs*, and of all the glorious perfections of God; for, *In him dwells all the fulneſs of the Godhead bodily*, Col. ii. 9. Every attribute of God ſhines gloriouſly in the face of Jeſus Chriſt.—He is the centre of all divine *truths*; and we cannot know any precious goſpel truths, or myſteries, in a ſaving and ſatiſfying manner, unleſs we *know the truth as it is in Jeſus*, Eph. iv. 21.—He is the centre of all the divine *promiſes*, being the centre of the covenant of grace, in whom it ſtands faſt, and *in whom all the promiſes are, Yea and Amen, to the glory of God*, 2 Cor. i. 20.—He is the centre of all divine *bleſſings*; for, God bleſſes us with *all ſpiritual bleſſings in heavenly places*, only *in Chriſt*, Eph. i. 3.—He is the centre of all divine *grace*; for, it is *out of his fulneſs* that *we receive, and grace for grace*, John i. 16.—He is the centre of all divine *comfort*; for, he is the *conſolation of Iſrael*; and he is *anointed with the oil of joy and gladneſs above his fellows*, Pſal. xlv. 7. that he may anoint with the ſame oil, and bring his people to fellowſhip with him in the ſame ſpirit of joy and conſolation, according to their meaſure.—He is the centre of all ſaving *offices*; being, as a PROPHET, the *Wiſdom of God*, for our *illumination*; as a PRIEST, the *Righteouſneſs of God*, for our *juſtification*; and, as a KING, the *Power of God*, for our *ſanctification*.—He is the centre of all ſweet *relations*; the *Saviour*, the *Surety*, the *Head*, the *Husband*, the *All and in All* of his people; their *Light*, and *Life*, and *Strength*, and *Righteouſneſs*, and *Rock*, and *Refuge*, and *Portion*.—He is the centrical *place*, where God and man may meet together; for, he dwells between the cherubims, on the mercy-ſeat, and over theſe; *There will I meet with thee*, Exod. xxv. 22. *There will I commune with thee*. And no communion with God can we have but in him, who is the Lamb in the midſt of the throne, and middle-perſon between God and us.—In a word, being in the centre of the throne, he is the centre of *all things*: he is the centre of all the *ſins* of the redeemed, for their expiation; for, *the Lord hath laid on him*, [or, *made to* MEET IN *him*,] *the iniquity of us all*, Iſa. liii. 6.—And the centre of all their *ſervice*, for their acceptation; for, *We are accepted in the Beloved*, Eph. i. 6. And thus he is ſomeway the centre of all things; for, as *all things are in his hands*, ſo all things in *heaven and earth* are ſaid to *meet in him*, Eph. i. 10. Col. i. 20. And therefore, the Lamb, who is in the midſt and centre of the throne, ought to be the centre of our hearts and affections, the centre of our love and delight.——Thus, among other things, he is the centre of all our *proviſion*. Which leads to,

V. The *fifth* thing propoſed, which was, To view the benefit of *feeding* that iſſues from the Lamb's being in the midſt of the throne; *He ſhall feed them.* Whatever other paſtoral care, rule, or government this word imports; yet I ſhall, becauſe this is a feaſt-day, conſider that part of his paſtoral care that is here expreſt by the word FEED: *The Lamb that is in the midſt of the throne ſhall feed them.* If I were to enlarge upon this ſubject, I might tell you how the Lamb feeds his church and people, with the *manifeſtations* of his *glory*, with the *intimations* of his *love*, with the *communications* of his *grace*, and with the *conſolations* of his *Spirit*: but I confine myſelf to the *doctrine* of the Lamb being in the midſt of the throne; and therefore I ſhall ſpeak to this *feeding* only as it relates to that *doctrine*. The Lamb that is in the midſt of the throne is the food; the Lamb that is in the midſt of the throne is the feeder; and the Lamb's being in the midſt of the throne makes the feeding of thoſe that are the followers of the Lamb, to have the following qualities. All our ſacramental food and proviſion, this day, muſt come from the throne of God, and of the Lamb. Therefore,

1. It muſt be *kindly* food and proviſion that comes from the throne, ſince the Lamb is in the midſt of it. The meek Lamb, the loving Lamb, that *feeds his flock like a ſhepherd, gathers the lambs with his arms, carries them in his boſom, and gently leads thoſe that are with young*, Iſa. xl. 11. *He makes them to ly down in green paſtures*, Pſal. xxiii. 2. He makes them to *go out and in and find paſture*, John x. 9. It is ſweet, and eaſy, and kindly feeding, that iſſues from the Lamb in the midſt of the throne. And yet,

2. It muſt be *powerful* feeding that comes from thence; it is from the throne of power: and, indeed, you will not feed to advantage this day, unleſs power come from the throne to make you take your food. It is the work of the Lamb in the midſt of the throne, to feed by the efficacy of his grace: all the means and miniſters in the world cannot make a ſoul open its mouth or heart for this food, till power come from the throne; and yet when it cometh, it comes ſo ſweetly and kindly, that there is nothing like force or violence. The man is made as frank and free, in going out after Chriſt, to be the food of his periſhing ſoul, as if there were no power at all put forth in the caſe. Power makes him eat and feed heartily; *Thy people ſhall be willing in the day of thy power*, Pſal. cx. 3.

3. It muſt be *ſpiritual* feeding that comes from the Lamb in the midſt of the throne; for his throne, his kingdom, is a ſpiritual kingdom, it is not of this world: *The fleſh profits nothing*; his *words are ſpirit and life*. Food for the ſoul muſt be ſpiritual food: *The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteouſneſs, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt*, Rom. xiv. 17.

4. It muſt be *plentiful* proviſion and feeding that comes from the Lamb in the midſt of the throne; for it is a rich throne, and *all fulneſs* is there. There is plenty of wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification, and redemption; abundance of all ſorts. Here is *wiſdom* enough, for the moſt ignorant; *righteouſneſs* enough, for the moſt guilty; *ſanctification* enough, for the moſt filthy; *redemption* enough, for the moſt ruined;

comfort

comfort enough, for the moſt ſorrowful; *ſtrength* enough, for the weakeſt; *They ſhall be abundantly ſatisfied with the fatneſs of thy houſe*, Pſal. xxxvi. 8. O the plenty that is about the throne! Plenty of divine *perfections* to feed upon, when viewed in Chriſt. Indeed, the mildeſt attributes of God, out of Chriſt, will be a terrible ſight; but the moſt terrible attributes of God, in Chriſt, are a pleaſant feaſt; even *juſtice*, *holineſs*, and *truth*. Here is plenty of *promiſes* to feed upon, while the performance is delayed. Every thing in Chriſt is a feaſt; his names, and natures, offices, life, death, reſurrection, aſcenſion, interceſſion; his merit, his Spirit, his word, his fleſh, his blood, and victory.

5. It muſt be *ſuitable* food that comes from this quarter; for, the Lamb, being in the midſt of the throne, will diſtribute equally and ſuitably. He cannot poſſibly fail and miſcarry, by giving too much, or too little; being in the middle of the throne, and the middle perſon between God and man, to communicate what is ſuitable for God to give, and ſuitable for man to have, no more and no leſs does he communicate, becauſe he is the Lamb in the midſt of the throne. And, indeed, as a key is ſuited to a lock, ſo is Chriſt's fulneſs to our wants. We are *diſeaſed*, he is a *Phyſician*; we are *loſt*, he is a *Saviour*; we are *debtors*, he is the *Surety*; we are *dead*, he is *Life*; we are *blind*, he is *Eye-ſalve*; we are *naked*, he is *Clothing*; we are *troubled*, he is *Reſt*: Are we *bewildered?* he is a *Guide*: Are we in *danger?* he is a *Guard*: Are we *benighted?* he is a *Sun*: Are we *aſſaulted?* he is a *Shield*.—Who in heaven or earth can thus ſupply our wants, heal our wounds, bear our burdens, ſweeten our afflictions, ſubdue our enemies, as Chriſt? O ſuitable feeding to the ſoul is here in all caſes!

6. It muſt be *joyful* feeding and proviſion that comes from the Lamb in the midſt of the throne; for, the throne is a place of joy and triumph. Here muſt be the choiceſt cheer, amidſt the choiceſt company; God, and Chriſt, and angels, and ſaints. There is as much ſweetneſs in Chriſt, as there is fulneſs and ſuitableneſs: He is the fountain of ſweetneſs; his mouth is moſt ſweet, his preſence is moſt ſweet, his fruits are moſt ſweet; *I ſat down under his ſhadow with great delight*, ſays the church, *and his fruits were ſweet to my taſte*, Song ii. 3. Here are the ſweet rivers of living waters that drive away all death and ſorrow, as it follows here in the text.

7. It muſt be *free* proviſion and feeding that comes from the Lamb in the midſt of the throne. There is nothing to pay about a throne; this would be a diſgrace and diſparagement to the prince that poſſeſſes the throne: ſo here, all is to be had freely. The fineſt is always the freeſt, Iſa. lv. 1. The legaliſts, that cannot feed upon Chriſt and his righteouſneſs freely, but only on their own works and duties, they *feed upon aſhes*: the legal preacher, that cannot offer Chriſt freely, is like the unnatural fathers, that, when their children aſk *bread*, give them a *ſtone*; when they aſk a *fiſh*, give them a *ſcorpion*. What is our beſt performances but ſcorpions, ſerpents, ſtones, yea, poiſon to them that make them their ſoul-food? Nothing can feed the ſoul but Chriſt. Rabſhakeh threatened to *make all the people on the wall to eat their own dung*, 2 Kings xviii. 26.; the legal preacher accompliſhes this threatening, in a ſpiritual ſenſe; our beſt works are but dung; *I will ſpread the dung of your ſacrifices on your faces, even the dung of your ſolemn feaſts*. But, O Sirs, here the fineſt and ſweeteſt feaſt is the freeſt; from the throne of grace proceed all bleſſings freely.

8. It muſt be *durable* proviſion and feeding that comes from the Lamb in the midſt of the throne: for he ever lives upon the throne, and his throne is for ever and ever; and therefore everlaſting food comes from thence, and food that nouriſhes to everlaſting life: *I am the living bread that came down from heaven*, ſays Chriſt; *if any man eat of this bread, he ſhall live for ever*, John vi. 51. Here is proviſion for eternity; *Labour not for the meat that periſheth*, ſays Chriſt, *but for that meat that endures to everlaſting life, which the Son of man ſhall give unto you*, John vi. 27. What a fool was he, that filled his barns, and then ſaid, *Soul, take thy reſt, thou haſt much goods laid up for many years!* while God ſaid to him, *Thou fool, this night ſhall thy ſoul be required of thee?* But, O what wiſdom were it to lay up for eternity this day, that death may not be able to rob you of your ſtore, but that ye may have it all before your hand! The Lamb that is in the midſt of the throne lives for ever there to feed; *He lives for ever to make interceſſion*; he lives for ever to make proviſion: they have everlaſting food, who have the Lamb that is in the midſt of the throne to feed them.——Thus you ſee what ſort of feeding is to be had under the throne of the Lamb, and who it is that muſt cover our table this day, even the Lamb in the midſt of the throne; he hath mounted the throne, to be a feeder, and to let down bleſſings to the footſtool.

VI. The *laſt* thing propoſed, was, The *application*. Is it ſo, that our Lord Jeſus is the Lamb in the midſt of the throne? Hence we may infer theſe following particulars.

1. Surely we need not be *aſhamed of a crucified Chriſt*, nor our *Chriſtian paſſover* this day, the Lamb that was ſacrificed for us. Since now the Lamb is upon the throne, and in the midſt of the throne, the ſhame and reproach of the croſs is wiped away, with the glory and ſplendor of the throne. We need not be aſhamed of the croſs of Chriſt, who is now in the midſt of the throne. Let none deſpiſe thoſe that eſpouſe the cauſe and intereſt of the Lamb, whatever hardſhips they may be brought under before courts, councils, and judicatories on earth: they need not be aſhamed to *go forth unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach*. The great apoſtle Paul ſays, *God forbid that I ſhould glory, ſave in the croſs of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*. O believer, it is our greateſt glory to be bearing his croſs, who is now wearing the crown; to be followers of the Lamb that is in the midſt of the throne.

2. Hence we may learn, that the *church of God is* SAFE, ſince the Lamb that is their Head is in the midſt of the throne. Believers in Chriſt are happy and ſafe; their Head and Huſband, their Lord and King is upon the throne: the militant church, the fighting remnant, are in no great danger while he hath the government. Perhaps, there are ſome here, like Eli, whoſe *hearts are trembling for the ark of God*, and the work of God at this day, when ſo many *axes and hammers* are *lifted up againſt the carved work* of the doctrine, worſhip, diſcipline, and government of God's houſe: but let this be matter of joy

to

to their hearts, that the Lamb is in the midſt of the throne; and therefore, as he *rules in Jacob to the ends of the earth*, and over-rules all damage done to his houſe, ſo he will make it appear in the iſſue, that, according to his word, *Upon all the glory there ſhall be a defence*, Iſa. iv. 5.

3. Hence we may learn, that the *enemies of Chriſt* may have a *quaking heart*, ſince the Lamb, whom they deſpiſe, is in the midſt of the throne. His Father, that ſet him on the throne, hath ſaid, Pſal. lxxxix. 23. *I will beat down his foes before his face, and plague them that hate him. The heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing; the kings of the earth ſet themſelves, and the rulers take counſel againſt the Lord and his Anointed, ſaying, Let us break their bands, and caſt their cords from us. But he that ſits in heaven ſhall laugh, the Lord ſhall have them in deriſion:* having *ſet* his *King upon* his *holy hill of Zion*, he will *break them in pieces with a rod of iron, and ſhall daſh them in pieces like a potter's veſſel*, Pſal. ii. 1,—9. *The Lord reigns, let the people tremble; he dwells between the cherubims, let the earth be moved*, Pſal. xlix. 1. The Lamb being in the midſt of the throne, is matter of terror to the enemies of his glory; for he ſits upon the throne of power, and the Lamb will be a Lion to tear them in pieces.

4. Hence we may learn, that there is a *ſure foundation* laid for the faith and hope of *life* and *juſtification* by the blood of the Lamb. Since the Lamb is in the midſt of the throne, the throne of grace is a door of hope; and, that our hearts may be raiſed and lifted up to lively hope, the Lamb that was ſlain is raiſed and lifted up to the throne. Did he riſe again for your juſtification? and does his reſurrection ſeal upon our conſciences the ſufficiency of his death, and the acceptableneſs of his righteouſneſs unto God? Much more may our faith and hope be confirmed herein, that he is exalted to the midſt of the throne; for his Father had never put ſo much honour upon him, had he not been infinitely well-pleaſed and ſatisfied with his obedience unto the death. We may now read the dream that Jacob had at Bethel, Gen. xxviii. 12. *Behold, a ladder ſet upon the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven:* the ladder is the Lamb; the foot of the Ladder was fixt in the midſt of the earth when he was here in a humbled eſtate; and now the top of the ladder is fixed in the midſt of the throne: all the rounds of it are completed, that we may aſcend by this way from earth to heaven.

5. Hence we may learn, what good reaſon there is for having a *high eſteem of Chriſt*, ſince God hath ſo highly exalted him, to the very midſt of the throne. O believer, ſhould not Chriſt be high in our valuation, when God hath ſet him ſo high! No wonder then that it is ſaid, *If any man love not our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, let him be* ANATHEMA MARAN-ATHA; that is, *accurſed until our Lord come*, 1 Cor. xvi. 22. Wo will be to them that will not put honour upon him, whom God the Father put ſo much honour upon, and that as our Redeemer and kinſman!

6. Hence learn, that the throne of God needs not be *terrible* untous, ſince the Lamb, the meek Lamb, is in the midſt of the throne; ſinners need not fear to go to the throne of God as long as the Lamb is there. If unbelief look toward the throne, it views it only as it is the *throne of God*, and ſo fills the ſoul with ſlaviſh fear, and frightful apprehenſions: but true faith views it as the *throne of God and of the Lamb*; and the view of the Lamb in the midſt of the throne, raiſes ſome joy, hope, and pleaſure in the midſt of the heart. Why, there is meekneſs as well as majeſty; grace, as well as grandeur, about the throne, becauſe the Lamb is there.

7. Hence we may learn what ground there is to expect the great God to be *preſent in the midſt of us this day*, becauſe the Lamb is in the midſt of the throne. We would have no ground to expect that God would be with us on the foot-ſtool, if Chriſt were not with God upon the throne. Chriſt promiſed, upon his aſcending to the throne, that he would be with his people, ſaying, *Lo, I am with you always*, Mat. xxviii. 20. He promiſed, when he went up to the throne, he would ſend down his Spirit; *If I go away, I will ſend him*, John xvi. 8. Therefore, if he be, by his Spirit, in the midſt of us this day, it is becauſe he is in the midſt of the throne. It is eaſy for him to be both *ſitting glorioufly in the midſt of the throne*, and at the ſame time *walking graciouſly in the midſt of the golden candleſticks*, Rev. ii. 1. He is both the bleſt Λόγος, the *Word of God;* and the bleſt IMMANUEL, *God with us*. The *ſeven ſpirits* are ſaid to be *before the throne*. The Spirit of God is one, but his gifts, operations, and influences are various: and the Lamb, that is in the midſt of the throne, hath the Spirit to give; and, having ſaid that *he will ſend him*, O let us look to the throne, and thence expect the Spirit according to his word.

8. Hence we may learn what is the mark of a *worthy communicant*, namely, if he be a true believer of this doctrine, that the Lamb is in the midſt of the throne. *Let a man examine himſelf* upon this, *and ſo let him eat*. I aſk not if you ſay you believe, or think you believe; but I call and injoin you to try if you truly believe that the Lamb is in the midſt of the throne. For helping you to this ſearch, you may conſider two things, namely, what *view* you have of this turth, and what *virtue* you find in it.

(1.) What *view* have you of this truth? If you truly believe it, then you view it with *approbation*. Is your heart ſatisfied that the Lamb is in the midſt of the throne? Do you cordially approve of the Father's ſetting him ſo high? Did it ever fill your heart with joy and ſatisfaction, and with ſome ſecret pleaſure and exultation, that God hath put ſuch honour upon Jeſus? And have you thus received this truth in the love of it, and in the ſweetneſs of it? O did ever your heart leap, as it were, within you, to think that the throne of God is alſo the throne of the Lamb, and ſo a throne open to you to come boldly unto by the blood of the Lamb, that encircles the throne like a rainbow? How does your heart ſtand affected to this truth? *With the heart man believes unto righteouſneſs*, Rom. x. 10.

(2.) What *virtue* have you found in this truth for leading you to enthrone Chriſt, as the Father hath done? As the Father hath ſet the Lamb in the midſt of the throne of glory; ſo, have you ſet him in the midſt of the throne of your *heart?* Is he, that is in the midſt of the throne of God, in the midſt of the throne with you? Surely, *to them that believe he is precious*, [or, an *honour*,] as the word may be read, 1 Pet. ii. 7. And they put this honour upon him, even to ſet him in the midſt of the throne. O my dear friends, let me tell you, that by this you may try and *examine yourſelf*, and *prove your ownſelf, whether Chriſt*

Christ be in you: if he be in you at all, he will be in the midst of the throne. You are not fit for a communion-table, and at your peril be it if you go, and yet some other thing than Christ hath the throne of your heart: if *self* be in the midst of the throne, if the *world* be in the midst of the throne, if your *lusts* be in the midst of the throne, Christ is not in you. It is true, the heart of the believer, while here, is not quite free of sin, and self, and the world: they may fight for the throne, and many times they may be seen to win the throne of their heart; but, sure I am, they never got peaceable possession of the throne of their heart. The believer is free from *peace* with sin, though he is never free from *war* with sin in this world: his league with it is broken, he can never consent to its rule and government any more; and hence, whenever sin usurps the throne, like Adonijah, then the believer enters his protest against it before the King of kings, saying, *Lord, hast thou not said, that Solomon shall reign?* Hast thou not promised, that *grace shall reign*, and that *sin shall not have dominion?* O down, down with this usurper; and let Christ have his own proper room and place, which is the midst of the throne. Hath virtue come from the throne of the Lamb to enable you to enthrone Christ in the midst of your heart? Hath he the throne of your esteem, the throne of your delight, the throne of your affection? Felt you ever any virtue coming down from the throne of Christ, to dethrone sin, and to draw your heart up to the throne of God? Did you ever find so much grace descending from the throne, as to make your hearts ascend to the throne? And is it the view of the Lamb's being there, that fires your heart, and makes it flame upward to the very midst of the throne where he is? Again,

Lastly, Hence we may learn the *duty* of sinners that hear this doctrine of the Lamb's being in the midst of the throne. I think it is your duty, yea, sure I am, it is your duty, to come and *see* the Lamb in the midst of the throne, to come and *match* with the Lamb, and then to the *marriage-supper* of the Lamb.

(1.) It is your duty to come and *see* this great sight, the *Lamb* that is in the midst of the throne. If the question be, *Where is the Lamb?* The answer is, In the midst of the throne. But, if the question again be, *Where is the throne, that we may see it, and the Lamb in the midst of it?* We answer, God's throne of *glory* is properly in heaven; but his throne of *grace* is really on earth, as well as in heaven; it is erected in the church, and in this gospel-dispensation, declaring that *God is in Christ reconciling the world to himself.* A God in Christ is a throne of grace every where, and *a glorious throne every where is the place of our sanctuary*, Jer. xvii. 12. Hence, when the apostle says, *Let us come boldly to the throne*, he does not mean *locally* climbing up to heaven, but *believingly* approaching to God in Christ, as held forth in the gospel of his grace. Why then, as Christ is in the midst of the throne, so the throne is in the midst of this house.

QUEST. *What will we see, if we come and see the Lamb in the midst of the throne?*

ANSW. You will see that the throne of God is *patent* to sinners, because the Lamb is there; and that there is *access with boldness* from all quarters, at every side of the throne, because the Lamb is in the midst of it. The blood of the Lamb encircles the throne, and sprinkles the mercy-seat; and therefore, guilty sinners may come, through this guilt-expiating blood. Here you will see the most dreadful attributes of God divested of all their dread and terror, and appearing amiable. Infinite holiness and infinite justice are awful attributes, and both are upon the throne of God, but the Lamb is in the midst of them: holiness is gratified, justice is satisfied, every attribute is glorified; *Mercy and truth meet together, righteousness and peace kiss each other*, and all harmoniously conspire, because the Lamb is in the midst of them. The mildest attribute would be dreadful to sinners, if the Lamb were not in the midst of them; but the most terrible attributes are amiable and lovely, when you see the Lamb in the midst of them.

Here you will see the most terrible dispensation of God *smilling* in your face, when you see the Lamb in the midst of them; for, though *clouds and darkness are round about him*, yet *righteousness and judgment are the habitations of his throne.* He that *rides in heaven by his name* JAH, and *makes the clouds his chariots*, as he sits in the midst of his throne; so he sits in the midst of the cloudy and dark dispensations of our day, to order and over-rule. Black clouds are over the church of Scotland, and the government, as it is in the hands of men, is all in disorder and confusion, and turned upside-down*; but, if you see the Lamb in the midst of these dispensations, you will see that the *government is upon his shoulders*; and that not only *justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne*, but that *justice and judgment* sit with *mercy and grace*; and God hath some glorious design on foot, however terrible to his enemies, yet merciful to all the followers of the Lamb.

In a word, here you will see all the *glory of God*, when you see the Lamb in the midst of the throne. O the throne of glory is a throne of grace, because the Lamb is there; the throne of justice is a throne of mercy, because the Lamb is there; the throne of infinite holiness is accessible by guilty sinners, because the Lamb is there. O come and see.

(2.) It is your duty to come and *match* with the Lamb. O sinner, who hath been married to the devil hitherto, married to your lusts, married to the world; O man, woman, whether old or young, will you come and be *the bride, the Lamb's wife?* as the word is, Rev. xix. 7. Let none dare to go to the marriage-supper of the Lamb, to the communion-table, until once they have given their heart and hand to the Son of God, and joined in marriage with the Lamb; and, O may this be a marriage-day. It is a great part of our work to court a bride for the Lamb, and then to lead her to the table; and, O may drawing power come from the throne, to draw out many hearts after him! O sinner, the Son of God, the Lamb of God, is come to court your heart, saying, *My son, give me thy heart*; and he is come to offer

* Matters in the church, at this time, had a very dismal aspect; errors of the most pernicious consequence abounding; impieties of the grossest nature prevailing; incroachments upon the Lord's heritage, of the most grievous kind, taking place; as observed above, p. 149, 322, 454, 631.: And yet the sword of discipline drawn forth with more keeness against those who faithfully testified against these evils, than against the authors, perpetrators, and promoters of them; as may be seen, p. 661.

himself

himself to thee, man; to thee, woman, saying, *Behold me, behold me: come to me, that you may have life.* What for a match would you have? Would you be well married, and happy in a husband to all eternity?

1. Are you for an *honourable* match, a *royal* match? O here is the *King of kings*, the *Lamb in the midst of the throne; The head of all principalities and powers.*

2. Are you for a *rich* and *oppulent* match? Here is the Lamb in the midst of the throne, in whom are hid *unsearchable riches*, and *all the fulness of the Godhead;* everlasting treasures of grace and glory.

3. Are you for a *bountiful* match? O there is none like the Lamb in the midst of the throne for a generous Spirit, willing and ready to lay out all his riches, that *out of his fulness* ye may *receive, and grace for grace.*

4. Are you for a *beautiful* match? Behold the Lamb in the midst of the throne, the *King in his beauty;* he is *white and ruddy*, and *altogether lovely:* no wonder, for he is the *brightness of his Father's glory;* all the glory of God shines in his face. Some of God's glory shines in the works of creation, the sun, moon, and stars; some of it in the works of providence: but all the glory of God is here. He is the temple of God, and *there doth beauty shine*, Psal. xcvi. 6.

5. Are you for a *loving*, as well as a lovely match? Behold, the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne is a mirror of love, without all dimension: *O the height and depth, the length and breadth of his love!* He loved and prayed for his enemies that murdered him; and how then must he love his friends that will match with him? Again,

6. Are you for a *beloved* match, who is valued and esteemed of all whose love and esteem is worth the regarding? O! the Lamb in the midst of the throne is beloved of all the holy angels, they admire and adore him; he is beloved of all the saints in heaven and earth; they say, *This is our Beloved;* he is beloved of God the Father, who says, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased:* he is hated of none but the devil and his wicked crew.

7. In a word, are you for an *immortal* match? Well, here is the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne; he lives for ever and ever: *I am he that was dead, and am alive; and behold, I live for evermore.* The best friends here in this world are mortal, and may leave you in a moment; but the Lamb is the *King eternal, immortal:* he lives for ever, and he can make you live for ever and ever. O mortal worms, whose bodies will be laid in the dust in a few days or hours, and who have nothing but a thin wall of flesh between you and eternity; are ye for a match that can abundantly jointure you for another world, and portion you for eternity? Is this a despicable bargain? Are your lusts and idols, and perishing vanities of a world, a better bargain? Nay, you dare not say it for your life. This offer of Christ, accept or reject it as you will, is worth ten thousand worlds.

8. Are you for a match that can pay all your debt to law and justice, that can supply all your wants, that can heal all your diseases, that can bear all your burdens, sanctify all your crosses, sweeten all your afflictions, subdue all your enemies, manage all your concerns, and make you happy for ever? Then come and match with the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne: a greater offer cannot be made to you than this most glorious King, upon the most glorious throne. O great proposal! Wonder men and angels, at this gospel-offer! Be astonished, O heavens and earth! If such a matchless match be offered and rejected, all the angels and saints that are about his throne will cry, *Shame upon you for ever,* that reject and refuse such a bargain; and we must say, AMEN; everlasting shame must be upon you. What was the Gadarenes blasphemy, but their preferring their swine to our Lord Jesus Christ, when he was upon the earth, and not yet upon the throne? But greater is your blasphemy, O sinner, if you prefer your swinish lusts to our glorious Lord, now exalted to the throne. What! prefer the swine, that are in the midst of the dunghil, to the Lamb in the midst of the throne! O base, brutish, mad, and deviliſh blasphemy.

I hope, by this time, there are none hearing me, but are so far self-convicted, that they see they must condemn themselves if they reject such an offer as is made to them; and therefore, I take witness upon it, that when the Lamb, that is now in the midst of the throne of grace, will be the Lamb in the midst of the throne of judgment at the last day, ye must own that the sentence of condemnation, that shall be then past against you, will be just and righteous, if you stand to your refusal: therefore, though this should be a rejected offer to-day yet it shall redound to the honour of the Lamb at the great day, insomuch, that the condemnation of you will be the justification of him; your own consciences witness, that he will be *just when* he *speaks, and clear when* he *judges* and adjudges you to hell and damnation, because of your neglecting the great salvation, and rejecting the offer of the great Saviour, the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne. By way of anticipation, the tribunal is now erected before-hand in your bosom, where God's deputy, conscience, sits as the judge; and there the Lamb is assoylled as free of your blood, and the sentence comes forth, that your blood is upon your own head. Well, I hope your judgment is persuaded of this, that such an offer is made to you, as is worthy of all acceptation: but, O Sirs, since the judgment may be informed and gained, while yet the heart is not engaged; therefore, though faith come by hearing what a worthy Lamb is offered to you, yet bare hearing will not do without the heart-drawing power of the Spirit which is before the throne: and therefore, this being the *pure crystal river*, that *proceeds out of the throne of God and of the Lamb*, Rev. xxii. 32. that this river of drawing influences of the Spirit may run down among you, I will put the best rope in your hand that I know for bringing down this blessing; it is even the Lamb's own sweet promise, John xii. 32. *And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men after me.* Where observe, 1. The *persons* concerned. 2. The *promise.* And, 3. The *condition* of it.

[1.] The *persons* concerned, *all men.* There is an *All* among sinful men, that Christ the second Adam hath to draw to him; these were *given of the Father* to him, and they *shall come*, John vi. 37. Yea, these he *must bring* to him, John x. 16. He must draw them, and they shall hear his voice. But, lest any should hereupon say, Perhaps I am not among the number of the second

Adam's

Adam's *all*, that he is to draw; perhaps I am excluded by the ſecret council, or hidden decree of God from all eternity. Therefore, I will tell you what may ſatisfy you fully upon this point, that the Lamb, that is now in the midſt of his Father's throne, was in the midſt of his Father's counſels from all eternity; the Lamb was at that council-table: therefore, let not the thoughts of the eternal decree be terrible and dreadful to you; for the Lamb was upon the concert, and therefore nothing paſt at that council to the prejudice of any poor ſinner, that would venture his ſoul upon the blood of the Lamb. It was concerted there, that the ground and object of faith ſhould be no hidden counſel, no paſt decree, but a preſent openly declared truth; namely, that the *Lamb is in the midſt of the throne;* and that *whoſoever will might come to him*; and *him that comes, he will in no wiſe caſt out:* and, therefore, if you venture your life and ſalvation upon the Lamb that is at preſent upon the throne of grace, you have nothing either paſt or future to fear; neither any paſt decree, or any future wrath: and now, by this free offer of Chriſt to you all, God is accompliſhing his glorious decree, that you may be for ever happy upon your acceptance, or for ever inexcuſeable upon your refuſal.

[2.] The *promiſe*, which is, *I will deaw all men unto me.* In caſe any ſhould ſay, There is indeed a free offer, and a good bargain; but I have a reluctant as well as a deceitful heart; I cannot embrace the offer, nor bring up my heart to cloſe with Chriſt, and make up the match. Why, here is the encouraging promiſe, *I will draw;* that is, I will ſend the Spirit to draw out your heart, to make it riſe and mount, like a flame, towards the throne, where the Lamb ſits. But, if I do not find this drawing power, what encouragement have I to look for it? Why, obſerve,

[3.] The *condition* of this promiſe, *If I be lift up from the earth.* Not an uncertain condition, depending upon us, but a ſure condition, depending upon himſelf: *If I be lifted up*, or *when I am lifted up.* Now, the condition is performed; Chriſt was not only lifted up upon the croſs, but now he is lifted up to the throne. Now, Chriſt ſaid, John xvi. 8. *If I go to the Father, I will ſend the Spirit;* if I go to the throne, I will ſend down the Spirit in his drawing influences. And now, may you not plead, "Lord, the condition is performed, the time is come, thou art lift up, thou art upon the throne; therefore, let the cryſtal river run down out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb?" Is this the language of your heart and ſoul? Lord, draw, draw; thou that art the Lamb in the midſt of the throne, draw my heart to thee, according to thy word. Is your heart burning or beating, ſaying, "O I am the blackeſt, the vileſt ſinner that ever matched with ſuch a glorious One; but yet I find my heart beating and burning within me, ſaying, O to be drawn; O to have the Lamb that is in the midſt of the throne to erect his throne in the midſt of my heart, and to rule there in the midſt of his enemies; and to be *all in all* to me; for *wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification*, and *redemption*, to me?" Why then, we may ſay, your heart is the throne, and the Lamb is in the midſt of the throne. And, if the drawing power of his Spirit hath made up the match between him and you, we are warranted to lead you next to the marriage-ſupper, where *the Lamb that is in the midſt of the throne ſhall feed you.*

A Word at the Cloſe of the SOLEMNITY *on the Monday.*

BEFORE you go, I ſhall conclude this ſolemn work in two words, one directed to the *enemies* of the Lamb, and another to the *lovers* of the Lamb in the midſt of the throne.

Firſt, To you who are *enemies* to him. If the Lamb be in the midſt of the throne, then let ſinners *ſtoop* to him; O ſink down at his feet, and be content to be ruled by him: if you be ruled by your own luſts, and by your ſins, you put Chriſt out of his throne in effect, and put your luſts in his room. O ſinner, conſider how you croſs and contradict the great God by this means: he hath ſaid of Chriſt, Pſal. ii. 6. *I have ſet my King upon mine holy hill;* I have ſet him in the midſt of the throne: and, are you ſaying to your luſts, *Be ye king over me?* Man, will you live in ſin, and ſin againſt him that is in the midſt of God's throne? If a thief cut a purſe when the judge is upon the bench, and the ſentence ready to paſs againſt him, he is worthy to be hanged: Chriſt is on the bench, in the act of judgment; O man, beware of ſinning againſt him: be afraid, O ye that are enemies to the Lamb, *Enemies in your minds by wicked works: It is hard for you to kick againſt the pricks:* Can you *harden yourſelf againſt God, and proſper?* Nay, you ſhall be ſo far from proſpering in this way, that the Lamb in the midſt of the throne hath a *rod of iron, to break and daſh you to pieces. Conſider this, ye that forget God.* The Lamb will in a little be a lion, to *tear you to pieces, when there ſhall be none to deliver.* The Lamb is yet upon the throne of grace, inviting you; but it may be this is the laſt invitation you ſhall have, till you ſee him upon a judgment-ſeat: and what ſhall be the effect of theſe goſpel-offers ye have enjoyed? Theſe ſolemn feaſts will not always laſt, and perhaps death will daſh you down to the duſt before another occaſion of this ſort. Can ye find in your heart to let Chriſt go, and this occaſion over, without getting any good of him? Are you content that ſalvation hath come ſo near you, and you loſe it for ever? If not, O will ye take the firſt opportunity of retiring to ſome corner, and crying to the Lamb in the midſt of the throne, to come and draw you, and back theſe precious means with his powerful bleſſing! He that is in the midſt of the throne hath been ſetting his throne in the midſt of Dunfermline, and ſaying, *Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men!* O let him not lift his tent till you be taken in!

Again, O *crown* him King whom the Father hath crowned! O might this be his coronation-day! A day of eſpouſals with the Lamb is his coronation-day: *Go forth, O ye daughters of Jeruſalem, and behold king Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his eſpouſals, and in the day of the gladneſs of his heart*, Song iii. 11. Happy day, if you could go away, ſaying, Such a day, at the communion of Dunfermline, Chriſt was crowned King; I beheld King Jeſus with the crown wherewith his Father crowned him, and ſaw that the Father ſet him

him in the midſt of the throne, and I helped to put the crown upon his head; for, through grace, I ſet him in the midſt of the throne of my heart, and crowned him King there: I found in my heart to dethrone ſin, and enthrone Chriſt. O is Chriſt crowned King here! Hath no virtue come from the throne to draw my heart, as the adamant draws the iron? The clucking of the hen makes the chickens to run; goſpel-preaching is the voice of the Lord Jeſus; and much of this you have had theſe days bygone. O have you run under his wings? See what Chriſt ſays to Jeruſalem, Matth. xxiii. 37, 38. *O Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your houſe is left unto you deſolate!* May we hope that God will not yet leave Scotland deſolate, but that Chriſt will be crowned King in the church of Scotland? Though he be robbed of his royalties, and notwithſtanding of all unwarrantable Acts that tend to the hurt of his government, he is in the midſt of the throne.

2dly, To you that are the *lovers* of the Lamb, I offer firſt a word of comfort, and then a word of advice.

[1.] A word of *comfort*. Surely, *Though the earth ſhould be removed, and the mountains be caſt into the midſt of the ſea;* though external governments ſhould be diſſolved and overturned, yet, while the Lamb is upon the throne, all ſhall be ruled to advantage unto all the lovers of the Lamb. What though ye ſhould ſee the miniſters of Chriſt *ſuſpended* † or *depoſed* for adhering to the teſtimony of Chriſt, and endeavouring to keep a good conſcience in an evil day? Though they ſhould be reproached and perſecuted, yet ſtill *there is a river, the ſtreams whereof make glad the city of God:* and ſtill there is this great ground of comfort, that the Lamb is in the midſt of the throne, and the cryſtal river proceeds from the throne of God and of the Lamb: and upon this throne the Lamb rules righteouſly and mercifully, though men rule never ſo unjuſtly and cruelly; and in a little there will be an end of man's rule and government, but the Lamb's dominion is for ever and ever. God the Father hath proclaimed that he is the everlaſting King, ſaying, *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.* The followers of the Lamb have unſpeakable ground of comfort in Chriſt, whatever trouble they have in the world; *In the world you ſhall have tribulation, but in me you ſhall have peace, be of good chear; I have overcome the world,* and I am now upon the throne; and ye at laſt ſhall overcome, and ſit down with me on my throne.

1. Here is comfort againſt *deſertion*. Though the Lord may hide himſelf, and ſeem to be far away, yet ſtill it is food to your faith, that the Lamb is in the midſt of the throne; and, as he never deſerts the throne, ſo he will *never leave you, nor forſake you:* Why? *The promiſes are all Yea and Amen in him* who is ever upon the throne, to make out his word.

2. Here is comfort againſt the *croſs*. While you have the croſs upon your back, you may keep the throne in your eye, and you may be ſure of pity and favour thence, becauſe the Lamb is there, who went from the croſs to the throne.

3. Here is comfort againſt the *power of ſin, corruption*, and *ſpiritual enemies*, be they never ſo powerful: for the Lamb is upon the throne of power, and *all power in heaven and earth is given to* him; and he is concerned, in honour, to deſtroy theſe enemies.

4. Here is comfort againſt *want* and *weakneſs*. Your ſtrength lies in the Lamb, and your ſpiritual proviſion flows only from him.

5. Here is comfort againſt *church-tyranny*. Times have been, when there was tyranny in the ſtate over the conſciences of men; theſe were reckoned very evil days: but, when there is tyranny in the church over the conſciences of men, it is in many reſpects worſe: for church-perſecution is a kind of blaſphemy; it is in the name of God to perſecute the people of God. But yet here is comfort in this caſe, that church-tyranny cannot keep the throne; *Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowſhip with thee, which frameth miſchief by a law?* No, no: *They gather themſelves together againſt the ſoul of the righteous, and condemn the innocent blood,* Pſal. xciv. 20, 21. The Lamb will keep the midſt of the throne, and tread down his enemies in due time.

What would make a church-government glorious and eminent? When the Lamb is kept in the midſt of the throne, and when his ſpiritual kingdom is kept diſtinct from the temporal kingdoms of this world. The government of the church is quite miſmanaged when the Lamb is put out of the throne, and temporal heritages are made the foundation of ſpiritual privileges: As for example, when in the choice of paſtors to any congregation, which is a ſpiritual privilege relating to immortal ſouls, the heritors of this earth, the heirs of a little yellow duſt, have ſuch a privilege and preference given

† Alluding to the conduct of the Aſſembly and Commiſſion, in the proſecution carrying on at this time againſt Mr. EBENEZER ERSKINE, and his adherents. As this affair is frequently hinted at, it may not be improper here briefly to lay the matter open.—— The Church, at this time, was not only in imminent danger of being over-run with a pernicious ſcheme of Arian, Socinian, and Arminian doctrines, as formerly noticed, p. 70, 149, 322, 454.; but likewiſe of being peſted with a corrupt, erroneous, and time-ſerving miniſtry, for whom a wide door had been opened by ſeveral violent ſettlements on reclaiming congregations: The numbers of legal ſermons and dry moral harangues too evidently evinced the truth of it; and the eager diſpoſition appearing in many to graſp at Preſentations, and the Act of Aſſembly 1732. in favours of them, (obſerved above, p. 631, 648.) put the fact beyond all diſpute. This being the melancholy ſituation of matters at this time, Mr. EBENEZER ERSKINE, miniſter at Striling, thought it his duty, in a ſermon at the opening of the Synod of Perth and Stirling, at Perth, Oct. 10th 1732. to teſtify plainly againſt ſome of the prevailing evils of the times, particularly againſt the Act of Aſſembly 1732. and the proceedings of the Judicatories, in the ſettlement of miniſters over reclaiming and diſſenting congregations. This diſcourſe ſo galled and tormented ſome of the miniſters then preſent, that they puſhed and obtained of the Synod, an appointment of a Committee to conſider the particulars in the ſermon, ſaid to give offence. The expreſſions were condeſcended on, and anſwers given to them by Mr. Erſkine. The Synod, after ſpending three days on this affair, found Mr Erſkine *cenſurable*, and reſolved to *rebuke* him; from which ſeveral miniſters and elders *diſſented:* and Mr. Erſkine and Mr. Fiſher *proteſted*, and appealed to the Aſſembly 1733.—The Aſſembly having conſidered the Appeal, approved of the proceedings of the Synod, and appointed him to be *rebuked* and *admoniſhed* by the Moderator; though neither Synod nor Aſſembly had ſhown his doctrine to be contrary to the word of God and our Standards. Mr. Erſkine proteſted againſt this deed; and his Proteſtation was adhered to by Meſſrs. Wilſon, Moncrieff, and Fiſher. The Aſſembly ordered the foreſaid Miniſters to appear before the Commiſſion in Auguſt; and impowered the Commiſſion to ſuſpend them, if they did not withdraw their Proteſtation, and profeſs their ſorrow. They appeared before the Commiſſion in Auguſt, and were *ſuſpended* by them. The Commiſſion in Nov. 16. *looſed their Relation to their reſpective charges*, and declared them to be no *longer Miniſters of this Church*. The Aſſembly 1740, paſſed the ſentence of *Depoſition* againſt them, and others who adhered to them, and joined with them: and all this for their ſteadfaſt adherence to their principles, and miniſterial fidelity, in *ſetting the trumpet to their mouth*, and *telling the houſe of Jacob their ſins, and Iſrael their tranſgreſſions!* —— Theſe who incline to ſee more of this matter may peruſe Mr. Erſkine's printed Sermon, which was the foundation of this proceſs, together with the *State of the Proceſs*, and other public papers emitted to the world.

them by virtue of their temporal inheritance, as if they were *lords over the consciences of men*, and *lords over God's heritage*: surely their secular advantage in the world can intitle them to no spiritual privilege in the house of God, no more than an earthly inheritance can intitle them to heaven: but to give them a dominion over the souls of men in this matter, is a practical dethroning of the Lamb from the midst of the throne. Church-officers themselves are discharged to usurp such a dominion as to be *lords over God's heritage*: it is unlawful for them to obtrude pastors upon a Christian people without their consent; far less have they power to put such a dominion over mens consciences into the hands of earthly superiors. How can they give what they have not themselves *? In spiritual matters we are to own no man *lord*, but he that is *Lord of lords*, the *Lamb that is in the midst of the throne*. Church-government is quite overturned, when the throne of Christ's spiritual kingdom is possest by any other in this world but only the Lamb.

6. Here is comfort against *death*. Death shall not reign, because the *Lamb is in the midst of the throne*, and *liveth for ever and ever*, and *hath the keys of hell and of death*; and therefore death shall be swallowed up in victory.

7. Here is comfort against the fear of *judgment*; that awful day needs be no terror to the lovers of the Lamb, because, when the fiery tribunal will be erected, the Lamb will be in the midst of the throne; and the friends of the Lamb will be received into his bosom, while all his enemies will stand trembling before his throne.

8. Here is comfort in the view of a *long eternity*; that the Lamb, that is for ever in the *midst of the throne*, will for ever *feed you*, and *lead you unto living fountains of waters*, and *wipe away all tears from your eyes*. O! who can tell the happiness of the higher house, the glorious feeding and leading you shall have there, the everlasting and ever-living fountain of divine consolation, wherewith ye shall for ever be refreshed! The fountain is God, and his glorious attributes; Christ, and his inexhaustible fulness; the Spirit, and his everlasting consolation; a glorious Trinity: God, who is now a promising God, will then be a performing God. Who can tell the sweetness of that blessing, his *wiping away all tears from your eyes?* He that hath a bottle for your tears now, hath a napkin to wipe them all away then; for, *Ye shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away*.

Secondly, I offer a word of *advice* to you. O Sirs, if the Lamb be in the midst of the throne,

1. Then be *quiet* amidst all the mal-administrations of men, amidst all the mismanagements of church-men and church-judicatories; because, though men cannot be justified in their church-ruining projects, yet the Lamb being in the midst of the throne, hath a just, holy, and sovereign hand in ordering these evils, when he hath a controversy to plead with us. Let us see the hand of God in leaving men to themselves, to rob the church and people of God of their rights and Reformation-privileges. What was the hand of Pilate against Christ, the cruellest act that ever was done? Why, it was the hand of God himself: for it is said, when Pilate spake, saying, *Dost thou not know that I have power to crucify thee, or to set thee at liberty?* Christ answered, *Thou couldst have no power except it were given thee of my Father*. Even so say I, church-men or church-judicatories, courts or assemblies, could have no power to break down any of the carved work of Reformation; no power to harm the liberties of God's people in chusing their pastors; no power to obtrude ministers on Christian congregations, willing to chuse faithful pastors; no power to pass sentence against such as oppose that speat of defection, except it were given them of our Father; and therefore, let us be quiet and sober: we have some other thing ado than to break out in a passionate resentment against poor mortal men; the sinful instruments of the church's confusion and disorder. When Shimei railed upon David, *Let him alone*, says David, *may be the Lord hath bidden him*. The Lord, for our trial and chastisement, perhaps, hath required some in our day, Go and tread upon the rights of these people; go and reproach and persecute, suspend and despose these ministers, for keeping a good conscience in an evil time: I say, It may be the Lord hath bidden; yea, *Is there evil in the city, and the Lord hath not done it?* Is there evil in the church, and the Lord hath not done it? No, no: Well, what of that? This does not justify evil instruments, no; but it says, we are to be sober, and lay our hand upon our mouth, and *bear the indignation of the Lord, because we have sinned against him*: We are to be *dumb*, and not to *open our mouth, because he does it*. The Lamb in the midst of the throne hath the government upon his shoulders, and he is righteously ordering and over-ruling these matters for the profitable trial of his people, and the glorious praise of his name in the issue: *The wrath of man shall praise thee, and the remainder of his wrath wilt thou restrain*. The Lord hath his own time and way of restraining his enemies, and his own time and way of reforming his church; and when the *Lord shall appear in his glory*, he *will build up Zion*. Sometimes he sees fit to appear in his wrath, and then he lets out the wrath of man, the enmity of man, to the breaking down of Zion, and of his carved work: but there is another time, when he sees fit to appear in his glory, and then to restrain the wrath of man, and reform his church. And since he is appearing in his wrath in our day, letting out the reins of man's wrath, to the ruining of Reformation-work; O be sober and humble; and depend upon him as the Lamb in the midst of the throne, who hath the reins in his hand, to let them out, or take them in, as he pleases. Instruments are but his sword, his hand, by which he does as he pleases, Psal. xvii. 13, 14. *Deliver my soul from the wicked, from men which are thy hand, O Lord*. Think not then the government is out of Christ's hand, when men are doing many sad things, and giving many heavy blows to the work of God; No, no: men are but his hand; and it is the hand of God that justly and righteously is lying heavy upon his people. Look above men then; you have not to do with them; there is a turn of matters just as he is pleased to turn his hand; the Lamb is in the midst of the throne, and in the midst of heavy clouds hanging over Scotland; therefore look to him, that he may turn away his wrath; Psal. ii. 12. *Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled*

* Patronage has always been a great grievance to the church, and was carried on at this time with a very high hand, though contrary to Scripture, Reason, our Standards, and Acts of the church; particularly Act of Assembly at Glasgow 1638. as observed, p. 631, 648.

but

but a little: bleſſed are all they that put their truſt in him. Again,

2. If it is only the Lamb that is in the midſt of the throne, O then be *tender* of thoſe that are followers of the Lamb, while they are yet upon the footſtool, and not yet ſet down with Chriſt upon his throne. They are in danger in an evil day, wherein they are called to give teſtimony againſt the evils and corruptions of the day, to go aſide to ſome extreme or other. There are many thoughts of heart, and many needleſs words among people at preſent about the manner of teſtifying. Some are accuſed as if they were too far *forward*; others are accuſed as if they were too far *behind*, in their teſtimony. Well, not to meddle with miſtakes people may be under, it may be both theſe are true: for, who can ſay, I am clean, and do not err toward the right or left-hand, when they would appear for Chriſt and his cauſe? But, O be tender of the militant followers of Chriſt. I hope you will remember, that it is only the Lamb that is able to keep the midſt of the throne; and, I hope, we are all willing to ſubſcribe to this, that this honour only belongs to him, that he was able to keep the midſt of the way to the throne, without going to one ſide or other: none but himſelf was ever able to do ſo; let him alone have all the glory.

3. Let me ſay to you that have become the bride, the Lamb's wife, If the Lamb be in the midſt of the throne, O then ſee that ye *frequent* the throne. What more inviting argument than this can there be, that the Lamb is in the midſt of it? And the farther forward you approach ſo, much the better. Never reſt till you be in the midſt of the throne, where the Lamb is. You may have boldneſs to go as far as the Lamb goes; and you will find this the moſt pleaſant exerciſe in the world, and the moſt profitable alſo: for grace and mercy is about the throne of grace; it is a mercy-ſeat, becauſe the Lamb is there.

4. O believer, if the Lamb be in the midſt of the throne, even the Lamb, your Head, your Huſband, ſee that you *live upon him by faith*; let the Lamb be your feeder, and the Lamb your food every day: and beware you do not diſgrace your honourable Huſband. Are you married to the Lamb in the midſt of the throne? We read that Bathſheba ſaid to her ſon, Prov. xxxi. 4. *It is not for a king, O Lemuel, it is not for a king to drink wine, nor for princes to drink ſtrong drink.* So it is not for believers in Chriſt to drink and tipple, to ſwear and cheat; the graceleſs world do ſo. But, O believer, have you been at a communion-table? Hath the Lord graced and honoured you with marriage to the Lamb in the midſt of the throne? Do not diſgrace yourſelf; it is below your rank: ſee that you live as becomes theſe that are matched and married to the *Prince of the kings of the earth.*

I remember ſome years ago, after certain diſputing in the church about the doctrine of the goſpel, we had a ſolemnity here, on which occaſion I was led to ſpeak of the *ſubſtance* of GOSPEL-DOCTRINE, *Chriſt given of God to be a covenant of the people* †; and now I am obliged to remark, That after ſome contendings, or rather in the midſt of ſome contendings in the church about the government of his houſe, I have been led, without any deſign in me, but only as the text was pleaſant to my own ſoul, to ſpeak of the very *ſum* and *centre* of ECCLESIASTICAL GOVERNMENT, the *Lamb in the midſt of the throne.* I remember, at that former occaſion the Lord was preſent by his Spirit, and gave evidence thereof unto many; and now, I hope, at this occaſion alſo there ſhall be ſome bleſſings dropt down from the throne. And, O to be going away from this place, with this truth ſealed upon our heart, concerning the Lamb's being in the midſt of the throne! Come what will, there is no fear of the followers of the Lamb, and the ſufferers for him; for, *The Lamb is in the midſt of the throne.*

SERMON LIX.

STABILITY in the *Faith*, the CHURCH'S STRENGTH *.

ISA. XXX. 7. —— *Their ſtrength is to ſit ſtill.*

EVER ſince man departed from God, the only reſting-place, he has been, in vain, rambling among the creatures for ſafety and ſatisfaction; whereas, if we believe the word of God, we will ſee our only ſtrength and ſafety is to return to God in Chriſt, as the centre of reſt; and to ſit ſtill, and reſt upon him, and put confidence in him; as ſaith the prophet here, *Their ſtrength is to ſit ſtill.* Theſe who have been ſitting down at a communion-table, by profeſſing to ſit down under the ſhadow of the Almighty by faith, are to remember that it is their ſtrength to ſit ſtill; as they are well ſet, who can ſay with the church, *I ſat down under his ſhadow with great delight, and his fruit was ſweet to my taſte;* for, to *ſit down*, is to *believe*: ſo it is yet better, if, by unbelief, they do not riſe again; for, it is *their ſtrength to ſit ſtill.*

Jeruſalem and Judah were here threatened with ſome approaching dangers and deſolations, and it is thought to be by Sennacherib; and this peoples ſin, for which they are here reproved, was their truſting to the Egyptians; they were all in a hurry to bring help and ſuccour from them, without ſeeking counſel of God, and reſting upon him.

† See this elaborate diſcourſe above, Sermon IV. p. 47.

* This ſermon was preached in the year 1733; but at what place, we are uncertain: However, from ſome paſſages in the diſcourſe, it appears to have been delivered on the Monday after ſome ſacramental ſolemnity. *Never before publiſhed.*

We

We may observe in the words, the four following things.

1. The *evil* of this sin; *the Egyptian shall help in vain, and to no purpose:* compare this with ver. 3. and hence observe, That though they that trust in the power, providence, and promise of God shall never be ashamed of their hope; yet they that put confidence in any creature will find it their reproach, shame, and confusion: they will hurt instead of helping. God is true, and may be trusted; but every man is a liar, and may be suspected: we cannot expect too little from man, and too much from God.

2. Notice the prophet's *intermeddling* in this concerning matter, he publishes God's mind and commission. Observe, it is the duty of ministers to meddle sometimes in public matters, whether in church or state; they are to *shew Jacob their sins, and Israel their transgressions:* and this is a part of ministers work, to testify against sin in all. Christ was the *light of the world;* they should be like their Master, testifying against all sin, and all works of darkness. However, this is one of the great quarrels that the world have against the servants and people of God, because they bear testimony against their sins. Many that have some light, yet they put their light in a prison, Rom. i. 18. They *hold the truth in unrighteousness;* particularly, by not bearing witness against sin and defection in others, as well as in ourselves: it was the graceless expression of a graceless Cain, *Am I my brother's keeper?* What am I concerned with the souls of others, or the sins of others? What am I concerned with the public evils of the day I live in? Indeed, right religion begins at home, but it does not end there; it will come without doors with us.

3. The *manner* of the prophet's address to this people, *I cried, concerning this: I* CRIED; hence observe, That it is the duty of ministers to be earnest and zealous in reproving sin, and reclaiming sinners. Ministers are both seers and criers; and when they see the danger they should cry that people may hear, and flee out of harm's way. If one in the streets of a city were crying, *Fire, fire!* O what a running and motion is then? But when ministers cry, the fire of hell is ready to burn the wicked and ungodly, no person is moved; why? they are sensible of bodily danger, but no sense have they of soul danger, nor fear of the fire that burns both soul and body. Ministers need to cry about matters of eternity, that people may secure something that death may not be able to take from them; such as these, (1.) *Saving knowledge;* if you get this it will lodge with you to eternity; *This is life eternal, to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.* (2.) *Faith*, saving faith, death will not be able to take it from you; *All these died in faith.* Again, (3.) *Evangelical love* of God in Christ; *Love never fails.* (4.) The *favour of God*, Rom. viii. 38, 39. *I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life,—shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus.* (5.) *Pardon of sin*, and washing in Christ's blood; *These are they that have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb.* (6.) *Faithful labours* for the honour and glory of God; *Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, they shall rest from their labours, and their works follow them.* They enjoy the fruit of their labours; they will not lose one good thought, one prayer, one tear; he has a bottle for these. Some seek after worldly honour, but these will soon be at an end; their honour will soon be laid in the dust. Some spend their time and strength in pleasure; there these will soon be at an end, 1 John ii. 17. *The lusts of this world passeth away, but he that doth the will of God, abideth for ever.*

4. The prophet's *doctrine*, or the sum of his *preaching* and *advice*, in these words, *Their strength is to sit still.*

In which words you may notice, 1. The *sedate life of faith*, expressed by *sitting still.* 2. The *advantages* of that life of faith to believers, it is *their strength.*

[1.] By *sitting still* we are to understand a *recumbancy* upon God, resting on him, and trusting in him, and stedfast waiting on him, and abiding in the way of duty. This duty puts a man to less trouble than his rambling abroad among the creatures; he has no more ado but sit still. Some are at more pains to bring misery upon themselves, than God's people are to get the blessing. Esau hunted up and down, and was at a great deal of pains; yet Jacob sat at home, and got the blessing: *He that believeth shall not make haste.*

[2.] The *advantage* of this duty, it is *their strength:* they that sit still in a day of distress, *Hoping and quietly waiting for the salvation of the Lord*, this will be their strength and safety: when we have tired ourselves by seeking help from creatures, we will find it the best way for recruiting ourselves, to repose and settle upon the Creator; by trusting in him, waiting on him, and stedfastly adhering to him: this will keep us from much needless labour and fatigue; yea, it will secure to us the accomplishment of the promise, Luke i. 45. *Blessed is she that believeth, for there shall be a performance.* Hab. ii. 3. *For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry.*

This text then has two parts, that are like the two pillars of Solomon's temple, the one JACHIN, and the other BOAZ; *stability* and *strength;* stability is one part of the text, and strength is the other: *Their strength is to sit still.*

OBSERV. *That a church or people's strength and safety in perilous times is their steadiness and stability in the faith.*

The prophet here speaks forth the duty of Jerusalem in a perilous and dangerous time, and shows, that that stability is their safety; and that it is stability in the faith, he here speaks of, you may see clear, from two other verses of this chapter, ver. 15. *In returning and rest, shall ye be saved; in quietness and confidence shall be your strength.* In returning to God, and reposing in him as your rest, in quiet acquiescing in him and confident dependance upon him. Ver. 18. *The Lord is a God of judgment, blessed are all they that wait for him:* this also explains it of the stability of faith.

This doctrine might be confirmed by many other scriptures, Heb. iii. 12, 14. *Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God; for we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfastly unto the end:* importing, that our stability in the faith, is our safety in evil times, and at all times. Heb. x. 23, 25. *Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another, and so much the more*

more as you see the day approaching. In Col. ii. 19. there you read of a number that fell of in time of temptation, *Not holding the head;* not sitting still and abiding in Christ. Heb. xiii. 8, 9.—— But many other scriptures will offer in the sequel.

The method I propose for prosecuting this subject, through the divine favour, shall be the following.

I. To show what are these *times* that may be called *perilous times*, wherein people are ready to show much instability and unstedfastness in the faith.

II. Open up the *nature* of this stedfastness and stability in the faith.

III. Show that this *stedfastness* and *stableness* is people's strength and safety, in perilous times.

IV. Deduce some *inferences* for the application of the subject.

I. We are to show what are these TIMES that may be called *perilous times.* You may see the apostle's description thereof, 2 Tim. iii. 1,—8. *This know also, that perilous times shall come; for men shall be lovers of their ownselves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthoughtful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heedy, high minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God, having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; from such turn away. Now, as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth, men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.* If the last times be the most perilous times, then we seem to be among the very last; we are called to *redeem the time, because the days are evil.* There is a twofold evil, moral and penal; the moral evil of sin is the ground of all penal evil of punishment. Jerusalem here was not so much in danger from the Assyrians, whom God was sending upon them to punish them, as they were from their own sins, for which God stirred up the enemy to afflict them; or if when danger appeared, they had returned to the Lord, and rested on him; then in *returning and resting they had been saved:* but they departed from God and then all went to wreck with them. Times of departing from God, the only resting place, are perilous times. More particularly,

1st, Times of *rebellion* against God are perilous times. Of this, Jerusalem is here reproved; and for this a wo is denounced against her, *Wo to the rebellious children*, ver. 1. of this chapter. When may a people be called rebellious? Even when sin, which is rebellion, is come to such a height, that the Lord is obliged in honour to plead a controversy with the sinning people; as it is said, Hos. iv. 1, 2, 3. *The Lord hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood. Therefore shall the land mourn, and every one that dwelleth therein shall languish, with the beast of the fields, and with the fowls of heaven, yea, the fishes of the sea also shall be taken away.* Now, he may be said to have a controversy with a land for their rebellions, in four cases.

1. When *all manner of sin* and acts of rebellion abound, such as are there mentioned, so as they are not only the sins of such and such a person, nor of such and such a congregation, but they are become national, and universal, and epidemical; and I imagine this is but too just a description of our case.

2. When peoples sins are committed against many *checks of conscience*, many beams of light, many means of grace, many calls of providence, many instances of mercy and divine goodness; how provoking is it, as you see, Rom. ii. 2, 3. Thus highly aggravated against the patience and forbearance of God.

3. When the rebellion is so heightened that not only is the patience of God *abused*, but *laughed* at, and *ridiculed*, by a profane age, that begin to say, as 2 Pet. iii. 4. *Where is the promise of his coming?* Where is the threatening of his coming to judgment? Then it is a perilous time, because the Lord is angry, and will let men know that he is not *slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness*, though *he be long-suffering to us-ward;* and that he is not slack concerning his threatening.

4. When there is nothing *standing* between the rebellious people and the stroke, *None to stand in the gap*, and keep out the wrath that is coming in, Ezek. xxii. 30, 31. Or, when such as would stand in the gap, and plead with God, have no access to him this way; and when God is saying, upon the matter, though Noah, Daniel, and Job, were pleading for such a people, it is in vain.

2dly, Times of *carnal consultation*, or of following carnal counsel, are perilous times. This was the case of Jerusalem, *Wo to the rebellious children, that take counsel, but not of me!* (Where also we see, that this was a special branch of their rebellion, they are reckoned rebels against God, that take counsel, but not of him; and so follow their own carnal counsel.) Men take counsel, but not of God, when they consult with flesh and blood, with carnal ease, carnal friends, carnal reason, and are swayed with carnal arguments; when they consult with numbers and multitudes, and follow the supernumerary party, and so bind their faith to the belt of a majority, saying, Can such a great number be all wrong? and such a small number only right? Shall we be singular? Indeed, when vice becomes general, singularity is a virtue; when error in judgment, or practice, becomes universal, it is then a necessary duty to be singular. Whomsoever men take counsel with, if it be not with God, they rebel against him, and expose themselves to wo and misery. To take counsel even with learned and eminent men, even when they are in the right side of the question, and to believe so and so, because they believe, it is but a human faith, built upon a human testimony; and yet ordinarily the most learned Rabbies are the greatest enemies of Christ and his cause, John vii. 48, 49. *Have any of the rulers and Pharisees believed in him? But this people, that know not the law, are cursed:* Why, says flesh and blood, they are but a pack of ignorant fools, who differ from such great and learned men. Well, but it may happen, that even these may be blind, whom neither themselves nor others think to be so, as it was with the applauded Pharisee, who said, *Are we blind also?* Christ proves them to be so; and tells, that if *blind follow the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.* Thus also they take counsel, but not of God, that yield a blind obedience to the commandments

mandments of men, as Iſrael did to the ſtatutes of Omri, Mic. vi. 16. and Ephraim, that *willingly walked after the commandment*, Hoſ. v, 2. This is charged upon Iſrael, Iſa. xxix. 13. *Their fear toward me is taught by the precepts of men.*

3*dly*, Times of *carnal confidence* and coverings, are perilous times, ver. 1. *They cover with a covering, but not of my Spirit.* The ſhadow of Egypt was their covering; they put their confidence therein: but it was a refuge of lies, a covering too narrow for hiding them, while they had no holy confidence in God, but a carnal confidence in men; they departed from God, partly through fear of men, namely, the Aſſyrians, and partly by truſting in men, *viz.* the Egyptians. *The fear of man bringeth a ſnare.* And it is an awful word to that purpoſe, Iſa. li. 12, 13. *Who art thou, that thou ſhouldſt be afraid of man, that ſhall die, and of the ſon of man, that ſhall be made as graſs, and forgetteſt the Lord, thy Maker, that ſtretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth; and haſt feared continually every day becauſe of the fury of the oppreſſor, as if he were ready to deſtroy? And where is the fury of the oppreſſor?* Many are like the Jews, John xii. 42. that durſt not profeſs Chriſt for fear of being laſhed out of the ſynagogue: and thus even ſome of the godly dare not make a public appearance for the cauſe and truth of the Lord Jeſus, for fear of being expoſed to the cenſures of the church, and fury of the prevailing party; but what ſays the Lord, in ſuch a caſe, to theſe that fear the *reproaches*, the *revilings*, and *reſentment of men*, Iſa. li. 7, 8. It is but the graſs of the field that oppoſeth you, *All fleſh is graſs*, Iſa. xl. 6. Are you afraid of withering graſs, and forget the everlaſting and everliving God? They may be reckoned fools that expoſe themſelves to the fury of a government, civil or eccleſiaſtic: why ſhould they expoſe themſelves to worldly loſſes and inconveniencies? But, if the commands of men be not agreeable to the commands of God; if they be unlawful and unwarrantable, it is the beſt wiſdom to ſit ſtill, and reſt obedient to God, and diſobedient to man; yea, this is their ſtrength and ſafety: it is better to ſuffer than to ſin; and we ſin, if we but yield a doubtful obedience to man, doubing if it be right; for, *Whatſoever is not of faith, is ſin.* It is always ſafeſt to keep back from ſin, and abide with Chriſt: all loſſes for his ſake are to be repaired an hundred fold in this life; that is good recompence, and the ſtock ſtill ſecure; *In the world to come, eternal life.* However, this is one part of carnal confidence, the fear of man; for, whom we truly fear, for their frowns, them we are apt to truſt, for their favours and friendſhip. And then, *truſt in man*, is another part of carnal confidence, which, when it prevails, ſhows it is a perilous time: this is croſs to the command of God alſo, Pſal. cxlvi. 3. *Put not your truſt in princes, nor in the ſons of man, in whom there is no help.* This is dangerous work, and points out a dangerous time, when truſting in an arm of fleſh is prevailing, Jer. xvii. 5. *Curſed is the man, that truſteth in man, and maketh fleſh his arm; whoſe heart departs from the Lord. It is better to truſt in the Lord, than to put confidence in man.* See Micah vii. 5. Jer. ix. 4. If we depend upon human power, for the preſervation of our church, or depend upon human policy, for the reformation of religion, we will find ourſelves ſadly diſappointed; *It is better to truſt in the Lord, than to put confidence in fleſh.* If we depend upon human laws, even for the ſecurity of our fortunes; or upon our compliance with whatever human authority injoins, for our freedom from outward trouble and trials, we but truſt in man, and confer with fleſh and blood: we truſt in a broken reed that will pierce us.

4*thly*, Times of *inſtability* are dangerous and perilous times. This is ſuppoſed plainly to be the ſin of Iſrael in the text, *Their ſtrength is to ſit ſtill*; to be ſtable and ſettled in the faith: but they were unſtable, unſtedfaſt, unſettled. Now, that times of inſtability are dangerous, may appear from theſe particulars.

1. Unſtable times are times of *error*; and theſe are dangerous. This is plainly inſinuate, Heb. xiii. 9. *Be not carried about with divers and ſtrange doctrines; for, it is a good thing that the heart be eſtabliſhed with grace.* Unſtable perſons are carried about with every error. This is the dangerous circumſtances of England and of Scotland in our day; what errors are ſpreading? *Atheiſm* is in a manner profeſſed by a number that call themſelves free-thinkers, who cannot think of a God, though it muſt be as certain that there is an eternal Being, as it is certain there is any being at all; for, there could be no ſuch effects, if there were not a ſupreme cauſe. —*Deiſm* is openly profeſſed by ſome, who deny all divine and ſupernatural revelation, and applaud the light of nature, though under a diſmal eclipſe.—*Arianiſm* has taken root, a denying the true and proper divinity and ſupreme Deity of Chriſt.—*Legaliſm* and *Libertiniſm*, which may well be joined together, becauſe they that deny Chriſt to be the *end of the law for righteouſneſs*, being not under grace, but under the law, ſin muſt have dominion over them.—*Prophaneneſs* and *Immoralities*, and all manner of *errors* and *evils* take place in unſtable times.

2. Unſtable times are times of *temptation* from men and devils; and it is much to continue with Chriſt in ſuch times: when men are tempted with the world, and tempted by the devil and his temptations, it is much to get that teſtimony, Luke xxii. 28. *Ye are they that have continued with me in my temptation, and I appoint unto you a kingdom.* A time of general temptation is a dark and dangerous hour, Rev. iii. 10. *Becauſe thou haſt keep the word of my patience, I will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which ſhall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.* When temptation is ſo univerſal, no wonder the moſt part are carried down with the ſtream.

3. Unſtable times are *backſliding* times; times of defection and apoſtacy, and theſe are perilous times; for, *the backſlider in heart ſhall be filled with his own ways*; and, *If any man draw back, my ſoul ſhall have no pleaſure in him.* Surely theſe are perilous times in Scotland, when they are ſuch covenant-breaking times; wherein reformation principles and purity are given up, wherein *truth falleth, and he that departeth from evil*, and adhereth to covenanted truth, *maketh himſelf a prey*, Iſa. lix. 15.

4. Unſtable times are times of *diviſion*, and theſe are perilous times; for, *a city, or houſe, divided againſt itſelf cannot ſtand.* Then is deſolation near, when the anger of the Lord has divided a people; divided their hearts, ſo as they hate one another; and divided their tongues, ſo as they reproach one another, and ſpeak evil of one another; then is the land's name

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juſtly turned to a BABEL, Gen. xi. 9. *The name of it is called* BABEL, *becauſe the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth, and from thence did the Lord ſcatter them abroad upon the face of the earth.* When people's hearts and tongues are divided and confounded, then they are in hazard of being ſcattered and deſtroyed.

5. Unſtable times are times of the *ſlighting of the goſpel*, the heavenly manna. When people cannot reſt content with that proviſion which God makes for them in the goſpel, how dangerous is this! See 2 Chro. xxxvi. 14, 15, 16. *They mocked the meſſengers of God, and deſpiſed his words, and miſuſed his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord aroſe againſt his people, till there was no remedy.* Jer. xxvi. 4, 5, 6. *Thus ſaith the Lord, If you will not hearken to me, to walk in my law, which I have ſet before you, to hearken to the words of my ſervants the prophets, whom I ſent unto you, both riſing up early, and ſending them (but ye have not hearkened) then will I make this houſe like Shiloh, and will make this city a curſe to all the nations of the earth.* Was ever a nation more guilty than ourſelves? Judge then if we live not in perilous times.

6. Unſtable times are times of *formality in religion*; men having a *form of godlineſs*, without the power; yea, *denying the power* of it. When God has but the outſide; drawing near to him with the mouth, and honouring him with the lips: a formal carnal way of worſhipping God, inſtead of worſhipping him in the Spirit. Unſtable ſouls, that take up a profeſſion of religion, which degenerates into a formal outſide hypocritical devotion, are in a very dangerous caſe, as appears from the many woes Chriſt denounced againſt the Phariſees and hypocrites.

7. Unſtable times are times of *ſecurity*. Where there is no ſpiritual ſettlement there will be a carnal ſettlement, like Moab, that was *at eaſe from his youth, and ſettled upon his lies* and dregs, *not being emptied from veſſel to veſſel*, Jer. xlviii. 11. It it a dangerous time, when the wiſe and fooliſh virgins are ſleeping and ſlumbering; when men cry, *Peace, peace;* and, like the old world, put the evil day far off from them, ſudden deſtruction may be at the door.

8. Unſtable times are times of *careleſs indifferency* about the matters of God, and lukewarmneſs. When people are unſtable in the truth, they can never be zealous for it: the dangerouſneſs of this diſeaſe you read of, Rev. iii. 16. *Becauſe thou art lukewarm, neither cold nor hot, I will ſpew thee out of my mouth;* that is, reject thee with abhorrence. This, among others, is the ſin of our day, and ſhows we are living in perilous times. There are two things very ſad in Scotland.

(1.) Our *light* has worn out our *zeal*. It is ſeldom heard tell of, that light ſhould be an enemy to zeal and practice, till now it ſeems to be our miſery, that our light, knowledge, wiſdom, and politeneſs has blunted our zeal for God and for reformation principles and practice.

(2.) Our *hazards* have drowned our *zeal*; our apprehended hazards and difficulties have quenched the fire of zeal in many. The days have been in Scotland, when our difficulties and croſſes, hazard and dangers, have been as a burning coal to quicken our zeal for God, and make it the more fervent; but now, our difficulties and dangers are like ſo much wet timber laid upon the top of our zeal, like to drown it all out; and yet, where is the danger of ſtanding up for God and his cauſe? Where is the fury of the oppreſſor? Is it our ſtrength and ſafety to run away from God and duty? No, by no means: rather, is it not *our ſtrength to ſit ſtill?*

II. We now proceed to the *ſecond* thing propoſed, which was, To open up the NATURE of this *ſtability in the faith*, or ſteadineſs and eſtabliſhment therein. I would here, 1. Offer a ſcripture or two for ſhewing how this duty is commanded and commended. 2. What it ſuppoſes. 3. What it includes. 4. What it excludes. 5. What it infers.

1*ſt*, I would ſhow that it is both *commanded* and *commended*. I might cite many ſcriptures for this end; but I ſhall only quote one ſcripture, where it is commanded, and another where it is commended.

1. This ſtability in the faith is *commanded*, 1 Cor. xvi. 13. *Watch ye, ſtand faſt in the faith, quit you like men, be ſtrong. Stand faſt in the faith;* this is that duty which the apoſtle calls *a continuing in the faith, grounded and ſettled*, and *not being moved away from the hope of the goſpel*, Col. i. 23. This is that which he calls a being *ſtedfaſt and immoveable*, yea, *always abounding in the work of the Lord*, 1 Cor. xv. 58. This is that which is called an *earneſt contending for the faith, once delivered to the ſaints*, Jude ver. 3. And again, it is called a *ſtanding faſt in one mind and ſpirit, ſtriving together for the faith of the goſpel, in nothing terrified by your adverſaries*, &c. Phil. i. 27. In a word, it is called a being *faithful to the death; Be thou faithful unto the death, and I will give thee a crown of life*, Rev. ii. 10. In all which ſcriptures this duty of ſtability is commanded; and it is called a *ſtanding faſt in the faith*, to ſhow the influence that faith has upon perſeverance; for, *by faith we ſtand*, by faith we walk; by faith we live; by faith we fight; by faith we overcome; and all this, becauſe by faith we *ſtand ſtill*, and reſt upon a God in Chriſt, eſtabliſhed in the faith.—Thus it is *commanded*. Again,

2. This ſtability in the faith is *commended*; Rev. ii. 13. there the church of Pergamus is commended in theſe words, *Thou holdeſt faſt my name, and haſt not denied my faith*, &c. Where the thing they are commended for being ſtable in, is *Chriſt's name*, and his *faith*; that is, his goſpel, and the doctrine thereof. Paul is called a *choſen veſſel to bear his name among the Gentiles*; that is, his goſpel; and it may well be ſo called, becauſe, by the goſpel he makes his name known: and it is called *the faith*, becauſe it is the object of faith, the thing to be believed; and it is called *his faith*, becauſe he is the author of it; the ſum and ſubſtance of it. The giver of this goſpel-doctrine, ſubſtitutes himſelf in Adam's room, and fulfils the law, which to him was a covenant of works: and hence it is, that out of his obeying the law, the ſweet doctrine of the goſpel flows unto us; *He is the end of the law for righteouſneſs, to every one that believeth.* Now, this is what the church of Pergamus held, and would not deny, but gave their teſtimony to it againſt all the enemies that oppoſed it; no wonder, for it is *the words of eternal life.* We are not to think the worſe of any truth that it is oppoſed and controverted, and requires faſt holding, and violent holding; *The kingdom of heaven ſuffers violence, and the violent take it by force.* Nay, the more a truth is controverted the more commendable is a ſteady adher-

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ence to it. While we are in this militant ſtate, we cannot hold the truth without fighting; it is ſaid of the builders of the walls of Jeruſalem, Neh. iv. 18. That *every builder had his ſword girded by his ſide, and ſo builded:* ſo, in adhering to the truth of the goſpel, we are not to think ſtrange to hear of a banner in the banqueting-houſe of the goſpel; *He brought me to the banqueting-houſe, and his banner over me was love.* Why a banner in a banqueting-houſe? Becauſe we cannot keep the feaſt without oppoſition either from without or within. Many, when they ſee their believing a promiſe to be joined with a combat, they are diſcouraged; but ſpiritual builders muſt be ſpiritual ſoldiers, holding the promiſe in one hand, and the weapon in the other; the word in one hand, and the ſword in the other; the truth in one hand, and the armour of proof in the other. Faith without trouble or fighting is a ſuſpicious faith; for true faith is a fighting, wreſtling faith; and this is the faith that is here commended, as it is alſo, Rev. iii. 10. *Becauſe thou haſt kept the word of my patience, I will alſo keep thee in the hour of temptation. Thou holdeſt faſt my name, and haſt not denied my faith*, Rev. ii. 13.

As to the *denying* of faith, there are four degrees of it. (1.) When men are *ſilent* through fear, unable to ſay, with Paul, *I am not aſhamed of the goſpel of Chriſt.* (2.) When men *diſſemble*, as Peter, *I know not what thou ſayeſt.* (3.) When they *halt between two opinions*, like theſe in the days of Ahab, that *halted between God and Baal.* (4.) When they expreſly *deny* the faith, as Peter denied Chriſt, *I know not the man;* and am not upon that ſide of the houſe, nor of that party. Thus, Chriſt is many times *wounded in the houſe of his friends*; ſometimes by a traiterous Judas, ſometimes by a timorous Peter. However, the denial of the faith goes on by ſuch degrees as theſe; every one of them draws on another: ſilence, through fear, draws on diſſimulation; diſſimulation draws on a halting between two, as it were, in a demurring what to do; and this halting draws on denying of the faith expreſly; for, apoſtacy is a ſlippery precipice; therefore men ſhould beware of the leaſt beginning, and of the leaſt ſhifting of the profeſſion of the faith, when called thereunto.

2dly, What this ſtability in the faith ſuppoſes? Surely it ſuppoſes peoples being once *in the faith*; as Paul deſigns Timothy, *his ſon in the faith*, 1 Tim. i. 2.; for, till once people be in the faith, they can never be *eſtabliſhed in the faith*, as the word is, Col. ii. 7. No more than a tree can be firmly rooted in the earth, that was never truly planted into it. Stability in the faith then, ſuppoſes a being in the faith; and that as it reſpects either the word of faith, the grace of faith, the obedience of faith, or the profeſſion of faith.

True ſtability in the faith ſuppoſes, 1. That we *know* the word of faith. 2. That we have the *grace* of faith. 3. That we make a *profeſſion* of faith. 4. That we yield the *obedience* of faith.

1. That we *know* the word of faith, or the doctrine of faith, or the truth; for a man can never be ſtable in the faith which he is ignorant of. If ever we will be eſtabliſhed in ſcriptural principles, we muſt be acquainted with the ſcriptures, the word of God, and *know the truth as it is in Jeſus*; and that not only a head knowledge, but a heart knowledge, that it may be a heart eſtabliſhment in the faith: this is called a *receiving the faith in love*, or a receiving the *love of the truth*, 2 Theſſ. ii. 19. Knowledge and affection ſhould grow together; for theſe people are moſt prone to error, who gain knowledge of truth, without affection to it; *Becauſe they received not the love of the truth, that they might be ſaved. For this cauſe God ſhall ſend them ſtrong deluſions that they ſhould believe a lye; that they all might be damned who believe not the truth, but had pleaſure in unrighteouſneſs.*

2. It ſuppoſes that we have the *grace* of faith; for, ſtability in the faith, being an eſtabliſhment in the grace of faith, as well as in the word or doctrine of faith, it muſt preſuppoſe, that a man has the grace of faith, otherwiſe he cannot ſit ſtill, or be ſtable in it; no more than one can be ſaid to ſit ſtill who has never ſat down: true ſtability then ſuppoſes, that a man hath once been made to ſit down, and reſt upon Chriſt as his righteouſneſs and ſtrength. We are called, 1 Pet. v. 9. to *reſiſt the devil, ſtedfaſt in the faith;* and that not only by a ſtedfaſt adherence to the word of faith, which was the weapon Chriſt made uſe of againſt the devil, when he quoted ſcripture to him, he refuted him by ſcripture; and this *ſword of the Spirit, which is the word of God*, is the weapon by which we are to reſiſt every temptation to ſin: but alſo, by a ſtedfaſt acting and exerciſing of the grace of faith, I mean, true ſaving juſtifying faith; becauſe this weapon of the word of faith cannot be uſed but by the grace of faith: for, to make uſe of the word of faith, without the grace of faith, is to do no more than the devil and his inſtruments can do, who will quote ſcripture as well as we; but to weild that weapon with the arm of faith, is what none but true believers, through grace, can do.

3. It ſuppoſes that we make *profeſſion* of the faith; why ſo? Becauſe ſtability in the faith, is a holding *faſt the profeſſion of our faith without wavering*, Heb. x. 23. They cannot be ſaid to hold faſt the profeſſion thereof, who never had a profeſſion, and never made a profeſſion. Men may be profeſſors, indeed, that are not true believers; but all true believers muſt be profeſſors, and ought to be profeſſors, and hold faſt their profeſſion, in the worſt times, without being aſhamed of Chriſt, or his cauſe; as Paul, who was not *aſhamed of the goſpel of Chriſt*, though oppoſed by the great, and wiſe, and learned of his day. Again,

4. It ſuppoſes that we yield the *obedience* of faith; of which we read, Rom. xvi. 26. This is a *practical* profeſſion, or confeſſion of Chriſt. There may be a *verbal* profeſſion with the mouth, without a *practical* profeſſion with the life; both ſhould go together: we ought to *confeſs Chriſt with the mouth*, Rom. x. 10. without being aſhamed to acknowledge our Maſter; and we ought to diſcover the ſincerity of our profeſſion by the whole tract of our converſation. This obedience of faith, or practical profeſſion, is either active or paſſive: *active* profeſſion is when our lives and manners do ſpeak and confeſs Chriſt, and evidence that we are not of theſe that *profeſs to know him*, but *in works deny him.* A *paſſive* profeſſion, is when we are ready to ſeal with our ſufferings and blood, what we profeſs with our mouths and actions: this is the profeſſion of martyrs, to whom *it is given, in the behalf of Chriſt, not only to believe on him, but alſo to ſuffer for his ſake*, Phil. i. 29. And here you ſee what is the obedience of faith, both active and paſſive.

paſſive. Now, true ſtability herein ſuppoſes a man's entering upon this obedience; for, how ſhall he be ſtable in it who never began to yield it? Stability in the faith then, being a ſtability in the doctrine of faith, in the grace of faith, in the profeſſion of faith, and in the obedience of faith, it ſuppoſes a man's knowing and underſtanding the faith which we ought to be eſtabliſhed in; believing what he underſtands; profeſſing what he believes; and practiſing what he profeſſes: and, indeed, faith not held in practice, will ſoon be denied in profeſſion, when the trial comes.

3*dly*, The next particular propoſed here was, What this ſtability in the faith *includes*. It includes two things, 1. An *adherence* to the faith. 2. A *perſeverance* in it.

1. A ſtedfaſt *adherence* to the faith, to the word of faith, the grace of faith, the profeſſion of faith, and the obedience of faith; this adherence to, or ſitting ſtill upon, the ſure foundation, is called a being *rooted and built up in Chriſt*, Col. ii. 6, 7. It is not enough that we *receive Chriſt Jeſus the Lord*, but we muſt *walk in him*, and be rooted and built up in him, by a daily improving of him. It is a fixed adherence to him notwithſtanding all fears, Pſal. cxii. 7. *He ſhall not be afraid of evil tidings; his heart is fixed, truſting in the Lord; his heart is eſtabliſhed, he ſhall not be afraid*, &c. Notwithſtanding all attacks of the enemy, and defeats by them. Though a believer be beat down, yet by faith he riſes, and keeps his ground; *Rejoice not againſt me, O mine enemy; for, though I fall, I ſhall ariſe*, Micah vii. 8. He that kills his enemy at the firſt blow, ſhows himſelf valiant; but ſo does he alſo ſhew a great deal of valour, who being often knocked down and wounded, yet riſes again and ſtands to it. Though the field be many times doubtful between faith and fear, between faith and doubting, yet faith overcomes by adhering to Chriſt, notwithſtanding difficulties in the way: thus Abraham *ſtaggered not*, but was fixed in his perſuaſion of the promiſe, being nothing moved by contrary appearances, but *againſt hope believed in hope*; over-looking both the deadneſs of his own body, and the the deadneſs of Sarah's womb.

2. It includes conſtant *perſeverance* in the faith; for, *he that endures to the end ſhall be ſaved*. They that caſt away their confidence intirely, were never built upon Chriſt; and that ſay, *Why ſhould I wait for the Lord any longer?* This is not to ſit ſtill, but to weary and withdraw from Chriſt. A true believer may be weary of his ſins, and weary of his life, but he will never be weary of his faith; he takes up Job's reſolution, *Though he ſlay me, yet will I truſt in him. He buys the truth, and will never ſell it;* he buys it at any rate, and will ſell it at no rate: but they that buy truth at an eaſy rate, no wonder that they ſell it at an eaſy rate; he that buys it for the ſake of the world, will ſell it for the ſake of the world; he that buys it for a luſt, will ſell it for a luſt.

There are two things we are to adhere to, and perſevere in, which yet the moſt part of people think needleſs; and theſe are, 1. The *preſent* truth; and, 2. The *leaſt* truth.

(1.) The *preſent* truth is what we are always to adhere to, and perſevere in, 2 Pet. i. 12. There the apoſtle ſpeaks of being *eſtabliſhed in the preſent truth*. If a man do not adhere to the truth, that is at preſent in controverſy in his day, he will adhere to no truth at all. The beſt evidence of integrity is freedom from the preſent corruptions of the times and place we live in; and adherence to the preſent oppoſed truth, ſo as to ſwim againſt the ſtream when it is ſtrong. Some think, what need we trouble our heads with a truth that is controverted among great and learned men? Really, Sirs, there is hardly one fundamental truth in religion, but what has been controverted by the devil and his inſtruments; and if we will not cleave to oppoſed and controverted truth, we muſt renounce the truth altogether. Nay, the more that Chriſt and his truths are oppoſed, the more ſhould we ſtand firm for him and it.

(2.) The *leaſt* truth is what we are to adhere to, and perſevere in, if we would be ſtable in the faith; he that is content to part with a hoove, is content to part with the whole of religion: as the true obeyer has a reſpect to *all God's commandments*; ſo the true believer has a reſpect to all his truths. The leaſt truth of God is a beam from the infinite Truth; and the man that will not adhere to the leaſt truth of Chriſt, will adhere to no truth in the day of trial for the truth.

4*thly*, The *fourth* thing here propoſed was, What this ſtability in the faith *excludes?* To this we reply, that among other things, it excludes theſe eight particulars following.

1. It excludes a *fainting* at the ſight of the croſs, Prov. ii. 10. *If thou faint in the day of adverſity, thy ſtrength is ſmall.* Sometimes the diſtant view of the croſs is more terrible than when it is at hand; and ſome have fainted at the diſtant view of it, that have rejoiced at the preſence of it. Peter was not ſo near the croſs, when only his Maſter was tried before the council, but he had a diſtant proſpect of it, and he fainted and fell by a ſilly maid challenging him; but when he came to be before the council himſelf, inſtead of fainting, you ſee what boldneſs he had, Acts v. 29. how he and the reſt of the apoſtles departed from the council, *rejoicing that they were counted worthy to ſuffer ſhame for the name of Chriſt.* The nearer the croſs of Chriſt is viewed, the ſweeter it is; and the nearer we come to it, the lighter. However, this fainting at the ſight of the croſs is excluded by this ſtability: the more ſtable, the leſs fainting.

2. This ſtability in the faith excludes a *doubtfulneſs* and *heſitation* about the truth, that we ſtand up for, and adhere to, in a time of trial, Rom. xv. 5. *Let every man be fully perſuaded in his own mind.* A man will never firmly adhere to, or ſuffer for that, which he is not fully perſuaded is a truth. I defy you to be a cleanly ſufferer for the cauſe of Chriſt, in a day of Scotland's defection, unleſs you can ſay, that you are really perſuaded, that the covenanted Reformation, doctrine, worſhip, diſcipline, and government of the church of Scotland, is the *work of God*, and founded on the *word of God*, and you have no doubt in your heart to the contrary.

3. This ſtability in the faith excludes a *preſumptuous perſuaſion*. We read of ſome preſumptuous believers, John ii. 23. to whom Chriſt *would not commit himſelf*, becauſe he knew them to be but rotten at the heart. Many have a faith that has neither God for its Father, nor the ſcriptures for its mother; it is a baſtard, that has neither true father nor mother. Chriſt will

will not commit himself to such believers: they persuade themselves that they trust in Christ, but he knows them, that they cannot be trusted, and that they will not be trusty to him, or his cause.

4. This stability in the faith excludes *wavering*, and being *tossed to and fro*, and *carried about with every wind of doctrine*, Eph. iv. 14. Some will have one religion this year, and another the next; one religion with this company, and another with that company. It is true, the faith of believers may be shaken by temptations from the devil, and his instruments, but yet it is not broken nor banished: he maintains an high veneration for the truth which he hears brangled, opposed, and borne down, and yet cannot sufficiently defend, like the woman that said, "Though I cannot dispute for Christ, yet "I can burn for him." But if your religion changes with the wind of temptation, or turns with the tide of the times, it is not worth a farthing.

5. This stability in the faith excludes *doubleness of mind* and *tongue*, James i. 8. *A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.* Many have a double mind, a double face, a double tongue; and when this doubleness gets in among God's people, it marrs this stability. Peter learned a little of this doubleness and dissimulation, for which Paul took him to task, Gal. ii. 13. Some are expert in this trade of dissembling, that they may please every party; but their prudence will be their plague, who are not straight and upright for God, to the utmost of their power and knowledge: their policy will never be a cloak for their perjury, who, upon prudential considerations, desert the cause of Christ.

6. This stability in the faith excludes all *sinful compliances with the courses of the times.* To go further than conscience will allow, is to make *shipwreck of faith, and a good conscience*, 1 Tim. i. 19. Carnal reason says, Hold with the times, comply with the measures of the majority, be what it will; it is dangerous to do otherwise: but God says, Hold faith and a good conscience, and then you are safe; *He that walks uprightly, walks safely.*

7. This stability in the faith excludes *sinful silence*, when the cause and interest of Christ requires our testimony; *For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace*, says the prophet, Isa. lxii. 1. The watchmen upon her walls are ordered not to *hold their peace*, but *to cry aloud*, and *not spare*. There are some scriptures that many are like to break their necks upon in our day, and that is one among the rest, Amos v. 13. *The prudent shall keep silence in that time, for it is an evil time.* Why then, say some in their practice, we should not speak a word for truth, let truth be never so much opposed; nor speak a word against any acts of Assembly, let them be never so contrary to scripture, and covenants both. But God never warranted any, according to their call, capacity, and station, so to keep silence as not to speak against the evils and errors of the times: this were inconsistent to his solemn orders to his watchmen, to give faithful warning to people, as they would not be guilty of their blood. And if God has said, he *will send a sword to avenge the quarrel of his covenant*, I think, we particularly, who preach the gospel unto you, would not be faithful, if we did not warn you that Scotland is in danger of God's wrath, as long as there is any standing acts of the national church, contradictory to, and inconsistent with the National Covenant; nor will ever any wrested scripture be a sufficient cloak to cover us from the guilt of sinful silence.

8. This stability in the faith excludes all *sinful debates* and *disputings about known truths.* We read, 1 Tim. iii. 5. *Of perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, destitute of the truth:* men that will bring known truths to be matter of debate, will never be stable; if the truth come not to be a matter beyond debate, and beyond dispute with them. Alas! all the precious truths of God, even some that were never debated in our land, are, now-a-days, become debatable points. It was never a point of debate, or debated in our reforming times, that ministers were to be settled by the call and consent of the people, but now it is turned to a debatable point; though we have the strongest arguments in scripture for it. Acts i. 23. we have an argument for it drawn from the *greater* to the *less*, in the whole church, or peoples being called to chuse the *apostle*, as far as was consistent with his being immediately chosen of God, as the office required; for, the *people* were to chuse the *two*, out of which GOD was to chuse *one:* and if they had such an hand in the choice of the *extraordinary officer*, much more ought they to have in the *ordinary.*—Acts vi. 3. we have an argument from the *less* to the *greater*, in the choosing of *deacons;* as the highest officers, the apostles, were not chosen of God, without the *people*, in the former example; so here the *lowest officer* could not be chosen by the *apostles* themselves, but by the *people;* though one might think the apostles were as good judges: and if the people must chuse these that take care of their *alms* or *charity*, much more concern have they in choosing such as take care of their *souls.*—Acts xiv. 23. we have a plain argument from the example, the apostles ordaining *presbyters* by the *suffrage of the people*, as it is well known the word χειροτονήσαντες signifies *. —And James ii. from the beginning, we have these arguments confirmed by the apostle, discharging all respect, in spiritual matters, to the *rich man, with the gold ring and the gay clothing;* intimating, that no temporal wealth or heritage can intitle them to any spiritual privilege, no more than an earthly estate can intitle a man to heaven; and consequently, no heritor of this earth, as such, has any right above others to chuse pastors to any congregation, which is a spiritual privilege relating to immortal souls; ministers themselves have no title to be lords over the consciences of men, far less have they power, by any act whatsoever, to make temporal heritors, or earthly superiors, lords over God's heritage. But for as clear as this is in scripture, and though it

* The word χειροτονήσαντες, in our version, is but half-translated; and made to run thus; *And when they had* ORDAINED *them elders in every church.* But according to Erasmus, who renders it, *Cum suffragiis creassent*, and Beza, Pasor, &c. who have it, *per suffragia creassent*, it should run thus, *When they had, by* SUFFRAGES, *appointed to them elders in every church.* All the old English Translations have it so; and it was retained by our last translators, until the version was committed by K. James, to some of the English bishops to be revised, who vitiate this, as well as thirteen other passages of the New Testament, to make them favour the church of England. The word here is not χειροθεσια, which signifies the *action of ministers* in ordaining; but it is χειροτονια, which is expressive of the *peoples act* in electing pastors, by *elevation*, or *lifting up the hand*, as was the custom at that time. In this sense the apostle uses it, 2 Cor. viii. 19.

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be one of the covenanted principles, yet it is turned now to a debatable point*.

Again, it is now turned a debatable queſtion, whether Chriſt be the *ſupreme God*, the *moſt high God*, though yet in ſcripture all the great names of God, all the glorious attributes of God, all the wonderful works of God, and all the worſhip due only to God be aſcribed to him †.—It is now a debatable point, whether there be any *neceſſity for divine ſupernatural revelation*, whether the *light of nature* be not ſufficient, without the *ſcripture*, to ſalvation ‡.—In a word, the greateſt points in religion are turned debatable points, and among the reſt, whether our *national covenants be binding upon us*.

Well, I ſay, ſtability in the faith excludes all ſinful debating about known truths; and when matters of faith are turned to debateable queſtions, it is a clear demonſtration of the inſtability of the times. If we would ſit ſtill, and be ſtable Chriſtians, we are to lay up known truths in our boſoms, as matters beyond debate; the debating of known truths is a ſin as pernicious as committing of known ſins, and the omitting of known duty, or neglecting of known commands.——Thus we ſee what this ſtability in the faith includes. The mentioning of theſe things plainly ſhow, that it is our ſtrength to ſit ſtill, and to be ſtable and fixed in the faith: there is little ſafety where there is little ſtability.

5thly, The next thing propoſed upon this head was, what this ſtability in the faith *infers*. And I ſhall conſider this queſtion, 1. With reference to the *object*. 2. With reference to the *exerciſe* of this ſtability in the faith. The firſt queſtion will relate to what we are to be *ſtable in*, when ſtable in the faith? and the ſecond to this, *how* we ſhould be eſtabliſhed?

[1.] What this ſtability infers, with reference to the object? And here we ſhall enumerate the following ten particulars on this point.

1. Stability in the faith infers, with reference to the *object*, wherein we are to be ſtable, a ſtability in reſpect of our *principles*: and hence we are called *to hold faith and a good conſcience*, 1 Tim. i. 19.: theſe two make up a right principle, namely, faith and a good conſcience. The *object* of a right principle is the *truth*, which is the object of faith. The *ſubject* of a right principle is *conſcience*, and that a *good* conſcience, a *ſanctified* conſcience; theſe two muſt be joined together, *Hold faith and a good conſcience*. Error is ſeldom accompanied with holineſs: faith and conſcience go well together; many join them very profanely, by ſwearing by them; few join them religiouſly, and hold them faſt together. The Spirit ſpeaks expreſly, that in the latter times ſome ſhall *depart from the faith*, 1 Tim. iv. 1. We do not know what is coming upon us; but it may be that theſe truths we now allow, and approve of, we may come to be aſhamed of, as ſome are at this day of our antient covenanted principles.

2. Stability in the faith infers, ſtability in reſpect of the *promiſes*. We ſee David taking hold of the promiſe, Pſa. lx. 6. *God has ſpoken in his holineſs, I will rejoice:* he ſees the mercy, truth, and holineſs of God are pledged for making out the promiſe. Now, we ought to be ſtable in the faith thereof: many times we take the promiſe, and upon the firſt temptation we caſt it away; but we are to hold the promiſe as we would do our life, ſaying, *Lord, I hope in thy word; Lord, remember the word on which thou haſt cauſed me to hope*. We are to expect good upon the head of the promiſe.

3. Stability in the faith infers, ſtability in reſpect of the *relations* wherein we ſtand to God, and he to us: the church maintains the faith of this, Song ii. 6. *My beloved is mine, and I am his*. And again, Song vii. 10. *I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine*. She ſays it backward and forward, He is *mine*, and I am *his;* and again, I am *his*, and he is *mine:* and, indeed, ſtability in the faith of this, is requiſite when enemies ſay, *Where is thy God?* And what claim have you to him more than others.

4. Stability in the faith infers, ſtability in *duty*, and particularly in the duty of the times, and in preſent duty, that God calls to in his preſent diſpenſations: as it is ſaid of the children of Iſſachar, that they *had underſtanding of the times to know what Iſrael ought to do*, 1 Chron. xii. 32. It may be ſaid of many of us, what Chriſt ſaid of the Phariſees, Mat. xvi. 3. that they *could diſcern the face of the ſky, but could not diſcern the ſigns of the times*. We have ſkill of many things, but no ſkill of preſent duty: but he that is eſtabliſhed in the knowledge of preſent duty, though there ſhould be never ſo many dangers and hazards in the way, he will venture upon duty, and tread upon the neck of hazard. See John xi. 7, 8. *Jeſus ſaid unto the diſciples, Let us go into Judea*. Again, *His diſciples anſwered, Maſter, the Jews of late ſought to ſtone thee, and goeſt thou thither again? Jeſus anſwered, Are there not twelve hours in the day, and while a man walks in the day he ſtumbles not, becauſe he ſeeth the light*. "I have, might he ſay, twelve "hour to walk in, and they are not yet end-"ed; there is no fear of hazard till my day be "done:" let not preſent duty be neglected from the proſpect of hazard. Danger hath many times more bulk in our eye than duty; but, if we follow Chriſt, duty will be more bulky in our eye than danger.

5. Stability in the faith infers, ſtability in our *reſolution* to follow duty. Thus Joſhua, chap. xxiv. 14, 15. when he is dealing with Iſrael, to whom he had been a leader, and endeavouring to confirm them in their reſolution to ſerve the Lord, *Chuſe ye*, ſays he, *whither you will ſerve the gods on this ſide of the flood, or the gods on the other ſide of the flood; but as for me, and my houſe, we will ſerve the Lord*. "Lay your hand to your "heart, might he ſay, and chooſe you whom "you will ſerve, but I am reſolute, I will ſerve "the Lord." Such a ſtability David profeſſes, *I have ſworn, and I will perform, that I will keep thy righteous judgments*.

6. Stability in the faith infers, ſtability in

* This reaſoning has a peculiar reſpect to the act of Parliament, 1710, reſtoring patronage, and the act of Aſſembly, 1732, in veſting heritors and elders with the power of election of miniſters. See above, p. 631, 635, 648.

† Alluding to the proceſs concerning profeſſor Simſon, briefly laid open above, p. 322. 454.

‡ About this time the principles of infidelity were greatly upon the increaſe; and ſeveral of the younger clergy but too juſtly ſuſpected as favourers of deiſtical tenets. Mr. Campbell, profeſſor of eccleſiaſtical hiſtory in St. Andrews, openly publiſhed to the world a ſyſtem of very pernicious principles; and amongſt others, "That the laws of nature, are in themſelves, a certain and ſufficient rule to "direct rational minds to happineſs; and that the obſerving theſe laws is the great mean and inſtrument of our real and laſting felicity." And the author of the *Aſſembly's Catechiſm reviſed*, etc. ſaps all the *Peculiar Doctrines of Chriſtianity*, and ſtrikes at the *whole Scheme of Divine Revelation*, contained in the ſaid Catechiſm. And ſo inſolent were ſome upon this point, that a little after this, one Mr. Nimmo, ſtudent in divinity, in a public diſcourſe in the divinity-hall of Edinburgh, made a blaſphemous attack upon the *whole of Divine Revelation*.

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our *courage* and *boldneſs* to confeſs Chriſt before the world, when others deny him: it is an awful word, Mat. x. 32, 33. *Whoſoever ſhall confeſs me before men, him will I confeſs before my Father which is in heaven; but whoſoever ſhall deny me before men, him alſo will I deny before my Father who is in heaven.* It is recorded to the praiſe of Daniel, that when he was forbidden to pray to God, he is not daunted, but will openly worſhip him with his windows open toward Jeruſalem, when a royal ſtatute and decree was emitted, that whoſoever ſhould aſk a petition of any god or man, for thirty days, ſave of king Darius, he ſhould be caſt into the lions den; Daniel worſhipped God in all the ſolemn circumſtances he had formerly done: ſome might have thought he might have worſhipped and kept his window cloſe, without expoſing himſelf by ſuch a circumſtance; but when even the *circumſtances* of a teſtimony and confeſſion tends to glorify God, and the failing even in *circumſtances* would tend to diſhonour God, and gratify the enemy, they muſt be adhered unto. Hence ſay ſome, "He that cannot be a circum-"ſtantial confeſſor will never be a martyr."

7. Stability in the faith infers, ſtability in our *war* againſt ſin, and in our old and new victories we have obtained over our idols and luſts, that we loſe not that which we have wrought, 2 John ver. 8. *Look to yourſelves, that we loſe not that which we have* GAINED, as the word is in the margin. May we not ſay many times, What we gained in the forenoon we loſe in the afternoon; what victory over ſin we have gained in the evening, we have loſt in the morning; or, what we have gained in the morning, we loſe in evening. Perhaps you have got ſome ground upon your worldly-mindedneſs, ſome time ago; ſome ground upon your paſſion, ſome ground upon your luſts; but, alas! now all is gone. What need have we to look to ourſelves that we be ſtable in our war againſt corruption, ſtedfaſt in maintaining what victories we have got over our luſts!

8. Stability in the faith infers, ſtability in our *ſpiritual frame*, as far as poſſible. It is true, this is the moſt changeable thing in the world; who can ſpeak of a communion frame continuing eight days? yea, or eight hours? It is a very rare thing; yet this ought to be ſtudied, and means of maintaining a ſpiritual frame followed, particularly in the intervals of duty; not only by ſpiritual converſation, but alſo ſpiritual ejaculations towards heaven; *Pray without ceaſing*, ſays the apoſtle; that is, according to ſome, endeavour ſtill to maintain a praying frame.

9. Stability in the faith infers, ſtability in *ſpiritual experience* and experimental knowledge. This helps to courage in unſtable and dangerous times. Paul, ſpeaking of his ſufferings, ſays, *Nevertheleſs I am not aſhamed; for I know in whom I have believed; and I am perſuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him*, 2 Tim. i. 12. "I know what dealings I have "had with him, and what affairs I have com-"mitted to his truſt; I know what meetings "I have had with him, may a believer ſay, "what Bethel viſits I have had from him, and "what Peniel views I have had of him." Trying times may ſhake your experiences, and death will try them, and pehaps bring down twenty of them to one or two: we need to be ſtable and well eſtabliſhed therein.

10. Stability in the faith infers, ſtability in *all the other graces of the Spirit*. It infers ſtability in our *love* and *affection* to Chriſt, and his truth. The church of Epheſus is reproved becauſe ſhe *fell from her firſt love*, Rev. ii. 4. O! where is that love that once you had to Chriſt and his way? But were we ſtedfaſt in the faith, we would be ſtedfaſt in our affections to Chriſt and his cauſe.—It infers ſtability in our *joy*, ſo as to rejoice in Chriſt Jeſus; *Though the fig tree ſhould not bloſſom, yet will I rejoice in the Lord; I will be glad in the God of my ſalvation.*—It infers ſtability in our *hope; Continuing in the faith, grounded and ſettled, ſo as not to be moved away from the hope of the goſpel*, Col. i. 23. What the anchor is to the ſhip, that is hope to the ſoul, *Entering within the vail, and having reſpect to the recompence of reward*, with Moſes; living in expectation of the heavenly Canaan; and in this view preferring a ſhare with the ſuffering Iſraelites before all the riches of Egypt.—It infers ſtability in our *zeal;* many are like Gallio, who care for none of theſe things, whither God or Baal prevail; whither Dagon or the ark be ſet up; whatever religion is in vogue they ſet up for being like Reuben, *Unſtable as water, and cannot excell:* but ſtability in our zeal for God, and his intereſt, is duty at all times, eſpecially in times of greateſt hazard, though it ſhould coſt us the loſs of our lives as well as our livelihood: it will be gain at laſt.——Thus of the object of our ſtability, or what we are to be eſtabliſhed in.

[2.] What this ſtability infers, with reference to the *exerciſe* of this ſtability, or the *duty* of ſtedfaſtneſs.

1. This duty of ſtability infers and carries along with it *grace* in the heart as the predominant ſettler and eſtabliſher of the ſoul, Heb. xiii. 9. *It is a good thing to have the heart eſtabliſhed with grace.* Grace muſt be predominant in that exerciſe, in ſettling the heart in the day of trouble and temptation. Where there is little grace, there is much ebbing and flowing in religion.

2. This duty of ſtability infers, an *immoveable motion*, a conſtant moving, yet always immoveable, 1 Cor. xv. 58. *Be ſtedfaſt and immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord:* the word ſignifies *ever moving*, and yet *never moving;* that is, ever moving within the circle of duty that God has caſt for him, but never moving over God's bounds.

3. This duty of ſtability infers, a continual *watchfulneſs; Watch ye, ſtand faſt in the faith. Let him that thinks he ſtandeth take heed leaſt he fall.* We ought to watch unto prayer; and watch unto the practice of known truth: every freſh diſcovery of truth quickening to the freſh practice of it: we ought to watch againſt ſin and particularly againſt the ſin of a backſliding time, wherein perjury is varniſhed over with the name of prudence. See Iſa. li. 20, 21.

4. This duty of ſtability infers and carries with it, *daily renewed actings of faith* upon the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, 1 Pet. ii. 4. *To whom coming, as to a living ſtone; ye alſo as living ſtones are built up a ſpiritual houſe.* It is a new coming to Chriſt that is there ſpoken of; the ſtable Chriſtian every day faſtens new grips, and takes faſter hold of Chriſt, leſt the former grip and former hold ſhould ſlip.

5. This ſtability infers, a daily *ſucking in the ſap of the ſcriptures, in order to ſpiritual growth and ſpiritual ſtrength*, 1 Pet. ii. 3. *As new born babes, deſire*

fire the ſincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby, 1 Pet. ii. 3. The ſteady Chriſtian will be daily gathering a ſtock of ſcriptures, and a treaſure of truths into his boſom, that when the devil ſets his cannon of temptation againſt him, he may be ready to bring out a cannon of ſcripture quotations out of his boſom, as Chriſt himſelf did, Mat. iv. 3,—11. and thereby defeat the devil, and diſcomfit the ſtrong man.

6. This duty of ſtability infers, a *patient waiting for the appointed time of the promiſe being accompliſhed*; Hab. ii. 3. *The viſion is for an appointed time; but at the end it ſhall ſpeak and not lye: though it tarry, wait for it, becauſe it will ſurely come.* The Lord many times reſerves ſome precious word of promiſe to be made out to his friends, when they come to ſome ſad hour of trial and temptation; *Becauſe thou haſt kept the word of my patience, I will keep thee from the hour of temptation*, Rev. iii. 10. Until the dark hour come, perpaps he will not ſhow himſelf. God promiſes to deliver Iſrael out of Egypt, Exod. iii. 8.; but, behold the Lord keeps the out-making of the promiſe to a Red-ſea, and there he lets it drop into their cup: *The Egyptians whom you have ſeen to-day, you ſhall ſeen them again no more for ever*, Exod. xiv. 13. Think not ſtrange, if ſome ſweet promiſe be reſerved to a Red-ſea that is before you: Iſrael had never known the ſweetneſs of the promiſe, if a Red-ſea had not made it out. God has wonderful ways of making out his word through fire and water.

7. This duty of ſtability infers, a *continual warfare*, and *fighting the good fight of faith*, putting on, and keeping on, the ſpiritual armour, Eph. vi. 11, 12. *And above all, taking the ſhield of faith, whereby we quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.* When the devil is like to ſet all the houſe in a flame with his fiery darts, we are as faſt to bring water from the word of God, and throw it upon the fire to quench it. Yea, not only has faith the waters of the ſanctuary to caſt upon the flames, but alſo the blood of the covenant, the blood of Chriſt, to extinguiſh the fire; *We overcome by the blood of the Lamb.* Why, the believer can go, where the tempter cannot approach, and that is to the *holieſt, by the blood of Jeſus*; or to God, through Jeſus Chriſt, to bring ſtrength from on high.

8. This duty of ſtability in the faith infers, a *living upon things unſeen*, till we get the things that do appear; *We look not at the things that are ſeen, but at the things that are not ſeen; for the things that are ſeen are temporal, but the things that are not ſeen are eternal*, 2 Cor. iv. 18. How did Moſes bear up, when he *choſed affliction with the people of God?* Why, he *endured as ſeeing him who is inviſible*, Heb. xi. 27. Viſible things bulk moſt with us, but they are the moſt changeable things; therefore, they are beſt of in trying times, amidſt all outward changes, who look moſt to the things that are not ſeen, and which are eternal and unchangeable.

9. This duty of ſtability infers, eſpecially in perilous times, a *taking up the croſs*, and yet *leaving the weight of it upon Chriſt*. The croſs of Chriſt is like the yoke of Chriſt, of which he ſays, *My yoke is eaſy, and my burden is light*, Mat. xi. 30. We are not to take it up, in order to bear the weight and burden of it, but only to take it up, and lay the weight of it upon Chriſt himſelf, who ſo orders us, ſaying, *Caſt thy burden on the Lord, and he will ſuſtain thee*, Pſal. lv. 22. Our Lord never requires us to lift a burden, but with a deſign we ſhould lay it upon his own ſhoulders, who is the chief burden-bearer. When he calls us to a warfare, it is upon his own charges; therefore, if we have any faith, we need not be afraid of the croſs of Chriſt; it is rather matter of joy; *Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations*, James i. 2. It is matter of gloriation; *God forbid that we ſhould glory, ſave in the croſs of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, Gal. vi. 14. *We glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope;* Rom. v. 3.

10. This duty of ſtability in the faith, in perilous times, infers a *continuance* in the faith in times of trouble; *If ye continue in my word*, ſays Chriſt, *then are ye my diſciples indeed; and ye ſhall know the truth, and the truth ſhall make you free*, John viii. 31, 32. Who will be the freeſt man in trying times? Even the ſtrickeſt man, who continues moſt firmly in the faith. There is a fourfold work of faith in this continuing exerciſe of it in a day of trouble.

(1.) It is the work of eſtabliſhed faith to take a *new feaſt* upon an *old experience*. The man comes ſometimes to a wilderneſs where there is nothing to be gotten but hunger and want, and then ſits down and ſearches around to find ſomething to ſupport him, and preſently recollects what he has formely enjoyed, and ſo falls upon a five or ſix-year-old experience, a twenty or thirty-year-old experince, and takes a feaſt upon it, ſaying, "For all that is come "and gone, *I will remember the years of the right-* "*hand of the moſt High: I will remember thee from* "*the land of Jordan, and from the hill Mizar.* "*I will remember the works of the Lord; ſurely I* "*will remember thy wonders of old*," Pſal. xlii. 6. lxxvii. 11. It is the work of faith, in the day of trouble, to take a new meal upon an old promiſe, as Jacob did, Gen. xxxii. 12. *Thou ſaidſt, I will ſurely do thee good:* and now, *remember the word on which thou cauſedſt me to hope.*

(2.) It is the work of eſtabliſhed faith, in times of trouble, to ſit down upon the *hill of difficulties* and *ſtraits*, and ſing that pleaſant ſong, *Though the fig-tree ſhould not bloſſom, nor fruit be found in the vine*, &c. *yet will I rejoice in the Lord, and be glad in the God of my ſalvation. Though my houſe be not ſo with God;* though my heart be not ſo with God as I would wiſh, *yet he hath made with me an everlaſting covenant, well ordered in all things and ſure: and this is all my ſalvation, and all my deſire.*

(3.) It is the work of eſtabliſhed faith, in a day of trouble and hiding, ſometimes to make uſe of ſome *common relations to God* as an argument for faith, till it get a more ſpecial relation to feed upon; Pſal. cxix. 73. *Thy hands have made and faſhioned me; give me underſtanding that I may learn thy commandments. Thy hands have made me and faſhioned me;* well, may not any reprobate wretch in the world ſay the ſame thing? True, but they cannot make ſuch an argument of it, *Give me underſtanding that I may learn thy commandments.*—Pſal. xxii. 9, 10. *Thou art he that took me out of the womb*; well, what of that? It follows in the next verſe, *Thou art my God from my mother's belly.*—Faith can take an argument from a general relation, till it get a more ſpecial relation to plead upon.

(4.) It is the work of faith to draw *incouragements* from *diſcouragements*: What more diſcouraging than to be called a *dog?* Matth. xv. 27. yet the poor woman draws incouragement out

of it: *Truth, Lord; yet the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from their master's table.* Hezekiah draws encouragement even from oppression; Isa. xxxviii. 14. *O Lord, I am oppressed, undertake for me.* David draws encouragement even from the *greatest of his sins*, Psa. xxv. ii. *For thy name's sake pardon mine iniquity, for it is great.* He daws an argument from his *weakness*, Psa. vi. 2. *Have mercy upon me, for I am weak:* and sometimes from his *poverty* and *necessity*, Psa. xl. 17. *I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinks upon me.* Established faith will, from guilt, draw an argument for pardon; from pollution, an argument for purification; from sickness, an argument for healing, *&c.*

(5.) It is the work of established faith to *dispute* and *deny* the *conclusions of unbelief*, Psa. lxxxvii. 7, 8, 9. The conclusions of unbelief are, *The Lord will cast off; the Lord will be favourable no more; his mercy is clean gone; his promise fails; he has forgotten to be gracious; he has in anger shut up his tender mercy:* but faith first disputes these conclusions, saying, *Will the Lord cast off for ever? will he be favourable no more? is his mercy clean gone? doth his promise fail for evermore? has he forgotten to be gracious? has he in anger shut up his tender mercy?* It calls these conclusions into debate, disputing and questioning them, and then denies them in the following verse, *I said, this is my infirmity; I will remember the years of the right-hand of the Most High; I will remember the works of the Lord, and his wonders of old.* And whenever faith comes to deny the conclusion of unbelief, then it is at the head of the mount, as it were, at the top of the hill, and a song of triumph in its mouth, *I will remember the years of the right-hand of the Most High, and his works and wonders of old.*

(6.) It is the work of established faith, in a day of the trial of faith, to recover and *restore the soul*, when temptation has thrown it down into the mire. David fell before the temptation that was drawn from the prosperity of the wicked, and adversity of the godly, Psa. lxx. and says, ver. 13. *Verily, I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency; for I am plagued all day long.* Well, but whenever he went to the sanctuary of God by faith, then he recovers himself, and says, *So foolish was I and ignorant; I was as a beast before thee: nevertheless, I am continually with thee: thou holds me by my right-hand; thou wilt guide me by thy counsel, and afterwards receive me into thy glory. Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none in the earth that I desire besides thee. My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.* ——Thus we see what this stability in the faith *infers* and *carries along with it.* I now proceed to the next general head,

III. To shew that this *stability* and *establishment in the faith*, is peoples *strength* and *safety* in perilous time. For opening this head, I shall consider, 1. The *evil* and *disadvantage* of INSTABILITY. 2. The *good* and *advantage* of STABILITY in the faith.

1st, The *evil* and *disadvantage* of INSTABILITY and *unstedfastness* appears in these particulars.

1. Instability in the faith is *hateful* to God, who says, *If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him*, Heb. x. 38. It provokes God to reject people, and to spew them out of his mouth. And why so? Because,

2. Instability in the faith is a greatly *aggravated sin*: it is a sin against knowledge; and the *servant who knows his master's will, and does it not, is to be beaten with double stripes.* It is a sin against profession and engagements, whether national or personal, in baptism and the Lord's supper. It is a sin against great love and mercy.

3. Instability in the faith has *fearful idolatry* wrapt up in it. When, by unbelief, we depart from the *fountain of living waters*, we turn to *earthen cisterns*, which can *hold no water.*

4. Instability in the faith is the *greatest reproach*; it is a leaving of God, even after experience: few have a profession of faith, but have tasted something of the sweetness of God's ways; and now, to prefer sin and lusts, what a reproach is cast upon God?

5. Instability in the faith is worse than *profaneness*, 2 Pet. ii. 21, 22. *It had been better for them, not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment.* Instability being the porch of apostasy, where this is total, it is worse than profanity; for it is a greater sin to renounce Christ, than to refuse him.

6. Instability provokes God to write a *bill of divorce* against a people; it is a sin that separates between God and them; it is just with God to cast them off, when they cast him off. And, wo to a people when God departs from them!

2dly, The next thing was to speak of the *good* and *advantage* of STABILITY and *establishment in the faith:* and therein it will appear, that it is a church or peoples strength to sit still, and abide in the faith. The advantage of stability in the faith may appear in the following particulars.

1. Establishment in the faith puts a man in capacity to *act* for God, Isa. xi. 31. *They that wait on the Lord, shall renew their strength.* And again, *They that know their God shall be strong and do exploits*, Dan. xi. 32. They have strength to do for Christ: if we abide in Christ, by faith then we bring forth fruit to the praise of God.

2. Stability in the faith puts a man in case to *suffer* for Christ, and to continue with him in his temptation; and thereby the Christian is made sure of Christ's legacy; *Ye are they who have continued with me in my temptations, and I appoint unto you a kingdom.* This legacy is secured by the death of the Testator, Luke xxii. 28. The men of the world think they have a poor bargain, who venture all for Christ; but let me see were there is such a noble bargain, and so upmaking for time and eternity.

3. Stability in the faith puts a man in case to *die* for Christ, if he be called to it, Acts xxii. 13. *What mean ye to weep, and break mine heart? I am content not only to be bound, but even to die at Jerusalem for the name of Jesus.* His friends were weeping because he was going up to Jerusalem, where bonds and imprisonments were abiding him: but says he, *I am content not only to be bound, but to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus:* I value my life as well as you do; but when my life, and the Lord of life come in competition, my life shall go, though I had a thousand lives.

4. Stability in the faith puts a man in case to *defeat* the devil; for, by faith, we *quench his fiery darts*, and *resist him stedfastly in the faith.* Satan sought to winnow Peter, but Christ *prayed for him, that his faith might not fail.* This says, the devil has a sieve wherein he sifts and winnows,

nows, and winnows both miniſters and people: and we may well affirm, that Satan has the miniſters and Chriſtians of Scotland now in a ſieve, and he is ſifting and riddling them; and it is like, more chaff than good corn will be found among us: but as for theſe that are ſtable in the faith, Satan loſes his pains and his profit with them; for, they will be able to *overcome, by the blood of the Lamb, and the word of their teſtimony.*

5. Stability in the faith makes a man reach the *deſign* both of the word and rod; it is the end of both to eſtabliſh us in the faith; wherefore comes the word to us, but that we may believe and be ſtrong in the faith? Wherefore comes the rod, but that by the trial of faith it may be ſtrengthened and confirmed? So that upon a man that is eſtabliſhed in the faith both word and rod have got their errand; none of them are in vain.

6. Stability in the faith is an *honourable duty* and *exerciſe*; for, faith is the crown, and ſtedfaſtneſs therein is a keeping of the crown, Rev. iii. 11. *Behold, I come quickly; hold faſt what thou haſt, that no man take thy crown:* and he lays no other burden upon us but this, *Hold faſt till I come*, Rev. ii. 24, 25.

7. Stability in the faith proves a man to be a *true diſciple*, John viii. 31, 32. *If you continue in my word then are ye my diſciples;* and *ye ſhall know the truth, and the truth ſhall make you free.* Men may reckon themſelves free by human laws and acts, though yet they abide not in the truth; but they that know the truth, and abide in it, are free by an act of the court of heaven.

8. Stability in the faith influences our *growth in every grace*; we will never add grace to grace, experience to experience, and faith to faith, unleſs we be ſtable in the faith; *The path of the juſt is as the ſhining light, that ſhineth more and more unto the perfect day.* When we are *ſtedfaſt and immoveable*, then we are *always abounding in the work of the Lord.* Except we ply the oars cloſe, we will go down the ſtream.

9. Stability in the faith evidences *ſincerity* and *uprightneſs* of heart, even as inſtability evidences hypocriſy, Pſal. xxvii. 37. *Their heart was not right with God, neither were they ſtedfaſt in his covenant.* Their unſtedfaſtneſs diſcovered that their heart was not right with God. Now, if you be ſteady and ſtable in the faith it will diſcover that your heart was right with God, and that is the great matter.

10. Stability in the faith makes a man *uſeful in his generation;* though he were alone, yet he is uſeful, as Noah, of whom God ſays, Gen. vii. 1. *Come thou, and all thy houſe, into the ark, for thee only have I found righteous before me in this generation.* How uſeful was he to the preſervation of a remnant! Elijah was alone as a prophet; and how uſeful was he in his day? He is called *the chariots of Iſrael and the horſemen thereof.* And though a man that is ſtable in the faith were of no other uſe but to give his teſtimony for God, exonerate himſelf in his day, it is a matter of conſequence to the generation, both paſt, preſent, and to come.

We need, Sirs, at this day, to exonerate ourſelves at the hands of our forefathers, who are gone; at the hands of our children, who are living; and at the hands of our poſterity that are to come. O Sirs, it is a queſtion we ſhould poſe ourſelves with, are we faithful to our *fathers* that went before us? Are we faithful to theſe that are *cotemporary* with us? And, are we faithful to theſe that are following *after* us, when we ourſelves are rotten in the duſt? —What are we doing, to exonerate ourſelves at the hand of our *forefathers*, who travelled night and day to get a covenanted work of Reformation brought to the pattern of God's word, and committed it to us, having left it whole and ſound at our doors? Alas! how is this work marred and defaced among our hands! How has the generation betrayed the truſt our fathers committed to us? — What are we doing to exonerate ouſelves at the hand of the *preſent generation?* Are we contending for the faith, and for the cauſe of Chriſt, againſt thoſe that are betraying it? —And, what are we doing to exonerate ourſelves at the hands of our *poſterity?* Are we tranſmitting Reformation-work whole and ſound to them? Or rather, are we not tranſmitting to them poiſon, inſtead of wholſom food; traſh, inſtead of truth; lumber and droſs, inſtead of ſilver and gold; and counterfeit, inſtead of good coin?

In a word, ſtability in the faith is our *ſtrength* and *ſafety*, becauſe it is God himſelf, Chriſt himſelf, that is our ſtrength and ſafety; he is the *ſtrength of Iſrael;* and therefore, our ſtrength lies in ſitting ſtill, and fitting near to him: our ſtrength lies not in the *act* of faith, otherwiſe it were enough to have once ſat down upon this foundation; but it lies in the *object* and *ground* of faith, our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; *the Lord our righteouſneſs and ſtrength*, on which alone true faith doth reſt and ſit ſtill: when we ſtay, by faith, in the midſt of our ſtrong tower, we are ſafe, becauſe the ſtrong tower is our ſafety: the ſtrength of faith is God himſelf in Chriſt; therefore, to abide in him, to ſit ſtill and reſt on him alone is our ſtrength. When a man runs to, and reſts upon an impregnable rock, where he is ſafe from the enemy, we do not mean that it is his act of reſting there that ſecures him, but the rock on which he reſts; yet we ſay, it is his ſtrength to ſit ſtill upon the rock, becauſe the rock is his ſtrength: ſo it is our ſtrengh to ſit ſtill on the Rock of ages; becauſe Chriſt the Rock of ages is our ſtrength, and when, by unbelief, we depart from him, then we deſert our ſtrength.

IV. The next thing was the *application.* All the application I offer at the time is in a few *inferences.*

1. If it be ſo, as has been ſaid, hence ſee, what to think of theſe who are ſo far from being *ſtedfaſt in the faith*, that they are ſtedfaſt in a *courſe of ſin;* inſtead of ſitting ſtill upon the Rock of ages, they are ſitting ſtill upon ſandy foundations that will ſink with them; they ſit ſtill in their ſins, and ſit ſtill in their errors, and ſit ſtill in their ſloth and ſecurity. Oh! how dreadful and terrible is their caſe! For God is ſaying to ſuch, Rev. xxii. 11. *He that is unjuſt, let him be unjuſt ſtill; he who is filthy, let him be filthy ſtill;* he that is erroneous, let him be erroneous ſtill; he who is wicked and ungodly, let him be ſo ſtill; he who is *joined to his idols, let him alone.* God is ſaying, Miniſters, let him alone; ordinances, let him alone; providences, let him alone; my Spirit, let him alone; *My Spirit ſhall not always ſtrive with men upon earth.*

2. Hence we may ſee what to think of the *church*

church of Scotland at this day; how dangerous her circumſtances are, when inſtead of ſitting ſtill, and remaining ſtedfaſt in the faith, ſhe is receding and running away from her antient Reformation principles, and purity. How unſtable, like water, is the generation! How great is the apoſtaſy and defection of the day! And here we may ſee, if there ſhall be any ſchiſm, or ſeparation, in the church of Scotland very ſoon, upon the preſent emergency *, that you all know of, who will be the ſciſmatics and ſeparatiſts? Surely not theſe who ſit ſtill and remain ſtedfaſt in the faith, and upon the old foundation, but theſe who go off from our Reformation principles: theſe that ſit ſtill are the ſtrength and ſafety of a church, they that riſe and turn away, the ruin thereof.

3. Hence ſee matter whereby every one may try their *ſtate* and their *ſtrength*, by trying what ſtability they have in the faith. Have you a ſtable and ſtrong faith? (1.) Strong faith is a *fighting* faith; it fights againſt all diſcouragements and overcomes the greateſt difficulties and trials, 1 Sam. xxx. 6. Hab. iii. 17, 18. Heb. xi. 33, 34.; againſt the greateſt temptations to ſin, Heb. xi. 24, 25. (2.) It is a *reſolute* and *wilful* faith; *Though he ſlay me, yet will I truſt in him.* It ſtands not at providences ſeemingly contradicting the promiſe, Rom. iv. 19, 20.; againſt all diſcouragements; *Why art thou caſt down, my ſoul?* (3.) It is a *wreſtling* faith; *I will not let thee go, except thou bleſs me.* (4.) It is a *violent* faith; *The kingdom of heaven ſuffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.* (5.) It is a *diſputing* faith, it diſputes every inch; *Truth, Lord, I am a dog; yet the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from their maſter's table,* Mat. xv. 22. (6.) It is an *urging* and *arguing* faith; it preſſes God with arguments taken from his own name, his own Son, his own promiſe, and his own perfections; mercy, faithfulneſs, truth, &c. (7.) It is a *touching* faith; *Turba premit, fides tangit,* Luke viii. 43,—48. (8.) It is an *humbling* faith, bringing in the deepeſt humility: the more confirmed and eſtabliſhed a perſon is, the more humble. Thus Abraham, *Who am I that have taken upon me to ſpeak unto the Lord, which am but duſt and aſhes?* Job when eſtabliſhed, *Now I abhor myſelf.* Iſaiah, when he got a confirming manifeſtation, ſays, *I am unclean.* Paul alſo, a confirmed Chriſtian, *I am leſs than the leaſt of all ſaints.* (8.) It is a faith that removes all *legal fears*, *terrors*, and *torments*, and yet increaſes godly ſorrow and goſpel repentance. It lives upon Chriſt, and not upon frames and enlargements; the doubting Chriſtian is up and down with his frames, if that be gone he thinks all is loſt; but the eſtabliſhed believer is ſecured in Chriſt, and his everlaſting righteouſneſs; even when the mutable frame is gone, it is not diſcouraged.

4. Hence ſee the *duty* both of *ſinners* and *ſaints*, or *believers*.

[1.] Of *ſinners*, to *ſit down;* we cannot exhort you to ſit ſtill, till once you ſit down, and take reſt in Chriſt. And therefore, O ſinner, ſit down and reſt upon a God in Chriſt as your Rock and reſting-place. Let me adviſe you, take a ſeat for your ſouls to ſit upon. Some of you know what an uneaſy thing it is to want a ſeat for your body, when you are weary walking or weary ſtanding; well, much more uneaſy will it be if you want a ſeat of reſt for your ſouls. Would you have your ſouls rightly ſeated and rightly ſettled? Will you tell me, can you find ſuch a right ſeat in all the world, as a God in Chriſt? Is there any ſeat or centre ſo proper for the ſoul? Is not God the ſeat and centre of the intellectual world? the centre of ſpirits, in whom they can find reſt? Is the world a proper ſeat for your ſouls to ſit down upon? Though you had your barns full, and were ſaying, *Soul, take thy reſt, thou haſt goods laid up for many years:* how ſoon can God ſay, *Thou fool, this night ſhall thy ſoul be required of thee.*—Is your own righteouſneſs a proper ſeat for your ſoul to ſit down and reſt upon, when your righteouſneſs is but *filthy rags;* and when there is as much ſin in your beſt duties as would damn you? Is it poſſible you can think, when death and judgment is before you, that you ſit ſafely enough there? or, do you think that the *devil*, the *world*, or the *fleſh*, can give you reſt and ſatisfaction, though you had all the advantages they can offer you? O ſinner, are you ſeeking to ſettle on this ſide Jordan? Though you ſhould ſit eaſy till the day of death, what will become of you upon the day of judgment? But would you have a ſeat on which you may find everlaſting reſt in death, judgment, and through eternity? Then, O come to Chriſt for reſt, and ſit down upon the Rock of ages. Here is a *high* and *honourable* ſeat; whenever you come to God *you dwell on high, you ſit with Chriſt in heavenly places.*—Here is a *ſoft*, and *eaſy* ſeat, *He will keep him in perfect peace, whoſe mind is ſtayed on him, becauſe he truſteth in him.* Here you may get reſt to your underſtandings in Chriſt, as a Prophet; reſt to your conſciences in him, as a Prieſt; reſt to your hearts in him as a King.—Here is a *ſafe* ſeat; when you reſt upon Chriſt for ſalvation, you cannot but be ſafe; *He that believes ſhall be ſaved.* Your *deſires* will ſit ſafely upon him, who is *the deſire of all nations;* your *hope* will ſit ſafely on him, who is *the hope of Iſrael;* your *delight* will ſit ſafely on him, who is the darling of heaven.—Here is a *ſure* ſeat, *the ſure mercies of David;* a firm ſeat, that cannot fail you in the day of need, and in the time of extremity. The covenant of works was not a firm and ſure ſeat; and to ſit down either directly, or indirectly upon the works of the law, is a ſandy foundation.—Here is a *ready* ſeat and juſt at hand; you need not ſay, *We cannot aſcend to heaven,* to ſit down upon this ſeat, it is near at hand, *I bring near my righteouſneſs;* and this righteouſneſs is the ſeat you are to ſit down upon.—And it is an *everlaſting* ſeat, an everlaſting righteouſneſs, where you may ſit ſafe and eaſy for ever. O ſeek not reſt any where elſe; ſit down under the ſhadow of the Almighty. But you may aſk, How ſhall I ſit down? Why, be convinced of the ſinfulneſs of your rambling among the creatures for help, relief, and reſt; and that in vain *is ſalvation looked for from the hills or from multitude of mountains.* Though you were to ſit down upon mountains of prey, mountains of gold or ſilver, this would not give reſt or relief to your ſouls; *riches profit not in the day of wrath.* Mountains of creature-aids and outward means will not do; therefore, cry to God, that he may ſet your feet upon a rock; upon himſelf, the Rock of ages; and cauſe you to ſit down under his ſhadow. The almighty power muſt make you willing and able: O cry then for a day of power.

[2.] The duty of *ſaints*, is to *ſit ſtill* and abide

* Our Author here, without doubt, alludes to the conduct of the Church-judicatories, in their proſecution at this time carrying on againſt the four Brethren, formerly briefly narrated, p. 661.

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in Christ by faith, and to sit still in respect of stability in the faith. And that I may the more distinctly direct you to this, I would have you consider this stability,

(1.) As a *privilege* secured to you; this should excite you to it; for, as in working out *salvation-work*, we could have no encouragement if God had not promised to work in us, *both to will and to do*; so, in *stability in the faith*, we could have no encouragement, if this stability was not secured.

(2.) Consider it as a *duty*, and I would direct you to it in the following particulars.

1. O believer, labour after *growth in grace*, and particularly after *establishing grace*: There are these establishing graces; *knowledge*, Isa. xxxiii. 6. *Wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of the times. The people that know their God shall be strong, and do exploits*, Dan. ix. 32.—*Faith*, Isa. vii. 9. *If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established.* See 2 Chron. xx. 20.—*Patience*, James v. 8. *Be patient, and stablish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.*—*Love*, Song viii. 6, 7. *Love is strong as death*, &c.; *Many waters cannot quench love*, &c.—*Joy*, Neh. viii. 12. *The joy of the Lord is their strength.*—*Humility*, James iv. 6, 10. Self-confidence is the greatest weakness; Peter was weak when proud; humility is a man's going out of himself, and laying all his weight upon the Lord, who looks to the humble, hears the desires of the humble, and gives grace to the humble.—*Fear*, Psalm cxii. 1, 8. *Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord; he shall not be afraid of evil-tidings, his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord; his heart is established*, &c.—*Hope*, Psalm xl. 1, 2. Rom. viii. 24. 1 John iii. 3.—Again, as you would endeavour, through grace, to grow in established graces; so,

2. To improve establishing *means: prayer* is an establishing mean, Psalm cxxxviii. 3. *I cried to the Lord, and he answered me, and strengthened me with strength in my soul.*—*Praise*, Psalm xliii. 4, 5. *Upon the harp will I praise thee*; then it follows, *Why art thou cast down, my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? still hope in God, for I shall yet praise him.*—*Communicating*, while he is known in the breaking of bread, the bread of life is strengthening.—*Fellowship* with the saints, confirming one another, Heb. x. 23, 24, 25. *As iron sharpeneth iron, so doth the countenance of a man his friend.*—Diligent *attendance* on *ordinances*; the voice of Christ is quickening and strengthening: *faith comes by hearing*; and establishment in faith comes the same way.—*Meditation*, and *spiritual conversation*, and *communication*, are strengthening.

3. Seek after established *manifestations*, John ii. 11. *He manifested forth his glory, and his disciples believed on him*; that is, their faith was established and confirmed.—Manifestations have a *convincing* light, and over-powering evidence, making clouds flee away, and dashing the bottom out of all their doubts; thus Thomas, *My Lord, and my God.*—Manifestations have an *instructive* light; from darkness, wavering proceeds; and what we know darkly we easily suspect: but see Psalm xx. 6. *Now, I know that the Lord saves his anointed*; that is, now I understand it more distinctly.—In manifestations there are *tastes* of his goodness and sweetness, and this is a spring of stability: dry notions will never make a man stable: while the truth is not received in love, they will soon quit it for delusion; but when they have a sense of it, then their sense will plead better than learning and rhetoric; like a philosopher telling a man the sun is not shining, the grass is not green.—Manifestations carry *power* in them: there is a heart-burning power; this power will embolden the believer to avouch and plead for the truth, whosoever be against it, and whatever it costs, when they find the good effects of it in their own souls.—Manifestations carry still a *suitableness* to the case, trial, and necessity of the person to whom he manifests himself: when Abraham is to leave his fathers house, and to go, not knowing whither; to leave friends, means, relations, the Lord manifests himself to him as God Almighty, God All-sufficient.—These manifestations exactly meet with their *necessities*, and this makes them abide by him.—Manifestations always *humble*; and humility is the strength of all other graces: "What is the first grace? humility, said one of the fathers: What is the next? humility: What is the third? humility;" and so on, intimating, that this is a bulwark to every other grace. Hence,

4. Take heed of these things that *hinder* stability: as *pride*; *Pride goes before a fall. God resists the proud.* Remember Peter.—*Worldliness*: See 2 Tim. iv. 10. *Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world*, 2 Tim. vi. 9, 10.—*Idleness*; *The hand of the diligent maketh rich, but idleness makes him poor*, in grace, poor in purse.—*Needless fellowship with wicked company*; *He that walks with the wise, shall be wise; but a companion of fools shall be destroyed. A man shall not be established by wickedness*, Prov. xii. 3. But the heart is established by grace.

5. Seek much after establishing *breathings* of the Holy Ghost. The disciples were letting their grips go, and Christ breathed on them, and says, *Receive ye the Holy Ghost.* Much of the Spirit will bring about much reformation in the matters of God. Be content of the Spirit's comforting and supporting influences, under trials, without seeking any visible signs for your confirmation. The Jews seek a sign from Christ, but says he, *No sign shall be given you, but that of the prophet Jonas; as Jonas was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.* Here is the sign, ye shall get many a cross; and I will strengthen you to bear them; and if you be not satisfied with these signs, ye will but tempt him. All the breathings of the Spirit are of an establishing nature; his quickening, sanctifying, and comforting influences. Wait the time of the Spirit's breathing, and of this wind of heaven blowing. Wait at the shore; though you cannot command the wind to blow; and be easy though he reserves the sweetest confirmation to the saddest times. Christ cures the blind man, John ix.; the Pharisees drag him from court to court, till at last they cast him out and excommunicate him; but then Christ took him in, and manifested himself; *Dost thou now believe? Who is he that I should believe?* says the man; Christ shows himself to him, and then he believed and worshipped. Well, perhaps a time of sweet consolation and confirmation is reserved till ye be cast out by a corrupt kirk and clergy, or to a more troublesome time, when you are at the extremity. He will season all with a new manifestation, a new communication.

6. Be *cautious*, and *jealous of yourselves*, and *watchful*; *Let him who thinks he standeth, take heed lest he fall.* Perhaps, you have laid up some

truths in your bosom beyond all debate, but in the hour of trial you may be in hazard to quit them: who would have thought that the disciples would debate whether Christ was the *Saviour of the world*, the *Saviour of Israel*, after the many confirmations he gave of this? Yet, they not only debate it, but are in hazard to quit it, Luke xxiv. 22. "Oh! it would make a heart break to hear such language; *We thought he was the Saviour of Israel; he that should have redeemed Israel*:" there it was all quit to a *thought*. O then, Sirs, beware of witchcraft; *O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you?* &c. Gal. iii. 1. The devil and his instruments sometimes cast a kind of fascination over our eyes, to hide the beautiful face of truth, to make it look ill-favoured; beware of the devil's deception; he can make perjury look like prudence; and honesty, like rebellion against judicatories, &c. You may be confirmed in the faith, and yet make such a sudden change, as to cause all honest ministers and Christians wonder at you, as Paul says, Gal. i. 6. *I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him who hath called you to another gospel.* Beware of letting the fear of losses and crosses affrighten you; you may make fair offers of following Christ, and yet forsake him in the view of the cross. There came a man to Christ, Mat. viii. 19. saying, *Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest:* Christ will hardly get a fairer offer from any here; but what says Christ to him? *The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.* What hinders the performance of this fair offer? Why, you must make yourself ready for losses and crosses, and follow Christ naked. Many men and women come the length of the cross, and there they bury all their resolutions. The cross has been the burial-place of many vows and promises; therefore, see that you be not scared and terrified with the fear of losses and crosses; know that what you lose for Christ will be the surest gain.

I might here add some *encouragements* to engage you to this duty.

(1.) If stability in the faith is the strength and security of the church, in most perilous times, then let us sit still and be stable, because the *most perilous time* is the very *season* wherein God has in all generations, made the most signal appearances for his church, in so much, that we have no more ado, in effect, when perilous times come, but to stand still; or, which is the same thing, to *sit still, and see the salvation of God.* Here I would offer eight instances of signal appearances in most perilous times: particularly in the first defection by sin; when our first parents fell; there God appeared in the first promise, wherein the devil was sentenced.—Israel's oppression in Egypt; then is Moses born; then the Lord appeared gloriously.—The Assyrians rage, under Sennacherib, against Jerusalem; then the Lord sent his angel.—Haman threatened the destruction of the Jews; then the Lord appeared, and brought about their deliverance.—Christ the Head laid in the grave, then the Lord appeared making that dark hour the porch of light and life.—The Jewish and Pagan persecutions against the first Christians, the Lord made these the mean of propagating the gospel, and the blood of the martyrs the seed of the church.—The antichristian tyranny, wherein the whore was drunk with so much blood, issued in the glorious Reformation; the Lord appearing in his glory building up Zion.—The bloody reigns in Britain, particularly in Scotland; the martyrdom in the late times, issued in the Lord's appearing by the merciful Revolution.—And now, when troubles and trials take place, our God is not dead; he *will arise and have mercy upon Zion. The Lord sits upon the floods: the Lord sits King for ever.* Hence,

(2.) To sit still in perilous times, is to *sit where God sits;* he sits upon the floods, and they sit with Christ upon his throne, not only when they come to heaven, but by faith upon earth; they sit and reign with Christ: as they shall judge the world at the last day, so they rule and judge even in this life, Psalm ii. 9. compared with Rev. ii. 26, 27. and with Psalm cxlix. 6, 7, 8, 9. This is the honour of all the saints; and hence the saints who are faithful to God in their day, not only judge and condemn the world, by their practice and their testimony, but in some respects execute the sentence against them, so as to torment them, Rev. xi. 10. *The two witnesses tormented them who dwelt upon the earth.*

(3.) To sit still is to sit *easy* amidst all the overflowing floods, because we sit still and rest upon him who sits upon the floods: this may give ease amidst whatever floods you are surrounded with. Is it a flood of tribulation, temptation, reproach? &c. the *Lord sits upon the floods*, and makes the floods his footstool, his throne. He treads upon the floods, and reigns amidst the floods, and makes the floods his chariot, wherein he rides, and his bench, whereon he judges righteously.

(4.) When we sit still by faith, we *glorify God*, and *edify men;* we honour God, and exonerate ourselves at the hands of men, both in the former, present, and following generations, as I said before.

SERMON LX.

FAITH'S PLEA upon GOD'S COVENANT *.

PSALM lxxiv. 20. *Have respect unto the covenant.*——

THE psalmist, in pleading for the church and people of God, and that he would appear for them against their enemies, uses several arguments; particularly, in the close of the preceding verse, there is something he pleads God may not FORGET, *Forget not the*

* This was an evening-exercise on a preparation-day, before the celebration of the sacrament of the Lord's supper, at Kinglassie. The exact time cannot be precisely ascertained; but it is supposed to have been in the year 1733.

congregation

congregation of thy poor for ever; and the rather he uſes this argument, becauſe he had ſaid, Pſal. ix. 18. *The needy ſhall not be forgotten; the expectation of the poor ſhall not periſh for ever.* There is, in this verſe, ſomething he pleads, that God may REMEMBER and have regard unto, *Have reſpect unto the covenant.* Thou haſt brought us into covenant with thee, might he ſay, and though we are unworthy to be reſpected, yet *have reſpect unto the covenant* of promiſe. When God delivers his people, it is in rememberance of his covenant, Lev. xxvi. 42. *Then will I remember my covenant with Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob; and I will remember the land.* We cannot expect he will remember us, till he remember his covenant: hence, therefore, we propoſe to illuſtrate the following truth.

DOCT. *That one of faith's ſtrong pleas with God is, that he would have reſpect to the covenant.*

If we would deal with God for mercy, or plead with him for favour, or look to him for any good at this occaſion, let us expect it only upon this ground, the reſpect he hath to the covenant, and plead upon this argument.

The method we would obſerve, as the Lord ſhall aſſiſt, for briefly handling this ſubject, ſhall be the following.

I. What *covenant* it is he will have a reſpect to.

II. What it is for God to have a *reſpect* to the covenant.

III. What it is *in* the covenant he hath a reſpect to.

IV. What *kind* of a reſpect he hath to it.

V. *Why* he hath reſpect to it, and ſo why it is a *ſuitable plea* and argument in ſuing for mercy.

VI. Make ſome *application* of the whole.

I. We are then firſt to ſhew what *covenant* it is he will have a reſpect to. The covenant here ſpoken of is the covenant of *grace* and *promiſe*, made in Chriſt Jeſus *before the world began*, and publiſhed in the goſpel to ſinners. Jer. xxxii. 39, 40. *And I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them. And I will make an everlaſting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they ſhall not depart from me.* Ezek. xxxvi. 26. *A new heart alſo will I give you, and a new Spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the ſtony heart out of your fleſh, and I will give you an heart of fleſh*, &c. Jer. xxxi. 35. *But this ſhall be the covenant that I will make with the houſe of Iſrael, After thoſe days, ſaith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and will be their God; and they ſhall be my people.* See alſo Pſalm lxxxix. throughout. It is called a covenant of *grace*; becauſe grace is the beginning and the end, the foundation and top-ſtone of it; even grace reigning through righteouſneſs.—It is called a covenant of *mercy*; becauſe therein mercy to the miſerable is proclaimed through juſtice-ſatisfying blood; for there *mercy and truth meet together*; and all *the ſure mercies of David* are conveyed thereby.—It is called a covenant of *peace* and *reconciliation*; becauſe it both treats of peace with God, and makes it good.—It is called a covenant of *promiſe*; becauſe it lies in promiſes with reference to us; and theſe to be accompliſhed upon the condition already fulfilled in Chriſt's obedience and ſatisfaction; and becauſe therein the faithfulneſs of God is pledged, for making out all the promiſes to believers, the children of promiſe.—It is called a covenant of *ſalt*; becauſe it is an incorruptible word, *An everlaſting covenant, well ordered in all things and ſure.*—In a word, it is a covenant of *help* to poor, helpleſs ſinners, ſaying, *I have laid help upon One that is mighty. O Iſrael, thou haſt deſtroyed thyſelf, but in me is thy help.*—It is a covenant of *pardon* to the guilty, ſaying, *I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy tranſgreſſions for mine own ſake, and I will not remember thy ſins.*—It is a covenant of *ſupply* to the needy, ſaying, *When the poor and needy ſeek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirſt, I, the Lord, will hear them, I, the the God of Iſrael, will not forſake them.*—It is a covenant of *gifts*, wherein grace and glory are freely given; and, in the diſpenſation thereof, God ſays, Come, and take all freely, himſelf, his Chriſt, his Spirit, and all, Rev. xxii. 17. Iſa. lv. 1.

II. We are to ſhew what it is for God to have *reſpect* to the covenant.

1. God hath reſpect to the covenant when he *remembers* it, and ſo remembers us, as in that forecited, Lev. xxvi. 24. *I will remember my covenant, and then will I remember the land.* Thus Pſal. cxi. 5. *He hath given meat to them that fear him.* Why, he will ever be mindful of his covenant. If he come to give us meat to feed our ſouls at this occaſion, the ground will be, he will be mindful of his covenant, mindful of his promiſe.

2. God may be ſaid to have reſpect to his covenant, when he *regards* it. He hath no reaſon to have reſpect or regard to us, but he ſees reaſon to have a regard to his covenant; he puts honour upon it, for reaſons that I ſhall afterwards ſhew, only I will ſay here, his honour is engaged therein, therefore he ſays, *My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips*, Pſal. lxxxix. 34. He hath more regard to it than he hath to heaven and earth; for he ſays, *Heaven and earth ſhall paſs away, but my words ſhall not paſs away.* He hath ſuch a regard to it, that he will never break it, but ever keep it.

3. He hath reſpect to his covenant, when he *eſtabliſhes* it. And when we pray, that he would have *reſpect to the covenant*, we not only pray he would *remember* the covenant, and *regard* the covenant, but *eſtabliſh* the covenant betwixt him and us, as he ſaid to Abraham, Gen. xvii. 7. *I will eſtabliſh it between me and thee, and thy ſeed after thee.* He ſhews reſpect to the covenant, when he makes the covenant take hold of us, and makes us take hold of the covenant; for then he makes us put reſpect upon him, and upon his covenant.

4. He hath reſpect to the covenant, when he *performs* the covenant-promiſes, according to Mic. vii. 20. *Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou haſt ſworn to our fathers from the days of old:* and he does this, when he acts according to the covenant, or according to the mercy that made the promiſe, and the truth that is engaged to make out the promiſe.

In ſhort, the ſum of this prayer, as it concerns the import of the word RESPECT, *Have reſpect to the covenant*, is, "Lord, remember the "covenant, and ſo remember me; Lord, have

regard

" regard to the covenant, and let me be re-
" membered on this ground, when there is
" no other reaſon why I ſhould be regarded;
" Lord, eſtabliſh thy covenant with me, and
" ſo put honour upon thy name manifeſted in
" that coverrant, and do to me according to the
" promiſe of the covenant. Cauſe me hope in
" thy word, and then *remember the word on which
" thou haſt cauſed me to hope;* and deal with me
" not according to my ſin and deſert, but ac-
" cording to thy covenant and mercy in Chriſt
" Jeſus."

III. We are next to ſhew what it is *in* the covenant he hath a reſpect to, or that we ſhould plead upon.

1. *Have reſpect to the covenant;* that is, to the *Mediator* of the covenant. Though thou oweſt no reſpect to me, yet doeſt thou not owe reſpect; and haſt thou not a great reſpect to the Mediator of the covenant, to Chriſt, whom thou haſt *given to be a covenant of the people?* For his ſake let me be pitied; have reſpect to the relation he bears to the covenant, even to him who is the Mediator, Teſtator, Witneſs, Meſſenger, Surety, and All of the covenant. Have reſpect to his offices, and let him get the glory of his ſaving offices. It is a ſtrong plea to plead with God upon the reſpect he bears to Chriſt; God cannot win over ſuch a plea as that. He muſt own his regard and reſpect to Chriſt, who paid ſuch reſpect to him, and *finiſhed the work he gave him to do.*

2. Have reſpect to the covenant, by having reſpect to the *blood* of the covenant. The blood of Chriſt, that is repreſented in the ſacrament of the ſupper, it is the *blood of the covenant*, called, *The new teſtament in* his *blood;* becauſe all the promiſes are ſealed therewith, and ſo *Yea and Amen in Chriſt:* this is the condition of the new covenant. The covenant of works had only the *active* obedience of the firſt Adam for its condition; but the condition of the covenant of grace properly, is both the *active* and *paſſive* obedience of the ſecond Adam, his doing and dying. Now, Lord, have reſpect to that blood that ſealed the covenant: ſince the condition is fulfiled to thy infinite ſatisfaction, let the promiſed good be conferred upon me.

3. Have reſpect to the covenant, by having reſpect to the *oath* of the covenant, Heb. vi. 17. The promiſe is confirmed with the oath of God; *That by two immutable things, wherein it is impoſſible for God to lye, we might have ſtrong conſolation,* &c. Now, Lord, wilt thou not have reſpect to thine own oath? Haſt thou not *ſworn by thy holineſs, thou will not lie unto David?*

4. Have reſpect to the covenant, by having a reſpect to the *properties* of the covenant. This would be a large field; I ſum it up in a few words. Have reſpect to the covenant; that is, Lord, have reſpect to the *fulneſs* of the covenant, and let me be ſupplied, for there is enough there; it contains *all my ſalvation, and all my deſire.*—Have reſpect to the *freedom* of the covenant, and let me, however unworthy, ſhare of the grace that runs freely thence.—Have reſpect to the *ſtability* of the covenant, and let me be pitied, though unſtable as water, and infirm, yet the covenant ſtands faſt; remember thy word that *endures for ever.*—Have reſpect to the *order* of the covenant, that *is well ordered in all things,* as well as *ſure. Though my houſe be not ſo with God,* ſays David, *yet he hath made with me an everlaſting covenant, well ordered in all things, and ſure.* Though my houſe be out of order, and heart out of order, and my frame out of order, and all be in confuſion with me, yet ſee, according to thy covenant, to order all well.

IV. We proceed to ſhew what *kind* of a reſpect he hath to the covenant, that we may be the more engaged to plead upon it.

1. He hath a *great* and *high* reſpect to the covenant. It is the covenant of the great God, with his great and eternal Son, for the honour and glory of his great name; and therefore, he cannot but have a great and high reſpect unto it. His great name is manifeſted in it; and therefore, when we plead his reſpect to the covenant, we plead, in effect, ſaying, *What wilt thou do for thy great name?*

2. He hath a *dear* and *lovely* reſpect to the covenant; for, it is the covenant of his *grace* and *love*, wherein he ſhews his infinite love to Chriſt, and through him to a company of wretched ſinners. It is a covenant of *kindneſs*, Iſa. liv. 10. *My kindneſs ſhall not depart from thee, neither ſhall the covenant of my peace be removed, ſaith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee;* intimating, his covenant of peace, is a covenant of kindneſs, wherein he manifeſts his deareſt love; therefore, he hath a dear reſpect to it.

3. He hath a *full* reſpect to the covenant, a reſpect to every promiſe of it; *They are all Yea and Amen, to the glory of God*, 2 Cor. i. 20. He hath a reſpect to all of them, becauſe they *are all Yea and Amen*, and becauſe they are all thus ratified in Chriſt, to the glory of God. He hath a reſpect to every article of the covenant, *Not a jot ſhall fall to the ground.*

4. He hath an *everlaſting* reſpect to the covenant; therefore it is called *an everlaſting covenant;* it is ſecured by an everlaſting righteouſneſs; it is made between everlaſting parties; it is repleniſhed with everlaſting bleſſings; it is rooted in his everlaſting love: therefore he is ever *mindful of his covenant*, and will never ceaſe to have a reſpect to it.

Well then, ſay you, what need we pray and plead, that he would have reſpect to his covenant? Why, if it be ſure that he hath, and will for ever have, a reſpect to the covenant, then we may pray with the more aſſurance and confidence; ſo that there is here ſtrong footing for our prayer: but beſides, when we pray, and ſay, *Have reſpect unto the covenant*, we ſeek, that he would ſhew the reſpect that he hath unto it, that he would ſhew and make it manifeſt unto us, that we may have the faith of it, and enjoy the fruits of it, and the bleſſed effects of that reſpect to it, in our participations of the bleſſings thereof.

V. The next thing was, To ſhew *why* he will have reſpect to his covenant; and conſequently, whence it is ſuch a *ſuitable plea* and argument for us. Why,

1. When he hath a reſpect to the covenant, he hath reſpect to *himſelf;* the framer of it he owns himſelf to be, Pſal. lxxxix. 3. *I have made a covenant with my choſen.* Why then, the ſtrength of the plea is, *Have reſpect to the covenant*, and ſo have reſpect to thyſelf, and thy own glorious name and attributes, and let them be glorified, in ſhewing regard to the covenant.—Have reſpect to thy *wiſdom* that ſhines in the contrivance of the covenant, *The manifold wiſdom of God;*

God; yea, the wiſdom of God in a myſtery that here appears.—Have reſpect to thy *power* that ſhines in the efficacy of the covenant, not only for over-powering principalities and powers, but overcoming thyſelf, and the power of thine own wrath, by the power of thy love.—Have reſpect to thy *holineſs*, that ſhines in the holy oath of Jehovah, by which it is confirmed, and the holy obedience of Jeſus, by which it it fulfilled; ſo that, as *by the* SINFUL *diſobedience of one, many were made ſinners, by the* HOLY *obedience of another* GLORIOUS ONE, *many are made righteous.*—Have reſpect to thy *juſtice*, that ſhines in the blood of the covenant, the ſacrifice by which juſtice hath condign and infinite ſatisfaction.—Have reſpect to thy *mercy* and *grace*, that reigns through this righteouſneſs to eternal life.—Have reſpect to thy *truth* and *faithfulneſs*, that ſhines in accompliſhing all the promiſes of the covenant, upon the ground of Chriſt's having fulfilled the condition.—Have reſpect unto thy *eternity* and *immutability*, in the unchangableneſs of the covenant; ſhew that thou art God, and changeſt not.——Thus have reſpect to thyſelf.

2. When he hath reſpect to the covenant, he hath reſpect to his Son CHRIST, the centre of it, and in whom it ſtands faſt, as he owns, Pſal. lxxxix. 28. *My covenant ſhall ſtand faſt with him.* Why then, the ſtrength of the plea is, *Have reſpect to the covenant*, and ſo ſhew reſpect to thy Son: have reſpect to him in his *perſon*, as he is thy Son and our Saviour; IMMANUEL, God-man; in his divinity, wherein he is equal with God; in his humanity, wherein he is the maſter-piece of God's work.—Have reſpect to him in his *purchaſe*, which is the ſubſtance of the covenant bought with his blood.—Have reſpect to his *death* and *reſurrection*; for thou loveſt him on this account, John x. 17. *Therefore doth the Father love me, becauſe I lay down my life, that I may take it* up *again*; where we ſee that Chriſt, as dying and riſing in the room of his people, is the object of the Father's love, delight, and eſteem.—Have reſpect unto his *interceſſion*, wherein he prays for all the bleſſings of the covenant that he hath purchaſed: doth not the Father hear him always?—Have reſpect to his *commiſſion*, which is ſealed by thee; for, *Him hath God the Father ſealed*, anointed, and authorized unto all ſaving offices, relations, and appearances: let him get the glory of all theſe. O ſtrong plea!

3. When he hath reſpect to the covenant, he hath reſpect to his *Spirit*, the great applyer of the covenant-bleſſings, and executor of the teſtament, ſealed with the blood of Chriſt, and by whom covenant-love is ſhed abroad upon the heart, Rom. v. 5. Why then, the ſtrength of the plea is, *Have reſpect to the covenant*; that is, have reſpect to thy own Spirit, that he may get the glory of applying by his power, what Chriſt hath purchaſed by his blood.—Have reſpect to the *promiſe* of the Spirit that thou haſt made, that *when he is come, he ſhall convince the world of ſin, righteouſneſs, and judgment*, and teſtify of Chriſt, and glorify Chriſt, by ſhewing the things of Chriſt.—Have reſpect to the *offices* of the Spirit, as he is a Convincer, Sanctifier, and Comforter, according to the order and method of the covenant.—Have reſpect to the *honour* of the Spirit, who is the *all in all* of the covenant, in point of power, and powerful manifeſtation, communication, and operation.—Have reſpect unto the *relations* of the Spirit, as he is the Spirit of the Father and of the Son; the Spirit of the covenant, and of all the covenanted ſeed. Hence,

4. When he hath reſpect to the covenant, he hath reſpect to his *people*, on the account of the covenant of promiſe; for *they, as Iſaac was, are the children of promiſe*, Gal. iv. 28. Why then, the ſtrength of the plea and argument here is, Lord, *Have reſpect to the covenant*, and ſo ſhew regard and reſpect to us. We have no confidence to claim any reſpect at thy hand, but merely upon the account of the reſpect thou haſt to thy covenant.—Have reſpect to our *perſons* on this ground, ſince the covenant provides acceptance *in the Beloved*, Eph. i. 6. Look upon us in the face of thine Anointed, and in the glaſs of the new covenant.—Have reſpect to our *prayers* and *performances* on this ground, ſince the covenant hath provided much incenſe, to perfume the prayers and offerings of all ſaints, upon the golden altar that is before the throne, Rev. viii. 3.—Have reſpect to our *tears*, when we ſigh and groan, and mourn and weep before thee, ſince the covenant provides a bottle for our tears, Pſalm lvi. 8. *Put thou my tears in thy bottle.*—Have reſpect to our *needs* on this ground, when we are hardened, that we can neither pray nor weep, nor ſhed a tear, ſince the covenant provides ſupply to the poor and needy, Phil. iv. 19. *My God ſhall ſupply all your need, according to his riches, in glory, by Chriſt Jeſus.*

VI. I would now proceed to make ſome *application* of the ſubject in theſe four *inferences*.

1. Hence ſee a mark and character of *true believers*, that are fit for a *communion-table*, they are of God's mind; he hath a reſpect to the covenant, and they have a reſpect unto the covenant; and hence they know what it is to plead with God upon the reſpect that he hath to the covenant: they could not do ſo, if they had not a high reſpect to it themſelves; they have ſuch a reſpect to the covenant in kind as God hath.—They have a *great* reſpect to it, ſo as they eſteem it more than all things in the world; they would not give one promiſe of it, on which they have been cauſed to hope, for all the gold of Ophir.—They have a *dear* and *kindly* reſpect to it, as all their ſalvation and all their deſire; yea, and all their delight alſo. The word of grace is *ſweeter* to them *than the honey and the honey-comb.*—They have a *full* and *univerſal* reſpect unto it, and to all the promiſes of it; they reſpect the promiſe of purity as well as the promiſe of pardon; the promiſe of ſalvation from ſin, as well, and as much as the promiſe of ſalvation from hell; the promiſe of holineſs as well as of happineſs. As they have a reſpect to all God's commandments; ſo they have a reſpect to all God's promiſes; and particularly, as David had his golden pſalms, ſo they have their golden promiſes that they are made to hing upon.—Yea, they have an *everlaſting* reſpect to the covenant, and to the promiſes thereof, even when their frame fails them; when their ſweet enjoyments fail them, yet their reſpect to the covenant remains, and their reſpect to the Maker of the covenant, to the Mediator of the covenant, to the blood and oath of the covenant, to the Spirit of the covenant, and to the bleſſings and benefits of it. They have an everlaſting reſpect to the *grace* of the covenant of grace; they are adorers and admirers

admirers of free grace. They have an everlasting respect to, and remembrance of the *words* of the covenant, particularly these words that have been let in with any life and power upon their soul, or that they have been caused to hope upon; whatever they forget, they can never forget such a word, that brought life to their souls; *I will never forget thy words*, says David; *for by them thou hast quickened me.* They have such an everlasting respect to the covenant, that, when they have nothing in the world to trust to, they will rely on the covenant, and confide in such a promise, and plead upon it, saying, Lord, *Have respect to the covenant.*

2. Hence we may see the *misery* of these that are *unbelievers*, and remain *strangers to the covenant of promise*, and have no respect to the covenant. It is misery enough, that God hath no respect to you; no respect to your *person* nor *prayers*, as it is said, *To Cain and his offerings God had no respect*, Gen. iv. 5. So God hath no respect either to your persons or performances; they are an *abomination to him.* Your prayers to him are but *like the howling of a dog*, if you have never taken hold of his covenant, nor seen the respect that God hath to the covenant. You have no respect to God, while you have no respect to that which he respects so highly.—And as he hath no respect to your persons or performances, so he hath no respect to your *tears*; they never flowed from faith's views of a pierced Christ.—He hath no respect to your *souls*, the *redemption thereof ceaseth for ever*, because you have no due respect to the Redeemer's blood and righteousness.—He hath no respect to your *communicating*; nay, he disapproves of it, and discharges you to sit down at his table, on peril of eating and drinking your own damnation.—God hath no regard nor respect to your *salvation*, because you have no regard nor respect to the Saviour he hath provided and offered. God thinks as little to damn you, as you think little to dishonour him. God thinks as little of you, as you little think of sin, and he hath as little respect to you, as you have little respect to Christ and to the covenant. Wo to you, if you remain in this case; for the day is coming wherein God will, before all the world, shew no more respect to you, than to say to you, *Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.* But,

3. Hence we may see the *happiness of believers*, that have such a respect to the covenant, as I was speaking of, a great, dear, full, and perpetual respect to it, and to the Mediator of it, who have taken hold of the covenant through grace, and who know what it is to take hold of God in the covenant, to take hold of God in a promise, and to hold him by his word, and rely upon him in it, saying, Lord, *Have respect to the covenant*; here is your great happiness, God hath a respect to you: What respect? Even to your persons and offerings, as it is said of Abel, Gen. iv. 4. God had a respect to him and to his offerings. Though you be saying in your heart, Oh! how can he have a respect to me, black and vile, and guilty me? Why? not for your sake indeed, be it known unto you, but for his covenant's sake, and his name's sake. He hath a respect to your praying and praising, and communicating; because he hath a respect to the covenant.—He hath a respect to your *name*; though *the name of the wicked shall rot*, your *name shall be in everlasting remembrance*; for God hath put his name in you; something of Christ in you, something of the covenant in you. Some observe, when Abram's name was turned to Abraham, that there was some of the letters of the name Jehovah put in Abram's name. Indeed, God gives the believer a *new name*, that he hath a respect unto.—He hath a respect to your *suits* and *supplications*; *I have heard Ephraim bemoaning himself. O my dove, that art in the clifts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs; let me hear thy voice, let me see thy countenance; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.*—He hath a respect to his beloved doves, when pouring out their hearts before him; that voice that the world laughs at, God hath a respect to it.—He hath a respect to your *blood*; precious in *his sight is the blood of his saints.*—He hath a respect to your *souls*; and hence he gave his blood to be a ransom for them: and when your souls languish, he sends his Spirit to restore them; and when you die, he will send his angels to bring them to heaven.—He hath a respect to your *bodies*: you ought, *being bought with a price*, to glorify him in your souls and bodies, which are his. When your body goes to the dust, he will take care of that dust, and lose nothing of you, but raise you up at the last day, and make your *vile bodies like unto his glorious body; and so shall ye be ever with the Lord.*—He hath a respect to you, such a respect, that he puts honour upon you; *Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable.* He hath made you kings and priests to your God. Jacob was crowned a prince on the field of battle, the field of prayer, when he wrestled with the Angel and prevailed, as a prince. The poor wrestling man is a prince, and the poor wrestling woman a princess, in God's sight; *This is the honour of all the saints.* They have power with God, therefore no wonder that they have *power over the nations, to rule them with a rod of iron*; they judge and *torment them that dwell upon the earth*, even here: And *know you not, that* hereafter *the saints shall judge the world?* God hath a respect to you, and he will shew in due time; because he hath a respect to the covenant, and filled your heart with a respect to it also.

4. Hence see the *duty* incumbent upon us in pleading with God for his favour, presence, and blessing; let us go to him both in secret prayer, and in solemn approaches to his table, crying, Lord, *Have respect to the covenant.* I know not a case you can be in but the covenant exhibites a cure, and you are allowed to plead it, Ezek. xxxvi. 37. After many new-covenant promises, it is said, *For this will I be enquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them*; and how are we to enquire, but by pleading the respect he hath to the covenant.—Have you a *polluted* heart with the filth of sin, a polluted conscience with the guilt of sin? Why, here is an article of the covenant; *I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you*, ver. 25. O then, go to God for cleansing, and plead, saying, O Lord, *Have respect to the covenant.*—Have you the old hard *stony* heart still within you, and would you have it renewed and softened? Here is an article of the covenant, *A new heart will I give you, and a new Spirit will I put within you; I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.* O then, go to God, and plead it, saying, *Have respect to the cove-*

covenant.—Are you deſtitute of the *Spirit, ſenſual, not having the Spirit?* Do you find ſuch a want of the Spirit, that you cannot walk in God's way? Well, there is an article of the covenant here, ver. 27. *I will put my Spirit within you, and cauſe you to walk in my ſtatutes.* O plead for this great bleſſing, and ſay, Lord, *Have reſpect to the covenant.*

In a word, when you conſider what kind of a ſinner you are, conſider alſo what kind of a covenant this is; it is enough to ſay, that it is a covenant of *grace*, of all ſort of grace, for all ſort of ſinners that are out of hell. Are you under *dreadful guilt?* Here is a covenant of *pardoning* grace, ſaying, *I will blot out thy ſin as a cloud, and thy tranſgreſſion as a thick cloud: return to me, for I have redeemed thee*, Iſa. xliv. 22. O then plead he may *have reſpect to the covenant.*—Are you under *fearful pollutions?* O here is a covenant of *purifying* grace, ſaying, *There is a fountain opened to the houſe of David, and the inhabitants of Jeruſalem for ſin and for uncleanneſs.* O then plead he may *have reſpect to the covenant.*—Are you in *darkneſs* and *ignorance*, having no knowledge of God? O here is a covenant of *enlightening* grace, ſaying, *They ſhall be all taught of God.* O then plead it, ſaying, Lord, *Have reſpect to the covenant.*—Are you under *deadneſs*, and like dead and dry bones? O here is a covenant of *quickening* grace, ſaying, *I am come to give life, and to give it more abundantly. The hour cometh when the dead ſhall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear ſhall live.* O then plead that he may *have reſpect to the covenant.*—Are you in *confuſion*, and know not what way to take? O here is a covenant of *directing* grace, ſaying, *I will bring the blind by a way they know not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkneſs light before them, and crooked things ſtraight.*—Are you under *ſad plagues* and *ſoul-diſeaſes*, over-run with ſores from the crown of the head to the ſole of the foot? O here is a covenant of *healing* grace, ſaying, *The Sun of righteouſneſs ſhall ariſe with healing in his wings. I am the Lord that healeth thee; I will heal your backſlidings.* O then plead, ſaying, Lord, *Have reſpect to the covenant.*—Are you in *extreme danger* of hell and damnation, becauſe of your ſin and guilt? O here is a covenant of *delivering* grace, ſaying, *Deliver his ſoul from going down to the pit, for I have found a ranſom.* O then plead it, and ſay, Lord, *Have reſpect to the covenant.*—Are you in *bondage* unto ſin, Satan, and the world, a captive unto luſts, and ſhut up in unbelief as in a priſon? O here is a covenant of *liberating* grace! *Proclaiming liberty to the captives, and the opening of the priſon to them that are bound.*—Are you a *ſtupid* ſoul that cannot move toward God, nor ſtir heavenward, by reaſon of a backward will, like a brazen gate that reſiſts all the force of moving means? Well, but, O! here is a covenant of *drawing* grace, ſaying, *When I am lifted up, I will draw all men unto me.* As the power and virtue of the load-ſtone draws the iron, ſo the virtue of an exalted Chriſt draws the iron-bar of the will; *Thy people ſhall be willing in the day of thy power.* O then plead it, ſaying, Lord, *Have reſpect to the covenant.*

What other concerns have you?—Are you concerned for your *children*, that they may be partakers of covenant *bleſſings*, and ſaved of the Lord? O here is a covenant of extenſive grace, intailing *bleſſings* on us and our offſpring, ſaying, *I will be thy God, and the God of thy ſeed.* O then look to God in behalf of your children, ſaying, Lord, *Have reſpect to the covenant.*—Are you concerned for the *church*, and the dangerous circumſtances ſhe is into by reaſon of cruel enemies? This ſeems to be the great concern of the pſalmiſt here, as appears from the body of the pſalm, and the words following the text: *For the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty.* Theſe that live in darkneſs of ignorance and error, and in the works of darkneſs, are full of cruelty againſt the church and people of God, and they are ſurrounded with them, in ſo much that the church is like a *lily among thorns*, or a *ſheep among wolves*; what ſhall become of it? Why, here is a covenant of *defence*, and of defending and protecting grace, ſaying, *Upon all the glory there ſhall be a defence*; therefore, even when enemies *break down the carved work with axes and hammers*, ver. 6.; when they are caſting *fire into the ſanctuary*, ver. 7.; when they are ſaying, *Let us deſtroy them together*, ver. 8.: Yea, when it ſhall come to this, that a bloody ſword that is raging abroad, ſhall come over to us *, and that foreign or domeſtic enemies, or both, ſhall devour and deſtroy, and, perhaps, *burn up all the ſynagogues of God in the land*, as it is, ver. 8.; and when *we* ſhall *not ſee our ſigns*, and *there is no more any prophet*, nor *any among us that know* the time *how long*, ver. 9. In all ſuch caſes, what courſe ſhall we take, but that of the pſalmiſt here? Lord, *Have reſpect unto the covenant.*

Are you concerned about *inward* enemies, ſpiritual enemies, and moleſted with the powers of darkneſs? Is your heart full of the habitations of cruelty, and fearfully inhabited with cruel devils, cruel luſts, cruel corruptions that maſter and conquer, and prevail againſt you, ſo as you ly many a time wounded and dead at the enemy's feet? O here is a covenant of *ſin-conquering* grace, not only a covenant of mercy to your ſoul, but of vengeance to your luſts, ſaying, *The day of vengeance is in mine heart, the year of my redeemed is come*, Iſa. lxiii. 4. O then, implore the promiſed vengeance on all your cruel ſoul enemies, ſaying, Lord, *Have reſpect to the covenant.*

Are you concerned about your *ſoul-poverty* and *indigency*, not only as oppreſſed with enemies without and within, but oppreſſed with wants and neceſſities, being abſolutely poor and needy, and deſtitute of all good? O here is a covenant of ſoul-ſupplying grace, and of all needful proviſion, ſaying, *When the poor and needy ſeek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirſt, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Jacob will not forſake them; I will pour water upon him that is thirſty, and floods upon the dry ground.* O then, plead the covenant, as the pſalmiſt here in the following verſe, *O let not the oppreſſed return aſhamed: let the poor and needy praiſe thy name. Have reſpect unto the covenant.*

In a word, let your caſe be the worſt caſe out of hell, this covenant contains all *ſalvation* as a

* Several foreign Powers, at this time, were at open war with one another: and, as formerly obſerved, p. 582. our own nation was alarmed with an open rupture with the court of Spain; who, as was then confidently affirmed, had entered into a formidable alliance with different Powers, in order to recover Gibraltar and Port-mahon: and, to favour their deſigns the better, gave out, that their intention was to invade Britain, and place the Pretender on the throne.—However, this rupture did not actually take place, till the year 1739.; nor the attempt to inthrone the Pretender, till the year 1745.

covenant

covenant of *grace*, of all grace, of all ſort of grace for all ſort of ſinners, and of all ſort of cures for all ſorts of caſes; and if you can get yourſelf wrapt within the bond of this covenant by believing and pleading it; then you draw God upon your intereſt, ſo that your concern is his concern, your intereſt is his intereſt, your cauſe his cauſe, as the pſalmiſt ſhews here, ver. 22. *Ariſe, O God, plead thine own cauſe.* It ſtands upon his honour, and he will do his own work in his own time. If ever you got grace to draw a bill upon God as a covenant-promiſing God in Chriſt, and have any bills lying tabled before the throne, and are ſometimes unable to plead and purſue the bill, with a Lord, *Have reſpect unto the covenant:* you have the ſtrongeſt encouragement to wait on him, and expect his anſwering the bill in due time; for, he will rather work marvellouſly, and create new worlds, rather turn all things to nothing than quit his concern in, or give up with his *reſpect unto the covenant.*

Are you concerned for the advancement of the *kingdom of Chriſt* in the earth as you ought to be? Here is a covenant of grace to the Jews, and grace to the Gentiles; grace to the heathen nations, ſaying, *I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermoſt parts of the earth for thy poſſeſſion.*—Are you concerned about *generations to come*, about the riſing generation, when there is little hope of the preſent? O! here is a covenant of grace to ſucceeding generations, till the end of the world, ſaying, *I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations; therefore the people ſhall praiſe thee for ever and ever.*

Are you concerned about your *latter end*, and how it ſhall fare with you when in the ſwellings of Jordan, how you will fight the laſt battle? O here is a covenant of *death-conquering* grace, ſaying, *Death ſhall be ſwallowed up in victory; O death, I will be thy plague; O grave, I will be thy deſtruction.*—Are you concerned about a *goſpel-miniſtry*, and thoughtful whether it ſhall be continued? There is many a word in this covenant about it; but eſpecially that, *Chriſt is exalted* to maintain and ſupport a goſpel-diſpenſation *to the end of the world*, Mat. xxviii. 20. Whatever ſpot of the earth he chuſe or refuſe, he having *aſcended on high, hath received gifts for men, yea, for the rebellious alſo, that the Lord God might dwell among them*, Pſal. lxviii. 18.

SERMON LXI.

FAITH's PLEA upon GOD's WORD *.

2 SAM. vii. 25. —— *Do as thou haſt ſaid.*

DAVID was a ſtrong believer; and it were our great advantage to follow him in his faith: and in this word that I fix upon to ſpeak to, there are two ways wherein his faith works, 1. By believing the divine word, *Thou haſt ſaid* ſo and ſo. 2. By pleading the accompliſhment thereof, *Do as thou haſt ſaid.*

1. Faith works by *believing* his word, *Thou haſt ſaid.* The object and ground of faith is the divine ſaying; and faith reſts upon a *thus ſaith the* LORD; it is not upon a *thus ſaith a* MAN, or *thus ſaith a* MINISTER; nay, nor *thus ſaith an* ANGEL. Divine faith can ſtand only upon a divine teſtimony; *Thus ſaith the* LORD; *thou haſt ſaid.* If you have faith then, you have received the word, *not as the word of man, but, as it is indeed, the word of God*, which effectually works in you that believe. Faith acts by taking God's word, *Thou haſt ſaid; thou haſt promiſed; thou haſt ſpoken in thy holineſs.*

2. Faith acts by pleading the *accompliſhment* of the promiſe, *Do as thou haſt ſaid.* God is not a ſpeaker only, but a doer; he is not a promiſer only, but a performer: and faith looks to a promiſing God, that he may be a performing God; and ſo puts him to his word.

OBSERV. *That it is the buſineſs of true faith, to take God's word, and to put him to it.*

In the illuſtration of this doctrinal propoſition, we would incline through divine aid, to eſſay briefly the following things.

I. To ſhew, that it is the *buſineſs* of faith to *take* God's word.
II. That it is the buſineſs of faith to *put him to his word.*
III. *How* faith *takes* God's word.
IV. How it *pleads* the *accompliſhment* of the promiſe.
V. *Whence* is this the buſineſs of faith to take God at his word, and to put him to his word.
VI. Make *application* of the whole.

I. We are firſt to ſhew, That it is the *buſineſs of faith* to TAKE *God's word*, or to take him at his word: this is plain, becauſe the word is the immediate *object* of faith. We have no other glaſs wherein to ſee God ſavingly, but his word, particularly his word of grace and promiſe; Rom. x. 8. *Say not, Who ſhall aſcend to heaven? that is, to bring Chriſt down from above; or, Who ſhall deſcend into the deep? that is, to bring up Chriſt again from the dead. The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart: ſo then, faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.* FAITH is a *relative* word, it relates to the faithfulneſs of the ſpeaker; believing relates to a word to be believed. That it is the *buſineſs of faith* to truſt in the *word of God*, is evident from the whole ſcripture. How many times, Pſal. cxix. doth the pſalmiſt ſpeak of *truſting in his word*, and *hoping in his word*, and *rejoicing in his word*, and ſo taking him at his word.

* This was an evening-exerciſe on a preparation-day, before the celebration of the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper, at Burntiſland, in the year 1733.

II. We

II. We come, in the next place, to shew, That it is the business of faith to *put him to his word*, or to plead the *accomplishment* of his word, that he would do as he had said: this is evident from Psal. cxix. 49. *Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope.* And how many times doth he plead with God, to do to him *according* to his word? *Quicken me according to thy word*, ver. 25. Again and again we have this repeated, as ver. 107, 154. *Strengthen me, according to thy word*, ver. 28. *Save me, according to thy word*, ver. 41. *Be merciful to me, according to thy word*, ver. 58. *Deal well with thy servant, according to thy word*, ver. 56. *Let thy merciful kindness be my comfort, according to thy word*, ver. 76. *Uphold me, according to thy word*, ver. 116. *Give me understanding, according to thy word*, ver. 169. *Deliver me, according to thy word*, ver. 170.—All comes to this, *Do as thou hast said.*

III. We proceed now to shew, *How*, or in what *manner*, faith *takes* the word of God.

1. It takes it by an *intelligent apprehension* of it in the *understanding*. The man is taught of God, and gets his eyes opened, to see the *faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation*; he sees it to be the *word* of God, and a word spoken in season to his weary soul. They will never take the word by faith that do not understand it; Philip said to the Eunuch, *Understandest thou what thou readest?* So we may say, Understandest thou what thou hearest? Are your eyes opened to see the wonders of his law or doctrine; to see the glory of Christ held out to you in the word?

2. Faith takes the word of God by a *particular application* of it with the *heart*; insomuch that it is a cordial apprehension, a cordial assent that is given to the word; *With the heart man believeth unto righteousness.* Saving light goes to the heart. Many have only their heads enlightened, their judgments informed, but not their hearts engaged, nor their affections captivated. Faith is a cordial applying the word, and that particularly to the man's own benefit; whether we call it assurance or not, it comes to the same thing: as when in *conviction* the *threatening* is applied, the man trembles under the fear of hell and wrath, because he applies the law-threatening to himself, saying, *I am the man to whom this threatening is spoken:* so, in the day of *conversion* or believing, the *promise* is applied, the man is relieved with the view of the grace and mercy of God in Christ, because he applies the gospel-promise to himself, saying, "I am the man to whom this promise is "spoken, and I receive and rest upon Christ "for salvation, as he is promised or offered to "me in this gospel; *To me is this word of salva-*"*tion.*" And if the man did not take it to himself, there would be no believing at all. But then,

IV. The *fourth* thing proposed, was, To shew *how* faith pleads the *accomplishment* of the promise.

1. It pleads upon the *mercy* that made the promise, that it is everlasting mercy, unchangeable mercy; *The Lord, the Lord God merciful and gracious.*

2. It pleads upon the *truth* that is to make out the promise; it is called, *The truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham*, Micah vii. 20.; that his name is faithful and true.

3. It pleads upon the *power* of the promiser, *Being fully persuaded, that he that hath promised is able to perform;* that he hath not out-promised his own promise, or said what he cannot do.

4. It pleads upon the *blood of the covenant* that seals all the promises thereof; hence they are *all Yea and Amen in Christ Jesus.*

5. It pleads upon the *love of God to Christ;* this is to pray in his name, that God, for the love he bears to Christ, would *do as* he *hath said.*

6. It pleads upon the *unchangeableness* of God and of his *word; that his word endures for ever*, and that he is *God, and changes not, therefore the sons of Jacob are not consumed.*

7. In a word, it pleads upon his *oath*, Heb. vi. 10. *God willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise, the immutability of his counsel, hath confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lye, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope set before us.*

8. And lastly, it pleads upon his *name; What wilt thou not do for thy great name?*

V. The *fifth* thing proposed, was, To shew *whence* is this the *business of faith* to take God at his word, and to put him to his word. Why, because,

1. It is the *end* and *design* of God, in giving his word; *These things are written*, and spoken, *that we may believe in the Son of God, and that believing, we might have life in his name*, John xx. 31. The gospel is preached in vain, if men do not take God at his word, and then hang upon it.

2. Because thus we *glorify* God; and the more we rest upon the divine word, the more we glorify him; *Abraham was strong in faith, giving glory to God.* We give him the honour of his truth, and other pefections this way.

3. Because thus we engage the *honour* of God upon our side, when we put him to his word; his honour is engaged, *He cannot deny himself.*

4. Because faith hath no other way of *living*, but upon the word of God; *Man liveth not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Thy word was found of* me, *and I did eat it. This is my comfort in my affliction, thy word hath quickened me.*

VI. The *last* thing proposed was the *application* of the subject, which, indeed, was the principal thing intended. Here is a fit exercise before the solemn communion-work, to go to God and say, O *do as thou hast said.* Consider what he hath said, and take him at his word, and put him to it, that he would do to you accordingly. Whatever your case be, surely there is some word relative to it.

Some may be thinking, alas! God hath said *nothing* to me, that I may put him to his word. Why, man, if the gospel, that is in this Bible, be preached to you, and if there be any word of grace therein suitable to your case, then put not away the word from you, but take it, and plead upon it, that God would *do as he hath said.* If you can see any word of promise suited to your case, and to your need, then put to your hand by faith, and lay hold upon his word.

Oh! say you, is there any word from God about my case, who am a *poor, needy* creature, like to starve for want of a spiritual meal, and a hearty draught of *the living waters that go out from Jerusalem.* What hath God said, or hath he said any thing concerning me? Yea, he

hath ſaid, Iſa. xli. 17, 18. *When the poor and needy ſeek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirſt, I, the Lord, will hear them, I, the God of Iſrael, will not forſake them. I will open rivers in dry places, and fountains in the midſt of the valleys. I will make the wilderneſs a pool of water, and the dry land ſprings of water.*—Hath he ſaid ſo? Then take him at his word, and put him to it, ſaying, Lord, *Do as thou haſt ſaid.*

Oh! but is there any word from God for me, who have been *long waiting about ordinances*, and *never yet ſeen his glory*, as I would deſire to ſee it? What hath he ſaid concerning me? Why, he hath ſaid, that he *waits that he may be gracious*; that he is *a God of judgment, and bleſſed are all they that wait for him*, Iſa. xxx. 18. He hath ſaid, *The viſion is for an appointed time, but at the end it will ſpeak, and not lye: though it tarry, wait for it, becauſe it will ſurely come, and not tarry*, Hab. ii. 3.—Hath he ſaid ſo? Then take him at his word, and put him to it, ſaying, *Do as thou haſt ſaid.*

But is there any word from God, concerning my caſe, that find my *conſcience challenging me for prodigious guilt*; there was never ſuch a guilty perſon on the face of the earth? Are you groaning under guilt? Hear what he ſays, Heb. viii. 12. *I will be merciful to your unrighteouſneſs, and your ſins and iniquities will I remember no more.* Iſa. xliii. 25. *I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy tranſgreſſions for mine own ſake, and will not remember thy ſins.*—O then! take hold of his word, wherein he proclaims indemnity, and put him to it, ſaying, Lord, *Do as thou haſt ſaid.*

But, ſays another, is there any word from God concerning me, that am compaſſed about with ſuch *ſtrong corruptions*, and *conquering luſts*, that ſin gets the maſtery of me? Would you be delivered? Hear what he ſays, Micah vii. 19. *He will ſubdue our iniquities, and caſt all our ſins into the depths of the ſea.* Rom. vi. 14. *Sin ſhall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace.* Iſa. lxiii. 4. *The day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redemption is come.*—Hath he promiſed to take vengeance on your luſts? Then take him at his word, ſaying, O *do as thou haſt ſaid.*

But is there any word to me, that am ſuch a *filthy monſter*, ſuch a *polluted creature* in heart and way, that am ſtinking, as it were, in the grave of ſin? He hath ſaid, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. *From all your filthineſs, and from all your idols will I cleanſe you.* Zech. xiii. 1. *There is a fountain opened to the houſe of David, and to the inhabitants of Jeruſalem, for ſin and for uncleanneſs.*—Is there a promiſe of cleanſing? Then take him at his word, and cry, Lord, *Do as thou haſt ſaid.*

But is there any word to me a *backſlider*, a *grievous revolter*, that many times *after vows* have *made inquiry*; my promiſes and reſolutions have been but paper-walls before the fire of temptation? Are you afflicted with this, and would have relief? Behold, he ſays, Jer. iii. 22. *Return, ye backſliding children, and I will heal your backſlidings.* Hoſ. xiv. 4. *I will heal your backſlidings, and love you freely. I will be as the dew to Iſrael.*—Hath he ſaid ſo? Then let your heart ſay, Lord, *Do as thou haſt ſaid?*

But what doth God ſay to me, that have *no ſtrength for any duty* or *difficulty*, that am weak like water? Would you have relief in this caſe? God ſays, 2 Cor. xii. 9. *My grace ſhall be ſufficient for thee, and my ſtrength ſhall be made perfect in thy weakneſs.* Iſa. xl. 26. *He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaſeth ſtrength.*—Doth he ſay ſo? Then put him to his word, ſaying, Lord, *Do as thou haſt ſaid.*

But is there any word concerning me, that am brought to a *great difficulty*, and know not what to do, or what hand to turn me to; I am ſtraitened what courſe to take: doth God ſay any thing to me? Yea, he doth: Iſa. xlii. 19. *I will bring the blind by a way they know not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known. I will make darkneſs light before them, and crooked things ſtraight.* Iſa. xxx. 22. *Thine ears ſhall hear a voice behind thee, ſaying, This is the way, walk ye in it. I will guide thee by my counſel.*—Doth he ſay ſo? Then put him to his word, ſaying, Lord, *Do as thou haſt ſaid.*

But what ſays God to a poor ſoul that is *haraſſed with the temptations of the devil*, and ready to be deſtroyed with the *fiery darts of the wicked one?* God ſays, *I will bruiſe the head of the ſerpent.* Rom. xvi. 20. *The God of peace ſhall bruiſe Satan under your feet ſhortly. For this cauſe was the Son of God manifeſted, to deſtroy the works of the devil.*—Hath he begun to deſtroy him? and hath he ſaid, *Thou ſhalt bruiſe* him *under thy feet?* Then put him to his word, ſaying, Lord, *Do as thou haſt ſaid.*

Alas! but what ſays God to a poor *deſtitute creature*, and hath nothing, no good, no grace, no light, no life, no ſtrength? He ſays, Philip. iv. 19. *My God ſhall ſupply all your wants, according to his riches in glory, by Chriſt Jeſus.* Pſal. ix. 18. *The needy ſhall not always be forgotten; the expectation of the poor ſhall not periſh for ever. There is bread enough, and to ſpare, in* your *Father's houſe.*—Hath he ſaid ſo? O then! put him to his word, ſaying, Lord, *Do as thou haſt ſaid.*

But what ſays God to me, that am longing, longing, *earneſtly longing* for ſome taſte of his goodneſs, ſome view of his beauty; ſome communion and fellowſhip with him? Why, God ſays to you, that he *will ſatisfy the longing ſoul, and fill the hungry with good things.* Matth. v. 6. *Bleſſed are they that hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs; for they ſhall be filled.* Hath he ſaid ſo? Then let your heart ſay, Lord, *Do as thou haſt ſaid.*

Oh! but is there any word for one that hath a quite other caſe to tell you of, that hath *no longing deſire*, no hunger, no thirſt, that hath as much need as any longing ſoul here; but I have no ſpiritual longing, not ſo much as a deſire, but, *like the parching earth*, the dry ground, that can have no active thirſt, but hath many a wide cleft? God ſays, Iſa. xliv. 3, 4. *I will pour water on him that is thirſty, and floods upon the dry ground; even my Spirit upon thy ſeed, and my bleſſing upon thine offspring. They ſhall grow up as among the graſs, as willows by the water-courſes.*—Have you no other thirſt, but like that of the dry ground, and hath he promiſed a flood? Then, O put him to his word, ſaying, Lord, *Do as thou haſt ſaid.*

Oh! but is there any word for me, that am like the *barren ground* and *unfruitful*, that bears nothing but briars and thorns, and I find this ground is *rejected, as nigh unto curſing, whoſe end is to be burned?* Is this your fear and concern? Hear that word, Iſa. lv. 13. *Inſtead of the thorn ſhall come up the fir-tree; and inſtead of the briar, the myrtle-tree; and it ſhall be to the Lord for a name, and for an everlaſting ſign that ſhall not be cut off.* Hoſ. xiv. 8. *I am like a green fir-tree, from me is thy fruit found.*—Hath he ſaid ſo? Then put him to his word, ſaying, Lord, *Do as thou haſt ſaid.*

Alas!

Alas! but is there any word for me, that have been a *fool*, a *mocker*, a *ſcorner*, that have laughed at all religion and godlineſs; is there any merciful word that I may take hold of? Yea, God ſays, Prov. i. 22. *Ye ſcorners, that delight in ſcorning, and fools, that hate knowledge, turn ye at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you; I will make known my word unto you.*—Doth he ſay ſo? Then put him to his word, ſaying, O *do as thou haſt ſaid.*

But what ſays God to one that hath a *plagued heart*, a hard heart, a baſe heart, full of all manner of evils, and all the plagues of hell? Why, God ſays, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. *A new heart will I give you, and a new ſpirit will I put within you; I will take away the ſtony heart out of your fleſh, and I will give you an heart of fleſh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cauſe you to walk in my ſtatutes.* And whatever be the plague, he hath ſaid, *I am the Lord that healeth thee.*—Hath he ſaid ſo? Then, O put him to his word, ſaying, Lord, *Do as thou haſt ſaid.*

Ah! but doth God ſay any thing to a *ſtupid wretch*, that only hears you, but is no more affected than the ſtones of the wall, and that is quite dead, and can no more ſtir than a rock, and hath no more life than a dead corpſe? God ſays, and, O that he would ſay it with power, *Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon theſe ſlain, that they may live.* Ezek. xxxvii. 12. *I will open your graves, and cauſe you to come out of your graves, and ye ſhall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, and ſhall put my Spirit in you, and ye ſhall live.*—Hath he ſaid ſo? Then, O put him to his word, ſaying, Lord, *Do as thou haſt ſaid.*

But, Oh! is there any word that God ſays concerning me, that hath *forfeited God's favour*, by heaping up great and inſuperable mountains betwixt him and me, that I fear he will never come over? Why, he ſays, Zech. iv. 7. *Who art thou, O great mountain? before our Zerubbabel, thou ſhalt become a plain. He ſhall bring forth the head-ſtone with ſhooting, crying, Grace, grace, unto it.* He can make *the mountains ſkip like rams, and the little hills like lambs.*—Hath he ſaid ſo? Then, O put him to his word, and ſay, Lord, *Do as thou haſt ſaid.*

But is there any word for one that is filled with fear of *heavy judgments* coming upon the *land*, and upon an *apoſtate-church?* Yes, he ſays, Iſa. xxxii. 2. *A man ſhall be a hiding place from the ſtorm, and a covert from the tempeſt: as rivers of water in a dry place, as the ſhadow of a great rock in a weary land.* When you ſee matters running into confuſion, church-members betraying the privileges of the church, and the church of Scotland deſtroying herſelf with her own hand, not only *boars out of the foreſt waſting her, and wild beaſts of the field devouring her*, but enemies in the boſom of the church making themſelves *famous, for lifting up axes and hammers to break down the carved work* of her doctrine, diſcipline, and government *, remember the Lord hath ſaid, that when he *builds up Zion, he will appear in his glory;* and that *upon all the glory there ſhall be a defence; that at evening time it ſhall be light;* that the darkeſt part of the night may uſher in the morning-ſtar of a Reformation in ſpite of hell: for I would incline gladly to hope God will not leave Scotland, though we have left him. He took infeftment by Solemn National Covenant ſix times †; and he hath had martyrs for his kingly office, that have aſſerted his royal prerogatives at the expence of their blood: therefore, let us apply that word, *He will ariſe and have mercy on Zion.*—Hath he ſaid ſo? Then, O take him at his word, ſaying, Lord, *Do as thou haſt ſaid.*

But is there any word for a poor creature that is in *bondage through fear of death? If I have run with the footmen, and they have wearied me; then, how can I contend with horſes? And if in the land of peace, wherein I truſted, they wearied me, then, what will I do in the ſwelling of Jordan?* I tremble to meet with the *king of terrors?* Why, he hath ſaid, Hoſ. xiii. 14. *I will ranſom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death! I will be thy plagues; O grave! I will be thy deſtruction. Death ſhall be ſwallowed up in victory.* Plead then, that he would *do as he hath ſaid.*

But I want *aſſurance* of all theſe things, may one ſay. Well, what mean you by that, man, woman, that you want aſſurance? I ſuppoſe many do not underſtand themſelves, when they ſay they want aſſurance; for, what better aſſurance would you have than the word of God? If you have his word, and take his word, you need no better aſſurance. If a man of credit, whom you can depend upon, give you his word for ſuch a thing, then you depend upon it, and ſay you are aſſured of it; for you have his word. There is an aſſurance of *ſenſe*, that is, the aſſurance of the *work*, when you have got the thing that is promiſed; this is not properly aſſurance, it is *enjoyment:* but the aſſurance of *faith* is the aſſurance of a *word.* And though the aſſurance of ſenſe be *ſweeteſt*, yet the aſſurance of faith is the *ſureſt* aſſurance: for, what you got in hand from God you may ſoon loſe the benefit and comfort of it; but what you have upon bond in the promiſe, is ſtill ſecure. If you take God's promiſe, you have the beſt aſſurance in the world: but if you ſay you want faith, you cannot take his word, or truſt his word, then this is plain dealing; I fear this indeed be the caſe of the moſt: then you want aſſurance indeed, becauſe you want faith, and cannot take his word, nor give him ſo much credit. But if any be ſaying, that is indeed my caſe; I cannot *believe his word:* doth God ſay nothing to me? Is there any word ſuited to my caſe? Yes, there are promiſes *of* faith as well as *to* it; Zeph. iii. 12. *I will leave in the midſt of them a poor and afflicted people, and they ſhall truſt in the name of the Lord. In him ſhall the Gentiles truſt,*—Hath the *Author of faith* ſo promiſed? Then, O take him at his word; cry for faith, ſaying, Lord, *Do as thou haſt ſaid.*

But may one ſay, I would deſire not only to have the *word*, but the *accompliſhment* of the word; I would not only have the promiſe, but the performance; and there are ſome promiſes I have been looking to, ſome ten or twenty-years-old promiſes, that I think I got the faith of; but, alas! the accompliſhment is not yet come; there are ſome prayers and petitions I have had long tabled upon the ground of the promiſe: What doth God ſay to one that hath never got theſe promiſes accompliſhed, nor theſe prayers anſwered? Why, man, be thank-

* What the Author here alludes to, is laid open above, p. 70, 149, 631, 648, 661, 670.
† This was done at different periods betwixt the year 1580, and 1650.

ful,

ful, if you have got grace to believe the promiſe; for ſo much faith as you have to take God's word, ſo much aſſurance you have that the word will be made out. If you be waiting upon a promiſing God, give him his time, and behold the womb of the promiſe will ſhortly open and bring forth; for it will not travel beyond its time; *Bleſſed is ſhe that believed; for there ſhall be a performance of thoſe things that were told her from the Lord*, Luke i. 45. And your fits and ſtarts of unbelief, O believer, ſhall not hinder the performance of the promiſe you have once believed ſavingly; *If we believe not, he abideth faithful; he cannot deny himſelf*, 2 Tim. ii. 13. Will he deny his word, will he deny his oath? No, no; he will have *reſpect to his covenant*; becauſe he hath a reſpect to himſelf.

But what ſays God of one that is *afflicted*, and *mourning* for the *deſolations* of Zion, and particularly for the ſins and defections of the day we live in? I will tell you what he ſays, *They that ſow in tears ſhall reap in joy*; and though you have your mourning time for Zion, you ſhall alſo have your rejoicing times; *Rejoice ye with Jeruſalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her: rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her*, Iſa. lxvi. 10. He ſays, that he will *ſet a mark upon the foreheads of them that ſigh and cry for all the abominations that are done in the midſt thereof*, Ezek. ix. 4. *Bleſſed are they that mourn, for they ſhall be comforted*, Mat. v. 4.—Why then, look to him to *do as he hath ſaid*.

But ſays another, I am one that has a *family*, and children that the Lord hath given me, and it is my concern, not only that I may be bleſſed *myſelf*, but that my *ſeed* and *offspring* may be bleſſed; is there any word for me in this caſe? Yea, what think you of that word? Iſa. xliv. 3. *I will pour my Spirit upon thy ſeed, and my bleſſing upon thine offspring*. What think ye of that covenant made with Abraham, which you are called to lay hold upon by following his faith? Gen. xvii. 7. *I will be thy God, and the God of thy ſeed*. You have not only the covenant of Abraham to look to, but the entail of the covenant to your poſterity to look to, Iſa. lix. 21. *This is my covenant with them, ſaith the Lord, My Spirit that is upon thee, and my words that I have put in thy mouth, ſhall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy ſeed, nor out of the mouth of thy ſeeds ſeed, ſaith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever*. He hath ſaid, that *children are his heritage*, Pſal. cxxvii. 3.; and that his *righteouſneſs is unto childrens children*, Pſal. ciii. 17.; *The promiſe is unto you and to your children?* Acts ii. 39. O take him at his word, and cry, Lord, *Do as thou haſt ſaid*.

But what do you ſay to one that finds himſelf *deſerted of God*, and that God anſwers neither by URIM nor THUMMIM. *I go foreward, but he is not there; backward, but I cannot perceive him: On the left-hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: He hideth himſelf on the right-hand, that I cannot ſee him*, Job xxiii. 8, 9. *The Comforter, that ſhould relieve my ſoul, is far removed*, Lam. i. 16. God ſays, Iſa. liv. 7, 8, 10. *For a ſmall moment have I forſaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee: In a little wrath I hid my face from thee, for a moment; but with everlaſting kindneſs will I draw thee, ſaith the Lord thy Redeemer. For the mountains ſhall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindneſs ſhall not depart from thee, neither ſhall the covenant of my peace be removed, ſaith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee.*—Hath he ſaid ſo? Then, O take him at his word, ſaying, Lord, *do as thou haſt ſaid*.

But what doth God ſay to one that is toſſed with *one wave of affliction* upon the back of another, *Deep calling unto deep, at the noiſe of God's water-ſpouts; all his waves and billows are gone over me*, Pſal. xlii. 7. Why, God ſays, Iſa. liv. 11, 12, 13, 14. *Oh thou afflicted, toſſed with tempeſts, and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy ſtones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with ſapphires: And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleaſant ſtones: And all thy children ſhall be taught of the Lord, and great ſhall be the peace of thy children: In righteouſneſs ſhalt thou be eſtabliſhed*. Yea he ſays, Pſalm xci. 15. *He ſhall call upon me, and I will anſwer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him*. Many ſuch ſweet words of grace he ſpeaks. O then, take his word, and plead, Lord, *Do as thou haſt ſaid*.

But is there any word to one that is *loſt in the wilderneſs*, and knows not where he is, ſo as to think it impoſſible that miniſters can find him out? I think I am loſt in a thicket, and it is impoſſible to find out my caſe in your preaching, it is a matchleſs caſe, a nameleſs caſe. Why, may be that word concerns you, Iſa. lxii. 11. *Behold thy ſalvation cometh; and thou ſhalt be called, Sought out, not forſaken?* And Hoſ. ii. 14. *I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderneſs, and* there will I *ſpeak comfortably to her*; or, as the word is in the margin, *ſpeak to her* HEART. O comfortable, when God ſpeaks not only to the ear, but to the heart!—Well, hath he ſaid it? O then, take his word and plead, *Do as thou haſt ſaid*.

But is there any word to one that hath been *incorrigible under correcting providences*, and hath his corruptions irritate by the croſs, and rebellion rather increaſed by rods, inſtead of being reclaimed by word and rod? Is there any caſe like mine, or is there any word for me to lay hold upon? Yes; what think you of that word, Iſa. lvii. 17, 18. *For the iniquity of his covetouſneſs was I wroth, and ſmote him: I hid me, and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart*. Well, what follows? *I have ſeen his ways, and will heal him; I will lead him alſo, and reſtore comforts unto him, and to his mourners*. O aſtoniſhing wonder of free grace! that it was not ſaid, *I have ſeen his ways, and will* DAMN *him*; but *I have ſeen his ways, and will* HEAL *him: I have ſeen his ways, and will* SAVE *him*.—Hath he ſaid ſo? Then put in your petition, Lord, *Do as thou haſt ſaid*.

But is there any word to ſuch as are under the *power of unbelief* and *impenitency?* The goſpel is preached to believers and penitents: O God forbid but it was not preached to ſinners, that are both unbelieving and impenitent, in order to bring them to faith and repentance: why, what ſays God to ſuch? He ſays, what they ought to lay hold and plead upon, Pſal. cx. 3. *Thy people ſhall be willing in the day of thy power*. Acts v. 31. Chriſt is *exalted* at the *right-hand* of God, *to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Iſrael, and forgiveneſs of ſins*. Plead then he may *do as he has ſaid*.

But is it poſſible that God is ſpeaking to any that hath been a *notorious ſinner?* Perhaps, all the country knows that I have been a ſcandalous debauchee, a leud and wicked ſinner, a profane graceleſs wretch. O! if any were charmed with the joyful ſound of goſpel-grace to-day, he ſays, Iſa. i. 8. *Come now and let us reaſon together, ſaith the Lord: though your ſins be as ſcarlet,*

ſcarlet, they ſhall be as white as ſnow; though they be red like crimſon, they ſhall be as wool. Though you have ſinned to the uttermoſt, I am able to ſave to the uttermoſt; is your name *wonderful*, as a ſinner? Behold his name is *Wonderful*, as a Saviour.—O hath he ſaid ſo? Well, go and plead his word, ſaying, Lord, *Do as thou haſt ſaid.*

But beſides my *wickedneſs*, I am *groſly ignorant*; doth God ſay any thing to a poor brutiſh ignorant creature like me? Would you be taught? There is a word you may take hold of, John vi. 45. *It is written in the prophets, They ſhall be all taught of God.* And, *who teaches like him?*—Hath he ſaid ſo? Then take him at his word, ſaying, *Do as thou haſt ſaid.*

But is there any word from God for one that hath *crucified ſo many convictions* as I have done; yea, and virtually crucified the Son of God afreſh, by rejecting his calls, grieving his Spirit? Yea, we are called to preach the goſpel to every creature, and even to the crucifiers of Chriſt; *Repentance and remiſſion of ſin* muſt be *preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jeruſalem*, Luke xxiv. 47. Why *beginning at Jeruſalem*, among the crucifiers of Chriſt? Becauſe they have *moſt need of his blood to waſh them*. Chriſt *came to ſave ſinners, the chief of ſinners?*—Hath he ſaid ſo? Then put in your bill, Lord, *Do as thou haſt ſaid.*

But will you tell me, Is there any word for one that *cannot think* that it is as you are ſaying, that there is any *merciful word* in God's mouth, or any *merciful thought* in God's heart towards me; it cannot enter into my thought; I cannot let it light in my mind or heart? Why, God ſays, Iſa. lv. 8, 9. *My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, ſaith the Lord: for as the heavens are higher than the earth, ſo are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.* You are not to meaſure his thoughts by yours, no more than you can meaſure theſe wide heavens with your arms: but God knows his own thoughts, and what ſays he of them? Jer. xxix. 11, 12, 13. *I know the thoughts that I think towards you, ſaith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Then ſhall ye call upon me, and ye ſhall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye ſhall ſeek me and find me, when ye ſhall ſearch for me with all your heart.*—Hath he ſaid ſo? Then go and plead his word, ſaying, Lord, *Do as thou haſt ſaid.*

In a word, Do you want his *preſence?* He hath ſaid, *Lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world: I will never leave thee nor forſake thee.* Are you afraid of hell and damnation? He hath ſaid, *Deliver his ſoul from going down to the pit, I have found out a ranſom.*—O what encouragement is here to go and pray and plead, ſaying, Lord, *Do as thou haſt ſaid.*

O Sirs, ſearch the ſcriptures, and ſtudy the word of God; conſult and conſider what he hath ſaid; let there be no mouldy Bibles among you; let not the duſt of your Bibles witneſs againſt you, for your eternal ſalvation depends upon your believing what he hath ſaid: therefore ſtudy the faith of what he hath ſaid. The Spirit is promiſed, and the ſcriptures are written to work this faith; Chriſt is exalted, and the throne of grace is erected to give this faith; and this faith comes by hearing what he hath ſaid: by hearing not what Plato hath ſaid, or Seneca hath ſaid; what this or that man hath ſaid, but what *God* hath ſaid in his word, in this Bible, which is a book ſo prefaced, and ſo atteſted as never any other book was: the Old Teſtament is prefaced by all the miracles wrought by Moſes; the New Teſtament was prefaced by all the miracles wrought by Chriſt. And as Moſes's miracles were wrought before the Old Teſtament was written, ſo Chriſt's miracles were wrought before the New Teſtament was written: never a book was ſo atteſted as this, even by a cloud of witneſſes, a cloud of miracles, a cloud of martyrs, who ſealed with their blood the truth contained in it. God, in the New Teſtament, exactly fulfils what he hath ſaid in the Old; yea, the preſent ſtate of all the world is a viſible performing of ſcripture-prophecies.—Are not the *Jews* at this day a *ſcattered* and *deſpiſed* people, as the ſcripture ſaid they ſhould be? Hath not God done as he hath ſaid?—Is not *Antichriſt*, the *long-lived man of ſin*, and the cruel man of blood, as the ſcripture told he ſhould be. Thus it is done as he hath ſaid.—Are not the *Pagan* parts of the earth the *dark places and habitations of cruelty*, as the ſcripture ſays they ſhould be? Thus it is as he hath ſaid.—Do not the ſeven churches of *Aſia* ly deſolate, as they were threatened, unleſs they repented? Thus it is as he hath ſaid.—Is not *Mahomet*, the falſe prophet, and his followers like the waters of the great river Euphrates, to which they are compared in ſcripture? And thus it is as he hath ſaid.—Does not the *whole world ly in wickedneſs*, as the word of God ſhews? And ſo it is as he hath ſaid.—Is not every *ſaint* as a *brand plucked out of the burning*, as the ſcripture ſpeaks? And ſo it is as he hath ſaid.—Are not *Deiſts* and *ſcoffers* walking after their *own luſts*, and ridiculing the *promiſe of Chriſt's coming*, as the ſcripture ſpeaks? And ſo it is as he hath ſaid.—Are not the black marks of *perilous times in the laſt days* upon us, as the ſcripture ſpeaks? And ſo it is as he hath ſaid.—Are not the *fooliſh virgins* as many, yea, and more than the wiſe, and *all ſlumbering and ſleeping*, and all according as he hath ſaid?—Doth not the Spirit ſpeak expreſly, that *in the latter times ſome ſhall depart from the faith*, and accordingly it is as he hath ſaid?—Is not the goſpel a *ſavour of life* to ſome, and a *ſavour of death* to others?—Is not Chriſt *precious* to ſome, and a *ſtone of ſtumbling and a rock of offence* to others, as the ſcripture ſpeaks? And ſo it is as he hath ſaid.——Look about you, and ſee if any thing that falls out be not an accompliſhment of the word: and, O how ſhould you value this word! not a jot or title of it ſhall fall to the ground.

Walk in this garden of the ſcripture, and pluck up the flowers of goſpel-promiſes, and put them in your boſom; live by faith upon the promiſe, and be perſuaded, whatever ſtands in the way, that he will *do as he hath ſaid.* He will do ſo, for what he hath ſaid he hath written, what he hath ſaid he hath ſealed, what he hath ſaid he hath ſworn, what he hath ſaid he will never unſay; therefore, take hold of his word of grace, and hold him at his word in life and death, ſaying, *Do as thou haſt ſaid.*

SERMON LXII.

The *promiſing* GOD, a *performing* GOD *.

GEN. xxviii. 15. — *For I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have ſpoken to thee of.*

AT the laſt ſacramental ſolemnity of this ſort, I ſpoke a little upon the great plea and prayer of faith upon the divine promiſe, in the words of David, 2 Sam. vii. 25. — *Lord, do as thou haſt ſaid.* We may now look upon this text that I have read, as the gracious anſwer of God to that prayer of faith, in the words of the great God himſelf to Jacob, *I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have ſpoken to thee of*; or, *till I have done as I have ſaid.*

What God ſaid once to Joſhua, chap. i. 5. — *I will not fail thee, nor forſake thee*, is applied as ſpoken to all believers, Heb. xiii. 5. *I will never leave thee, nor forſake thee.* Even ſo, what God ſaid to Jacob here, doth equally belong to all believers in Chriſt; *I will not leave thee, till I have done that which I have ſpoken to thee of.* Hath God condeſcended to ſpeak to you, and *cauſed you to hope upon his word of grace*, or promiſe, at this, or any former occaſion? Here is good news to take away with you, that the promiſing God will, in due time, be a performing God, and that you may not think long, and *weary or faint in your mind*, apprehending what a weary time it may be between the promiſe and the performance. Here is ſupporting encouragement in the mean time, *I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have ſpoken to thee of.* What I have ſaid I will do, and will not leave thee till I have done it.

In the preceding part of this chapter, you find Jacob was forced to flee from his father's houſe upon the account of the wrath of his brother Eſau: he is haſtened away to Padan-aram; and on his way he comes to Luz, which afterwards, on the account of a notable emergent, was called BETHEL, where God ſignally appeared and diſcovered himſelf to him in great glory, ſuitably to his ſtrait. Here he was benighted, ver. 11. and was obliged to ly in the open field. Some of the ſaints and ſervants of God have been put to great hardſhips, through the violence and rage of their perſecuting brethren. But though Jacob's bed was hard, yet his reſt was ſweet; while he had a hard pillow of ſtone under his head, the Lord appeared to him in a dream, and ſpake comfortably to him. God's time of ſpeaking comfort to his people, is readily when they are moſt deſtitute of other comforts; then he is moſt kind, when brethren come to be moſt unkind.

You may obſerve two things, firſt, what God *ſhewed* to Jacob; and then, what he *ſaid* to him.

1. What he *ſhewed* to him; he manifeſted to him his *glory*, as the God of providence, and the God of grace in Chriſt, who is here repreſented to him by the ladder reaching from heaven to earth, ver. 12.; and all the intercourſe between heaven and earth is by this ladder.

2. What he *ſpake* to him, ver. 13. *And he dreamed, and behold a ladder ſet upon earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold, the angels of God aſcending and deſcending on it.* As the viſion was ſuitable to his preſent caſe, letting him underſtand that he had a good guide, and a good guard, not only the angel of God, but the Lord of angels; ſo the words that God ſpake to him were ſuitable to his preſent need. The Lord ſpake from the top of the ladder; for all the glad tidings we receive from heaven come through Jeſus Chriſt. Here are former promiſes made to Abraham and Iſaac, his father and grandfather, repeated and ratified to Jacob; whereby God intimated, that he would be the ſame to him that he had been to them. Here are freſh promiſes made to him ſuited to his preſent condition. He was to leave his kindred, and to want their preſence: God promiſed to be preſent with him; *I am with thee.* He was in the fear of Eſau: God promiſed, ſaying, *I will keep thee.* He was journeying to an unknown place: God promiſed to *keep him in all places whitherſoever he went.* He was apprehenſive he would never ſee his own country again; God promiſed he would *bring him again to that land.* He ſeemed to be left of all his friends and relations: God promiſed, ſaying, I *will not leave thee.* Providence ſeemed to croſs the promiſe, while he is thus going as an exile to a place far diſtant: God aſſures him of the performance of all he had ſaid, in due ſeaſon; *I will not leave thee, till I have done that which I have ſpoken to thee of.* When God ſpeaks to his people, he ſpeaks to the point; he ſpeaks to the caſe; his words are ſuited to their preſent exigencies; and not only ſo, but to their future ſtraits alſo. Jacob knew not, but God knew and foreſaw what hardſhips he would meet with in his uncle Laban's ſervice; and in a ſuitableneſs to the event that was to take place, he aſſures him, ſaying, *I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have ſpoken to thee of.* This was ſuch a gracious manifeſtation, and ſuch a wonderful intercourſe that God had with Jacob, as obliged Jacob to put a remark upon the place, and call it BETHEL, the *houſe of God*, the *gate of heaven.*

The text is not ſo much a *new* promiſe, as a repeated confirmation of what he had *before* promiſed, for eſtabliſhing and fortifying of Jacob's faith; for, ſays God, *I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I* HAVE *ſpoken to thee of.* Where we may obſerve two things.

1. A *confirming* word concerning the iſſue; or what he would bring out of theſe promiſes, that they ſhall not be mere ſayings, but doings; *I*

* This ſermon was preached on a thankſgiving-day, immediately after the celebration of the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper, at Abbot's-hall, Oct. 22. 1733. It hath undergone three impreſſions.

will

will do what I have ſpoken to thee of. Have I ſaid it, and will I not do it? *In the end the viſion ſhall ſpeak.*

2. A ſupporting word in the *interim*, that faith may not faint in the mean time before the accompliſhment come, *I will not leave thee, until I have done it.* Jacob might think, Alas! it may be a long time between the promiſe now made, and the accompliſhment of it. What will become of me in the mean time! And, indeed, he had dark days, and hard ſervice before his hand; and there was long twenty years between Bethel-viſit here, where he met with God, and God ſpake to him in this manner, and Peniel-viſit, when he wreſtled with God and prevailed, and when God came to do for him ſome of the great things he here had ſpoken to him of. And in that interval of twenty years, between Bethel and Peniel, many viciſſitudes and changes, trials and difficulties occurred in Jacob's lot; but for this ſupport in the mean time, God aſſures him that he would never *leave him, until he had done that which he had ſpoken to him of.* Hence the doctrine I would ſpeak a little unto is,

OBSERV. *That whatever dark and diſmal days may befal the children of God, upon the back of ſweet Bethel-viſits that he allows to them; yet he will not leave them, till he hath accompliſhed all the Bethel-promiſes that he made to them.*

He *will never leave them, till he do what he hath ſpoken to them of.* He will go on, till he hath done as he hath ſaid. We may ſay of our Lord Jeſus, when once he hath ſpoken to a ſoul, and begun to do graciouſly, as Naomi ſaid to Ruth concerning Boaz, Ruth iii. 18. *Sit ſtill, my daughter, till thou knoweſt how the matter will fall: for the man will not reſt, till he hath finiſhed the thing this day.* Even ſo, when Chriſt hath begun to ſpeak kindly, the poor believer may ſit ſtill and wait patiently, till the appointed time of accompliſhing his word; for, the God-man will not reſt until he hath finiſhed the thing. We may be *confident of this very thing, that he that hath begun the good work in us*, and ſaid the good word to us, *will perform it*, and finiſh it, Phil. i. 6.; *I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have ſpoken to thee of.*

We find how this doctrine was verified, both in Jacob and his ſeed.

1. In Jacob's own *perſon.* After this diſcovery of God that he enjoyed at Bethel, many dark days, and much hard ſervice he endured, yet God did not leave him. When Laban caſt down his countenance on him, and ſaid, putting him in mind of his Bethel-viſit he made to him, and the Bethel-vow he cauſed him to make, Gen. xxxi. 13. *I am the God of Bethel.* Yea, God never left him, till he did what he ſpoke to him, both in proſpering him in the place where he was a ſtranger ſo long, and in bringing him back to his own land though he was in great danger: when Laban was purſuing him behind, and his brother Eſau meeting him in the face, yet God preſerved him according to his word, and brings him back to the land he promiſed to bring him to, and then ſends him to viſit Bethel, Gen. xxxv. 7. where he built an altar, and called it EL-BETHEL; that is, the *God of Bethel;* and ſo remarked the goodneſs of God to him, in not leaving him till he had *done all that he ſpoke to him of.*

2. In Jacob's *ſeed* this doctrine was verified, particularly with reference to the promiſe made to them, concerning their inheriting the land of Canaan, and expelling the Canaanites to make room for them. See and compare Joſh. xxi. 43,—45. with Joſh. xxiii. 14, 15. and 1 Kings viii. 56. God will take his own time of doing what he hath ſpoken; but he will be ſure to do it, whatever difficulties interveen between the promiſe and performance.

In handling of this ſubject, I would incline to obſerve the following method, through divine aſſiſtance.

I. What we are to underſtand by the *Bethel-viſits*, that God may allow his people.

II. Conſider ſome of the *dark days* that may follow upon theſe Bethel interviews.

III. Conſider and explain the *promiſe* here made, that he *will not leave them, till he hath done that which he hath ſpoken to them of*, notwithſtanding of the dark days that may interveen between the promiſe and the accompliſhment.

VI. Offer ſome *grounds* upon which the believers may be aſſured, that God *will not leave him, till he hath done that which he hath ſpoken to him of.*

V. Deduce ſome *inferences* for the application.

I. The *firſt* thing propoſed was, To ſhew what we are to underſtand by the *Bethel-viſits* God may allow his people. In order to this, I premiſe, it is ſure none are acquaint with what we call a *Bethel-viſit*, except theſe that are in a peculiar manner bleſſed of the Lord, as Jacob was, of whom his father Iſaac ſaid, *I have bleſſed him, and he ſhall be bleſſed*, Gen. xxvii. 33. They are the bleſſed objects of God's love, and the bleſſed heirs of the promiſes, brought into covenant with God, and joined to the Lord by converting grace and ſaving faith. And as none are acquainted with Bethel-viſits but theſe that are thus bleſſed; ſo it is with great variety, that the Lord's people do enjoy ſuch appearances of God. Though they have not all experience of Bethel-interviews with God, of the ſame meaſure and degree with that of Jacob; yet they have ſuch experience of meeting with God as are ſubſtantially the ſame. Whatever difference there may be in circumſtances; yet they are ſuch, as they may call the place BETHEL, the *houſe of God*, the *gate of heaven.*

In the illuſtration of this point, I ſhall here obſerve 1. The ſubſtance. 2. The ordinary circumſtances of ſuch interviews with God as may be called Bethel-viſits.

1ſt, The *ſubſtance*, or ſubſtantial part thereof, is God's gracious meeting with them, ſo as they may have it to ſay, *The Lord God of the Hebrews met with us*, Exod. iii. 18. And that either in public ordinances, or in ſecret duties, by night or by day, in the city or in the field; and this meeting hath theſe two things eſpecially in it, which we find was in Jacob's meeting with God here in Bethel, the one is the manifeſtation of his glory, and the other is the communication of his mind.

1. This Bethel-viſit includes a *manifeſtation of his glory.* Jacob here ſees the glory of God in Chriſt repreſented as the ladder reaching between heaven and earth. Why then, you may call that a Bethel wherever it hath pleaſed God to reveal Chriſt in you, and to open your eyes to ſee his glory in the face of Jeſus Chriſt, as the way to the Father, and as the ladder by which you may aſcend up to heaven. Have you

you ſeen, at this, or any former occaſion, Chriſt to be, as it were, the ladder ſet upon the earth, in his humiliation, and reaching unto heaven, in his exaltation, and ſo that all the rounds and ſteps of the ladder are compleated in his incarnation, life, death, reſurrection, aſcenſion, and ſitting at the right-hand of God; and *by him do we believe in God, who raiſed him from the dead, that our faith and hope might be in God?* 1 Pet. i. 21. And have we thus, by faith, ſtept up the ladder, or are we on the way ſtepping up as we can, through grace, upon the view of Chriſt as the only ladder, the only way? Hath thus the God that *commanded light to ſhine out of darkneſs, ſhined into our hearts*, not our heads only, but our hearts, to give us the *light of the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jeſus Chriſt*, ſo as our hearts have gone out after a revealed Chriſt? Well, this is one ſubſtantial part of a Bethel-viſit, the manifeſtation of his glory.

2. This Bethel-viſit includes a *communication of his mind*. Jacob here not only hath God manifeſting his glory to him, but alſo communicating his mind as a promiſing God, ſaying, I am your father's God, *The God of Abraham and Iſaac*; and in teſtimony that I will be your God alſo, I will do ſo and ſo to you: and thus he communicates his mind to him by promiſes of grace. Why then, you may call that a Bethel-viſit, when God comes and intimates his love, or communicates his mind, and ſpeaks into your heart by ſome word of grace and promiſe, opening up ſome ſecret truth of the goſpel to you, and opening your underſtanding to apprehend, and your heart to apply it, and cauſing you to hope in his word, as *Yea* and *Amen* in Chriſt. If God hath ſpoken a word to your heart, and made you take him at his word, ſo as you can look to him and ſay, *Remember the word on which thou haſt cauſed me to hope*, whereever it was, you may ſay the name of the place was BETHEL, and that you *found him in Bethel, and there he ſpake to you*, Hoſ. xii. 4. Now, concerning theſe viſits, we may remark four things.

(1.) That the Lord may allow a Bethel-manifeſtation and communication to his people, and yet they may not *know that God is preſent with them*, in ſuch a manner as he is, till an after reflection thereupon. Hence ſaid Jacob here, ver. 16. when he awaked out of his ſleep, *Surely God was in this place, and I knew it not*. God's people may be ſurpriſed with his viſits, that though they cannot but be conſcious of his coming, when he approaches to them, yet they may not be ſure about the qualities of that viſit, whether it was a ſaving divine manifeſtation, till they come to examine and reflect upon it, and find that it was none other but the powerful preſence of God: for, they carry their own evidence along with them; *Surely he was here*.

(2.) Bethel-viſits fill the ſoul with a *holy awe of God*, ver. 17. *How dreadful is this place?* They that will ſee God will ſee cauſe of holy trembling and bluſhing before him, and the ſight will humble and fill them with holy awe and reverence. Saving diſcoveries do not elevate and puff up with pride, but impreſs the ſoul with holy dread. The ſweet pleaſure and joy that attend the diſcovery is tempered with holy fear and awe, in ſo much, that they *fear the Lord and his goodneſs, and rejoice with trembling*. The place where God manifeſts himſelf is both a joyful and a dreadful place. Praiſe is the moſt joyful and heartſome exerciſe; yet God is ſaid to be *fearful in praiſes*, becauſe of the dread and awe of God that is on the heart of theſe that praiſe him; for, *Great is the glory of the Lord* which they ſee who *ſing in the ways of the Lord*.

(3.) Divine viſits are *not excluded from any place*; even here, where Jacob little thought of meeting with God, here he meets with him, he finds him in Bethel, and ſays, *This is the houſe of God, and the gate of heaven*. Wherever we are, in the houſe or field, if we meet with God there, we may call it the *houſe of God*, and the *gate of heaven*; for, heaven is in his gracious preſence.

(4.) Divine viſits are *quickening*, ver. 18. He riſes early in the morning, and ſets about ſolemn worſhip of the God that appeared to him. He ſets up the ſtone for a pillar, and anoints it as a memorial of what paſt, and gave the place a new name. As ſweet communion we have with God ought to be remembered; ſo his grant of mercy calls for our return of duty. Jacob is here alſo quickened to vow himſelf away to the Lord, and promiſe to ſerve him; and, indeed, our vows and promiſes are then regular and evangelical, when they are the fruit of God's manifeſting himſelf in the covenant of promiſe to us, as to Jacob here: for, whatever we promiſe, we can perform nothing but in virtue of his promiſe to us.

2*dly*, As to the *ordinary circumſtances* of ſuch Bethel interviews with God. Several of theſe may be gathered from the hiſtory of Jacob, and will be found to correſpond with the believer's experience, as in theſe following particulars.

1. That in the Lord's ordinary way of dealing, when he deals effectually with poor ſouls, and when he hath a mind to bring them to a Bethel, he readily brings them to a *wilderneſs*, and there deals powerfully with them, and *ſpeaks kindly to them*; or, *to their heart*. Thus here Jacob is in the wilderneſs, being baniſhed from his father's houſe. Though he was a ſon of the promiſe, ye he was forced to run to a ſtrange country. God allures his people, and brings them to a wilderneſs, and then ſpeaks comfortably; gives them the *valley of Achor for a door of hope*. Some here readily have come to this communion, or the like, and have found themſelves in a wilderneſs of confuſion, darkneſs, and deſpondency, and yet had, ere all was done, ground to call the place BETHEL, by reaſon of his meeting with them, and ſpeaking kindly to them.

2. The ſweeteſt diſcoveries of God are readily uſhered in with the *darkeſt nights*. God's viſit is ordinarily like the break of the day upon the back of a dark night. And, indeed, *Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning*, Pſal. xxx. 5. As it was literally in the dark night that God viſited Jacob here; ſo you will ſee what a dark night of trouble, diſtreſs, and perplexity Jacob was in when he met with God at Peniel, and wreſtled with the angel and prevailed; *Jacob was left alone; and there wreſtled a man with him till the break of day*, Gen. xxxii. 24. He had been before this compaſſed with clouds of fear on the account of Eſau, who was meeting him with four hundred men. You that are in a dark night of fear and diſtreſs may be encouraged to wait on, for readily the Lord uſhers in manifeſtations of himſelf with the darkeſt nights.

3. As the Lord is pleaſed to uſher in ſweet manifeſtations

manifeſtations of himſelf with a dark night; ſo readily a *dark night follows* upon their ſweet manifeſtations. And many times they are as a blink before a ſtorm; and the people of God often find this to their ſad experience, making them ſee ground to be ſober after their ſweet experiences. Jacob had a good night in Bethel; but new ſtraits followed upon it, particularly in the hard ſervice and harſh treatment he met with from Laban. Here is a viſit; and preſently follows a night of trouble again. We mention this, not for your diſcouragement, but that you may not be ſurpriſed; for, there may be a ſudden turn in your ſpiritual affairs: *I ſaid, my mountain ſtands ſtrong; but thou didſt hide thy face, and I was troubled.*

4. Sometimes the night that follows upon the Lord's manifeſting himſelf may be *darker*, and the darkneſs of it *greater* than the night they had before their Bethel-manifeſtation. Jacob was in a ſtrait before the Bethel-viſit, through the fear of Eſau; but after that kindly viſit, the ſtrait was greater, and the night darker, while he had not only the fear, but the feeling of Laban's diſpleaſure: perhaps you had a dark night before the Lord paid you a viſit; but what if a darker night ſhall follow upon that viſit, even ſome grievous temptation to raze all again. The church was brought to *the banqueting houſe, and his banner over her was love*; yet afterwards to the dark ſhadow, where ſhe cries, *I ſought him, but I found him not.* What a ſweet communion had the diſciples with Chriſt at the laſt ſupper! yet followed with the darkeſt night of temptation, trouble, and ſcattering: the ſhepherd of Iſrael himſelf being ſmitten, the ſheep were ſcattered. When the Lord allows you ſweet Bethel-interviews and bleſſings, you may miſtake them, and think they preſage nothing, but a life of joy and comfort henceforth, and that former trials are at an end; and yet they may be only preparations for approaching trials, and encouragements to faith and hope under future troubles. This leads me,

II. To the *ſecond* thing propoſed, which was to ſhew, what *dark* and *diſmal days* may follow upon theſe Bethel-diſcoveries. There are theſe following dark days, or rather dark nights, that may follow upon Bethel-viſits.

1. A dark night of *long abſence*, a night of *weary diſertion* may follow. Jacob had not, for twenty years, ſuch a night as he had at Bethel: there may be long twenty years travel between Bethel and Peniel. Perhaps you had much heavenly-warmneſs by a live coal from the altar, when God manifeſted himſelf, and you got a heart to cloſe with Chriſt. The place was like a heaven upon earth to you; but, perhaps, many a weary day you have had ſince that time. May be you have never had ſuch a gale ſince that time. Or, if this communion hath been a Bethel to you, think it not ſtrange, though a night of abſence and hiding may follow, and though the night be long.

2. A dark night of *forgetfulneſs* may follow upon the Bethel-viſit, ſo as it is hard to know how ſecure people may grow; and they may loſe the ſweet impreſſion of the viſit, and have little or no kindly rememberance of the ſweet days they had at Bethel. This dark night followed upon Jacob's meeting with God here; it ſeems he had much forgotten it, till God puts him in mind of it, ſaying, Gen. xxxi. 13. *I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedſt the pillar, and vowedſt the vow.* Jacob, might he ſay, do you not mind the time? do you not mind the place? do you not mind the two pillars? do you not mind the promiſe? do you not mind the Bethel, where I ſhewed my covenant to thee, and accepted thy vows unto me? Be not diſcouraged with the fear of Laban behind purſuing you, and Eſau before meeting you; it is enough to drive all fears and diſcouragements away, that *I am the God of Bethel*; I am the ſame God now, that I was at that day to you: however, Jacob had loſt the ſweet impreſſion, and loſt the kind rememberance of Bethel, till God himſelf was the remembrancer. In the dark night of oblivion, all may go out of ſight, and out of mind.

3. A dark night of *temptations*, *fears*, and *diſcouragements* may follow upon a ſweet Bethel-viſit. The gracious encouragement that God gave to Jacob afterwards, ſhews what fears and diſcouragements he was under, and under which he was ready to ſink, if God had not ſupported and comforted him from time to time. Well, even after a Bethel-viſit you may be grievouſly tempted, to call all that you met with but a deluſion; yea, to think that it was Satan that was working with you, and not the living God; and to think that your coming to a communion-table was but a taking a ſeal of your own condemnation. Some may be tempted to fear that God hath a controverſy with them, and does not obſerve their affliction. It ſeems this was a part of the dark night that came upon Jacob; and therefore God ſhews him that it was an ungrounded jealouſy; *For*, ſays he, *I have ſeen all that Laban hath done to thee*, Gen. xxxi. 12. Though thou waſt not ſenſible of my care, yet I have all this time had a ſpecial care about thee, and increaſed thy ſtock, notwithſtanding of what Laban did. It is hard to believe the divine care in a dark day, wherein we apprehend his diſpleaſure; and yet when he returns, he can make us ſee he had a ſpecial care of us, when we know not of it; and that he hath been doing all things well, even when we were fearing all theſe things were againſt us.

4. A dark night of *wants* and *ſtraits* may follow upon Bethel-viſits; both outward and inward wants: temporal wants, ſuch as Jacob mentions, when he complained that Laban had *changed his wages ten times*, Gen. xxxi. 41. Spiritual wants, and want of comfort, ſuch as Jacob was under, when in his ſtrait he could draw no comfort, even from an old Bethel, till God gave him a new viſit, by telling him, that he was the God of Bethel. Think not ſtrange, though, upon the back of Bethel-viſits, you be tryſted with great ſtraits, outward and inward, and perhaps can draw no comfort from a back-look upon Bethel; for, whenever you can draw comfort and encouragement from it, you may reckon it a new viſit; when, in a dark day, you can remember him from the *land of Jordan*, and remember what God did to you at ſuch a time.

5. A dark night of *perſecution*, even by friends and brethren, may follow upon Bethel-viſits, as Jacob found after this viſit, when perſecuted by Laban, his father-in-law, and Eſau his brother, that was conceived in the ſame womb with him, though God mercifully reſtrained their anger and fury, that they got not

not their will of Jacob; *For the wrath of man ſhall praiſe God, and the remainder thereof he will reſtrain.* Think not ſtrange then, even from Bethel-meetings with God, though you ſhould be tried with a dark night of perſecution, even from envious friends and falſe brethren. The church and ſpouſe of Chriſt ſpeaks of a Bethel, Song i. 4. *The king hath brought me into his chambers, we will be glad and rejoice in thee;* and yet a hot and ſcorching perſecution followed, ver. 6. *The ſun hath looked upon me.* Why? *My mother's children were angry with me.* There is hardly any perſecution more grievous and violent, than that of angry brethren; but they are under a reſtraint; they can go no further than God permits: only we need not think ſtrange to ſee church-perſecutions, even after Bethel-viſits.

6. A dark night of *backſliding* and *relapſe* into former unwatchfulneſs, ſecurity, and ſloth may follow upon the Bethel-viſit, though it was ſolemnly renounced at Bethel. Jacob ſeems to have been under a lamentable decay, as to the exerciſe of faith that once he had at Bethel, till once God returned and quickened him again. Chriſt ſaid to his diſciples after the communion, *Ye ſhall all be offended, becauſe of me this night:* you ſhall all turn your backs upon me: you may lamentably relapſe to theſe ſins that were renounced. I know not your particular caſe; but whatever it is, it hath been the ſad experience of God's remnant. You may relapſe to the omiſſion of known duty; yea, to the embracement of known idols, the very thing that parted between God and you. This is a ſad and ſorrowful night, that you need to take care you bring not upon yourſelves through unwatchfulneſs, in ſo provoking the Lord to anger with you, as he was with Solomon, 1 Kings xi. 9. It is ſaid *the Lord was angry with him, becauſe his heart turned from the Lord God of Iſrael, which had appeared to him twice.* What a ſad matter is it, if after a Bethel-interview with God you turn your back upon the God of Bethel! *Will you alſo go away?*

7. A dark night of *ſtrange diſpenſations* may follow upon Bethel-interviews. Various trials, viciſſitudes, and changes, ſuch as was in Jacob's lot, between the time of Bethel-promiſes and Peniel-performances thereof; Jacob did not want chaſtiſements; *If his children break my law, I will viſit their tranſgreſſions with rods, and their iniquities with ſtripes; nevertheleſs my loving-kindneſs will I not utterly take from him, nor ſuffer my faithfulneſs to fail,* Pſal. lxxxix. 30,—33. God may cover your table at Bethel, but behold afterwads the ordinary means of relief may fail you, as it was with Jacob in Laban's family; even ſo, the means of ſpiritual relief may fail you. You may go to preachings, and return as dark as before. You may go to your cloſet, and that mean may fail you. You may go to public ordinances and ſacraments, and theſe means may fail you. Though at Bethel you, perhaps, thought, Oh! I will never be what I have been; I will never do as I have done: I will never doubt nor fear any more: yet all this may be out of ſight, and *the comforter that ſhould relieve your ſoul, may be far from you,* Lam. i. 19. Strange diſpenſations may befal you. *All God's waves and billows may paſs over you, and deeps call unto deeps,* Pſal. xlii. 7.

8. A dark night of *perplexities* amidſt theſe ſtrange diſpenſations may follow upon Bethel-interviews. Thus it was with Jacob before he came off from Laban's houſe, he know not what to do till the Lord directed him to *ariſe and return to the land of his kindred,* Gen. xxxi. 13. You may come to ſuch a night of perplexities that you know not what to do, or what hand to turn you to. You may come to look upon yourſelf as in a periſhing condition, and to ſay your *ſtrength and hope is periſhed from the Lord. Remembering your affliction and miſery, the wormwood and the gall,* Lam. iii. 18, 19. What ſhall I ſay? May we not obſerve, with fear and trembling, that ſome who have met with God have afterwards come under dreadful dark clouds both in point of *ſin* and *miſery*?—Some have been ſo far left to *ſin* after manifeſtations, as deſervedly to be called devils: Peter got ſuch a diſcovery of God in Chriſt, that the Lord ſays to him, *Bleſſed art thou Simon Bar-Jona: fleſh and blood hath not revealed theſe things to thee, but my Father that is in heaven.* Yet inſtantly Peter is left ſo far to ſin, that Chriſt ſays to him, *Get thee behind me Satan; thou ſavoureſt not the things that be of God,* Matth. xvi. 17, 23. And what think you of his denying his maſter with curſes? Let us not imagine they are all ſtrangers to Bethel-interviews with God that deny, or do not zealouſly own the cauſe and intereſt of Chriſt at this day. But let us fear and tremble to conſider how far the children of God may be left to depart from him and his way, in a dark time, and in a day of temptation. It is poſſible that good men may be left to ſin, and to juſtify their ſin. I will be loth to ſay, that they are all wicked men that juſtify their ſinful proceedings in public matters at this day, and that juſtify their perſecuting rage and anger at their brethren, when I conſider how Jonah juſtified his anger againſt God, ſaying, *I do well to be angry.* So it is poſſible that even ſome, that have met with God, may juſtify their anger at their brethren, ſaying, *We do well to be angry even unto death,* and angry even to ſuſpenſion, depoſition, excommunication †. I hope none need be offended, if I have charity for ſome that are of that opinion, through their ignorant zeal, while carried away like Barnabas, with the diſſimulations of the day, and whoſe eyes God will open in due time, to ſee that their anger was as ill founded as that of Jonah's. For, if ever God met with them at Bethel, when he is pleaſed to return, their eyes will readily be opened, and they will ſee they did ill to be angry with their brethren that were contending for the rights of their mother's houſe: yea, another merciful turn upon their hearts will make them ſay, as Jacob's ſons once did of Joſeph, *We are verily guilty concerning our brother.* So we hope of ſome, if ever they have met with God at Bethel, ſurely upon the Lord's return they will regret their miſcarriage, and ſay, *We have verily been guilty concerning our brother.* — However, as ſome that have met with God may come under dreadful clouds of *ſin;* (for we are not to unfaint them all, and every one that are carried down the ſtream of defection, though we are to have no charity for their ways, yet let us not meddle with their ſtate, till we ſee if God ſhall reclaim them) ſo in point of *miſery,* ſome that have met

† Our author is here alluding to the conduct of the church-judicatories, in the proſecution, at this time, carrying on againſt the reverend Mr. Ebenezer Erſkine, and his brethren, formerly laid open, p. 661. See likewiſe, p. 631, 648, 670.

with

with God may be put to say, Oh! he breaks me with breach upon breach, and runs upon me like a giant; yea, while *suffering his terrors*, they have in a manner been *distracted*, and sometimes *cursed the day wherein they were born.* —— Thus you may see what dark days may follow upon Bethel-interviews with God; and yet, after all, the promise stands good to all the seed of Jacob that have met with God at Bethel. He *will not leave them, till he hath done that which he hath spoken to them of.*

III. The *third* general head proposed was, To *consider* and *explain* this promise, *I will not leave thee, till I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.* For *explaining* hereof there are these following questions that we would propound and answer. 1. How God *speaks* to his people? 2. How he doth or *accomplisheth* that which he hath spoken to them of? 3. *When* is it that he will do that which he hath promised? 4. What is the *import* of this privilege, that he *will not leave them?* 5. In what *sense* it is said, he *will not leave them, till he hath done what he hath promised?*

1st, How God *speaks* to his people, when they have a Bethel-visit of him? I answer, in a few words,

1. He speaks *divinely*, he speaks like himself, letting them know that it is he that speaks: as he said to the woman of Samaria, John iv. 26. *I that speak to thee, am he*; so says he here to Jacob, *It is I that speak to thee; I will not leave thee, till I have done that which I have spoken. Never man spake like this man:* man's speaking only reaches the ear, but God's speaking reaches and touches the heart. Hence,

2. He speaks *powerfully*, as it is said of Christ, *He spake as one having authority, and not as the scribes:* so, when the Lord speaks, there is power and authority accompanying the word, either in its first coming, or in its after-working, upon the heart. *Ye received the word, not as the word of man, but, as it is in truth, the word of God, which worketh effectually in you that believe*, 1 Thess. ii. 13.

3. He speaks *particularly*, as here to Jacob, *I will not leave* THEE, *till I have done that which I have spoken of to* THEE. People may hear the word delivered in general to all the congregation; but it doth them no good, till they hear it in particular spoken to them. Then God calls the person by name, and says, To *thee* I speak; and the heart says, It is to *me* that God is speaking. O! hath God spoken to thee, man, to thee, woman?

4. He speaks *kindly* and *comfortably*; Hos. ii. 14. *I will allure her, and bring her to the wilderness; and* then *speak comfortably to her.* His kindness in speaking appears most evidently when it is in a wilderness case he communicates himself: every word he speaks to Jacob here, is a word of kindness. O the light, life, strength, and comfort that the word brings when God speaks it! He hath a view both to their present comfort and their future support, when he speaks with them in Bethel.

5. He speaks *plainly* and not in parables: for he opens their understandings to apprehend, and their hearts to apply; *For to them it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven; to others it is not given*, Mat. xiii 11. The word of grace is a sealed book, till the Lion of the tribe of Judah open the seal.

6. He speaks *suitably* to their case; for, he hath *the tongue of the learned, to speak a word in season to the weary*, Isa. l. 4. He adapts his words here to Jacob's weary case, as I shewed in the explication. He gives them a word that suits their difficulties. Sometimes they have difficulty about this, and sometimes about that and the other affair, and they come with their burdens before the Lord, and he presents a word to them relative to them. —Sometimes they are burdened about their *provision*; and he gives a word for that: *Bread shall be given thee, and thy water shall be sure.*—They are burdened with *fears of danger*; and they get a word for that: *Fear not, for I am with thee: The eternal God is thy refuge.*—Sometimes they want *direction*; and get a word for that: *I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known; I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight.*—They want the *Spirit*; and they get a word for that: *I will put my Spirit within you; and the water that I give shall be in you a well of water springing up to everlasting life.*—They want *strength* for duty or trial; and they get a word for that: *My grace shall be sufficient for thee, and my strength shall be perfect in thy weakness.* —They want *pardon*; and they get a word for that: *I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions, for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.*—They want to have *sin subdued* and *mortified*; and get a word for that: *Sin shall not have dominion over you.*—They want something for the *church*; and they get a word for that: *That the wall shall be built in perilous times; that at evening time it shall be light; and upon all the glory there shall be a defence.* —They want a blessing for their *children*; and they get a word for that: *I will be thy God, and the God of thy seed* *.

2dly, The next question here, was, *How* he doth what he hath spoken to them? *I will do what I have spoken of to thee.* Why,

1. He will do it *faithfully: Not a word shall fail of what he hath spoken*, Josh. xxi. 45. The history of Jacob shews how faithfully God accomplished his promise, and all that he spoke to him; and he hath *faithfulness for the girdle of his loins. God is not man, that he should lye, nor the son of man that he should repent.* He will do what he hath spoken, surely, and certainly; *The vision shall speak, it shall surely come.*

2. As he will do certainly what he hath spoken, so he will do it *wonderfully*, and he will work wonders before he do it not; *Heaven and earth shall pass away, before one jot of his word fall to the ground.* And it is in a very marvellous and mysterious way, that God doth accomplish his word through a world of dark dispensations, *through fire and water he brings them to wealthy land.* Though impassable mountains be in the way; yet he will come and do what he hath said, and give his people occasion to say when he comes, *It is the voice of my Beloved, behold he cometh skipping upon the mountains, leaping upon the hills.*

3. He will do what he hath spoken, and do it *remarkably.* Thus he did what he said to Jacob; and if the believer may put a remark upon the Bethel-visit, when he comes to promise; much more upon the Peniel-visit, when he

* See a vast many more of the cases of the saints stated and solved, in the preceding Sermon, p. 685, —689.

comes

comes to perform what he hath promiſed. In the Bethel-viſit, we ſee him by faith in his word: but in the Peniel-viſit we ſee him by ſenſe in his work: for then he not only *ſays*, but *does* what he hath ſaid, and ſhews himſelf *face to face*.

4. When he doth what he hath ſpoken, he doth it *ſurpriſingly*. Jacob was not expecting ſuch a way of God's accompliſhing his word. Pſal. cxxvi. 1. *When the Lord turned back the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream.* He ſweetly ſurprizes when he comes to do what he hath ſpoken: *Then was our mouths filled with laughter, and our tongues with ſongs: the Lord hath done great things for us whereof we are glad.* Again,

5. When he doth what he hath ſpoken, he doth it *glorioufly*. His glory ſhines in all his works, and eſpecially in accompliſhing his promiſes, *that are Yea and Amen in Chriſt*. He makes the glory of his wiſdom, power, holineſs, the glory of his mercy, truth, and faithfulneſs to ſhine in the accompliſhment; he doth more than he hath ſpoken, and is better than his word, Exod. xv. 1. When God accompliſhed his promiſe of delivering Iſrael out of Egypt, and out of the hand of Pharaoh and his hoſt, then their voice was lifted up, ſaying, *I will ſing unto the Lord; for he hath triumphed glorioufly*.

6. When he doth what he hath ſpoken, he doth it *ſeaſonably; The viſion is for an appointed time, but at the end it ſhall ſpeak and not lye: though it tarry, wait for it; becauſe it will ſurely come, it will not tarry*, Hab. ii. 3. It will not tarry beyond the appointed time, nor beyond the proper time; and therefore, let faith wait upon a faithful God, who will do as he hath ſaid. This leads,

3*dly*, To the third queſtion, *When* is it that he will do what he hath ſpoken to them of? You may take the anſwer of this in the following particulars.

1. Some things he hath ſpoken relate to a day of *trouble*; and when that day comes he will do what he hath ſpoken to them of; *I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him*, Pſal. xci. 15. Hence his people never enjoy more of his preſence and pity, than in days of tribulation and affliction. And ſometimes he lets the trouble come to an extremity, before he ſenſibly accompliſh his promiſe of help; *I was brought low, and he helped me*, Pſal. cxvi. 6.

2. Some things that he hath ſpoken to them of relate to a day of *temptation*; and when that comes, then he will do what he hath ſpoken. He hath ſaid, Rom. xvi. 20. *The God of peace will bruiſe Satan under your feet ſhortly*. He hath ſaid, 1 Cor. x. 13. *That he is faithful, and will not ſuffer them to be tempted above what they are able to bear; but with the temptation will make a way to eſcape*. And hence it is, for ordinary, in a time of great and grievous temptation, he opens ſome door by which they eſcape from time to time, while they wait upon him.

3. Some things that he hath ſpoken relate to a day of *work*, of great work that he puts into their hand; and when that day comes, he doth that which he hath ſpoken. He hath ſaid, *That he works in us both to will and to do of his good pleaſure*, Phil. ii. 13. He hath ſaid, that he *will ſtrengthen, he will uphold with the right-hand of his righteouſneſs*, Iſa. xli. 10. And hence it is, that his people can ſometimes ſay with Paul, *I can do all things through Chriſt ſtrengthening me. Though we are not ſufficient of ourſelves, to think any thing as of ourſelves, yet our ſufficiency is of God*. And hence the church, Iſa. xxvi. 12. *Thou haſt wrought all our works in us*. And David, Pſal. lvii. 2. *I will cry unto God moſt High, unto God that performeth all things for me*.

4. Some things that he hath ſpoken of relate to a day of *warfare*: and when that day of bloody battle comes, he doth that which he hath ſpoken. He hath ſaid concerning this, even he *who is the Captain of ſalvation; the Lord mighty in battle* hath ſaid, for the encouragement of his ſoldiers, *Who go a warfare upon their own charges?* 1 Cor. ix. 7. *He is the ſtrength of their ſalvation, that covers their head in the day of battle*, Pſal. cxl. 7. And hence it is, that according to his word, his people are ſaid *always to triumph in Chriſt Jeſus*, and to be *more than conquerors*. See Pſal. xviii. 30, 32, 34. *The word of the Lord is tried: He is a buckler to all thoſe that truſt in him. It is God that girdeth me with ſtrength: He teaches my hands to war; and bows of ſteel are broken by mine arms*. All their ability to ſtand in a day of trial and danger flows from this.

5. Some things he hath ſpoken of relate to the day of *death*: and when that comes, he will do what he hath ſpoken to them. He hath ſaid, *Death ſhall be ſwallowed up in victory*, 1 Cor. xv. 54. He hath ſaid, Hoſ. xiii. 14. *I will ranſom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death! I will be thy plagues; O grave! I will be thy deſtruction*. And hence it is, that as all believers in Chriſt are bleſſed in death, for, *Bleſſed are the dead that die in the Lord, and that ſleep in Jeſus*; ſo ſome believers have got the ſenſible and comfortable view of this, even when paſſing through that valley between time and eternity, and have fallen a ſinging in the midſt of the valley, and ſaying, *O death, where is thy ſting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Though I walk through the valley of the ſhadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me, thy rod and thy ſtaff they comfort me*. With the ſtaff of the promiſe in their hand, they walk through Jordan dry ſhod. And when the ſoul is ſeparated from the body, then it enters into the *reſt that remains for the people of God*, according to that which he hath ſpoken.

6. Some things that he hath ſpoken relate to a day of *judgment*; and when that day comes, then he *will do what he hath ſpoken to them of*. He hath ſaid four times in one chapter; namely, John vi. *That he will raiſe them up at the laſt day*; and 1 Theſſ. iv. 13. *That if we believe that Jeſus died, and roſe again, even ſo*, upon the ſame ground, and with the ſame certainty, *them that ſleep in Jeſus will God bring with him*; and *that the dead in Chriſt ſhall riſe firſt, and meet the Lord in the air; and ſo ſhall they ever be with the Lord*. He hath ſaid, 1 Cor. xv. 52. *That in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the ſound of the laſt trump, the dead ſhall be raiſed incorruptible: That this corruptible ſhall put on incorruption, this mortal ſhall put on immortality*. He hath ſaid, Col. iii. 4. *When he who is our life ſhall appear, we ſhall appear with him in glory*. He hath ſaid, Phil. iii. 21. *That he will change our vile bodies, and make them like his glorious body, according to the working, whereby he is able to ſubdue all things to himſelf*. He hath ſaid, *That the ſaints ſhall enter into the joy of their Lord, and ſhall judge the world*.

What I have ſaid, may give ſome light to the queſtion, *When* will he do what he hath ſpoken

ken to his people? He will do all that he hath ſpoken, partly here, and perfectly hereafter. He hath promiſed eternal life to the believer: *He that believeth on the Son, hath everlaſting life.* This he doth in part here, and to perfection hereafter; and we may appeal to every believer of any ſtanding, if the promiſe of heaven and glory be not, even in part, allowed him here by a perſonal poſſeſſion. He is poſſeſſed of heaven, not only,

(1.) By *union* to Chriſt, ſo as his Head is in heaven, Chriſt the Fore-runner having taken poſſeſſion, and *gone to prepare the place for him*; ſo that he *ſits with him in heavenly places*; but alſo,

(2.) By *communion* he hath ſome perſonal poſſeſſion, if you conſider what heaven is.—Is heaven a ſtate of *light*, perfect light? The believer hath the begun poſſeſſion of this, in ſo far as *he hath the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jeſus Chriſt.*—Is heaven a ſtate of *liberty*, perfect liberty? The believer hath the begun poſſeſſion of this, in ſo far as at any time his *bonds are looſed, and the Spirit of God is poured out upon him; where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.*—Is heaven a ſtate of *love*, perfect love? The believer hath the begun poſſeſſion of this, in ſo far as *the love of God is ſhed abroad upon his heart, by the Holy Ghoſt*; and *the love of Chriſt conſtraineth him* to duty and ſervice.—Is heaven a ſtate of perfect *holineſs?* The believer hath the begun poſſeſſion of this, in ſo far as *he is ſanctified in Chriſt Jeſus, and going on to perfection*; yea, is already perfectly holy in deſire.—Is heaven a ſtate of perfect *joy?* The believer hath this alſo in begun poſſeſſion, when he is *filled with joy and peace in believing*; yea, ſometimes *with joy unſpeakable and full of glory.*—Is heaven a ſtate of *triumph* and *victory?* The believer hath the begun poſſeſſion of this, when he boaſts in the Lord, and ſays, *Thanks be to God, which always cauſes us to triumph in Chriſt.*—Is heaven a place of *praiſe* and *wonder* at the grace of God, and the glorious perfections of God? The believer hath the begun poſſeſſion of this alſo, when ſometimes his heart is filled with the high praiſe of God, filled with wonder at his matchleſs love and diſtinguiſhing grace. He would invite all the world to wonder and praiſe. Yet, O what a ſmall portion of heaven hath he here, in compariſon of what he ſhall have! *He ſhall drink of the river of pleaſure for ever.* Yet that part he enjoys here, is the earneſt of the full poſſeſſion, and the evidence that he *will do all that he hath ſpoken to them of*, concerning *grace and glory, and every good thing.*

4thly, The next queſtion was, What is the *import* of this privilege, *I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have ſpoken to thee of?* Why, how can it be ſaid he will not leave them; when yet, after Bethel-viſits and Bethel-promiſes given them, they may be tryſted with ſuch dark nights as I have been ſpeaking of? For clearing this ſubject, there are theſe two remarks I would offer.

1. The firſt remark is, "That there are *ſome* "*reſpects* wherein God may be ſaid to *leave* "people;" as,

(1.) When he takes away his *word*, his *candleſtick*, his *ordinances*, and brings a famine, *not of bread and water, but of the word of the Lord*, Amos viii. 11, 12. This is the worſt famine in the world.

(2.) When he takes away his *Spirit*, and *commands the clouds to rain no rain*, Iſa. v. 6. This is a fearful leaving; for, though the word and ordinances remain, yet, if the Spirit be away, then the word can do no good, it hath no power to convince or convert, to confirm or comfort.

(3.) When he takes away his *ear*, and doth not regard their prayers; when he doth not *ſuffer them to pray*, nor *anſwer their prayer*, but *ſhuts them out*, Lam. iii. 8.

(4.) When he takes away his *hand*, his help and aſſiſtance, and leaves perſons to themſelves, to their own luſts and counſels; *My people would not hearken, Iſrael would have none of me: therefore I gave them up to their own heart luſts; and they walked after their own counſels*, Pſal. lxxxi. 11. Alas! a ſad leaving! But then,

2. The ſecond remark I offer is, "That there "are *ſome reſpects* wherein God will *not leave* his "people." Either,

(1.) He will never leave them *really*, but in *appearance*. And hence they many times think, and fear he is away, when he is really preſent; *Verily God was in this place, and I knew it not*, ſays Jacob. Or,

(2.) He never leaves them *abſolutely*, but in ſome reſpect: he may leave them in reſpect of the *influence* of grace, though he doth not leave them as to the *preſence* of grace. He may leave them in reſpect of *comfort*; though he may allow the influences of grace, yet he may deny the comfort of grace. He may leave them in reſpect of *aſſiſtance*, though he may allow them the comfort of grace, yet he may deny them that aſſiſtance and ſtrength they want, and alſo the ſenſible anſwer of their prayers. Or,

(3.) He never leaves them *totally*, but in ſome degree. He may leave them to be buffeted by Satan; but will not leave them to be overcome by Satan. And he may leave them to be harraſſed and captivated by ſtrong corruptions; though he doth not leave them to be conquered thereby. Or,

(4.) He never leaves them *finally*, but for ſome time: he may *hide his face for a little moment, but with everlaſting kindneſs will he have mercy on them*, Iſa. liv. 7, 8. He will never leave them, ſo as to forget to do what he hath ſpoken to them of.

This promiſe then, *I will never leave thee*, it ſays, that *ſomething* of God is ever with them, and in them. They have in them *a well of water, ſpringing up to everlaſting life*, John iv. 14. God loves to ſtay where once he comes, *I will not leave thee.*—It ſays alſo, that he will not *ſtay* away: though he hides himſelf out of ſight, he will not be long away.—It ſays, that in whatever reſpect he may be ſaid to leave them for a while, yet he will *return* to their joy; *Now you have ſorrow; but I will ſee you again, and your heart ſhall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you*, John xvi. 22.—It ſays, there are ſome things God will never *deprive* them of, never take away from them. He will never take away his love and favour; *For he hath loved them with an everlaſting love.* He will never take away his covenant of peace and of promiſe from them; *The mountains ſhall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindneſs ſhall not depart from thee, neither ſhall the covenant of my peace be removed*, Iſa. liv. 10. *I will never leave thee, nor forſake thee*, Heb. xiii. 5.

5thly, The next queſtion is, In what *ſenſe* it is ſaid of Jacob, and of all the ſpiritual ſeed of Jacob, that God *will not leave them, until he hath done that which he hath ſpoken to them of?* To explain this a little further, I ſhall ſhew, 1. In what ſenſe we are to underſtand this *interim*

promiſe, *I will not leave thee.* 2. In what ſenſe we are underſtand this particle *until*; which ſeems to point at a period of this promiſe.

[1.] In what ſenſe are we to underſtand this *interim*-promiſe, *I will not leave thee?* Why, whatever way he may be ſaid to leave his people, yet,

1. He will never leave them *Godleſs*, but will ſtill be their God: for, his covenant with them is, *I will be their God:* they can never be ſo far left, but that God is ſtill their God, and they may ſtill go to him as their God.

2. He will never leave them *Chriſtleſs:* he hath given Chriſt, *the unſpeakable gift of God*, to them; and he will never recal that gift; *For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance:* they ſhall ſtill have *Chriſt in them the hope of glory.* Hence,

3. He will never leave them *Spiritleſs:* he hath given his Spirit to you who are believers; and this anointing which you have received of him abides in you; *I will pray the Father, and he ſhall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever*, John xiv. 16. The Spirit may be hid in the believer, but never abſent.

4. Hence he will never leave them *comfortleſs;* John xiv. 18. *I will not leave you comfortleſs; I will come to you.* However the *ſtreams* of their comforts may be abated, yet the *ſpring* of comfort ſtill remains; and hence the well of conſolation now and then ſprings up.

5. He will never leave them *helpleſs*, but ſtill be to them *a preſent help in time of trouble*: even when they have deſtroyed themſelves, yet in him is their help. He helps their infirmities when they cannot pray. He helps them up when they are down. He helps them forward when behind.

6. He will not leave them *hopeleſs*, even when they are ſaying, *My hope is periſhed from the Lord;* yet he opens to them a door of hope in the valley of Achor. They are never again *without God, and without hope in the world.* Their hope lives. Yea,

7. He will not leave them *faithleſs: For he hath prayed for them, that their faith fail not.* Their faith may indeed languiſh, and be like to give up the ghoſt, as that of the diſciples, when they ſaid, *We truſted that it had been he which ſhould have redeemed Iſrael;* but now we doubt of this fundamental article of our creed. But when their faith was juſt at the failing, the Lord Jeſus reſtored and revived it.

8. He will not leave them *friendleſs* and *fatherleſs:* he is a friend that ſticks cloſer than a brother; and as *a father pities his children, ſo the Lord pities them:* as a father chaſtiſes his children, ſo the Lord chaſtiſeth them; as a father provideth for his children, ſo the Lord provideth for them, that they may not be in total want, between the promiſe and the time of the performance.—Thus he *will not leave them, until he hath done that which he hath ſpoken to them of.* He will not leave dealing with them; he will not leave bleſſing of them; he will not leave guiding of them and guarding of them; he will not leave making all things working together for good to them, and working for the accompliſhment of his promiſe.

[2.] In what ſenſe are we to underſtand this particle, *until*, which ſeems to point at a period of this *interim*-promiſe. Surely the meaning is not, that when *he hath done that which he hath ſpoken to them of*, then he *will leave them;* but rather that then they will no more need ſuch an encouraging word as this, *I will never leave thee:* for then they will be free of all fear of his leaving them. But the word imports,

1. That there may be a *conſiderable time* between the *promiſe* and the *accompliſhment;* between the time of God's ſpeaking to them, and the time of his doing what he hath ſpoken. There was twenty years diſtance between theſe two in Jacob's caſe.

2. It imports, that in this interval God is *carrying on* his work; *I will not leave thee, until I have done it.* Saying and doing is all one to God, he ſpeaks the word, and it is done; and when he hath ſpoken the word, it is always a-doing, till he hath done it completely.

3. It imports, that though he be ſtill carrying on his work, yet it may *be hid from our eyes*, what way he is doing it; and though we may ſuſpect, on this account, that God hath left us, and left his work, when we do not ſee him with us, nor ſee what he is doing; yet he is not away, when he is delaying the accompliſhing of his word, to our ſenſe and feeling, but only taking his own time and his own way, *whoſe ways are* infinitely *higher than our ways, and his thoughts than our thoughts.*

4. It imports, that this interval of time, wherein God is carrying on his work, though in a way hid from our eyes, is the *time of faith*, wherein we are called to wait upon a promiſing God, believing that not only he will be a performing God in due time, to our ſenſible feeling and experience; but that he is a performing God at preſent, making all interveening providences ſo many ſteps towards the accompliſhment of his word, though to carnal ſenſe and reaſon, they may ſeem to be ſo many letts and impediments to hinder the accompliſhment thereof. Joſeph had it revealed to him once and again, that he would be lord over his brethren, and that all the family ſhould yield obeyſance to him. How was this accompliſhed? Why, he is thrown into a pit; he is ſold into Egypt for a ſlave; and afterwards he is caſt into a priſon: theſe ſeemed all ſo many letts and obſtructions, in the way of ſuch advancement. How could faith keep its ground here? unleſs it ſhould ſhut its eye upon providences, and open its eye upon the promiſe, and keep it fixed upon a promiſing God, and then it would ſee all theſe ſeeming letts to be ſo many ſteps towards the accompliſhment of the promiſe, *I will not leave thee, till I have done what I have ſpoken:* therefore, let faith ſee and believe, that I am ſtill carrying on my work, and doing what I promiſed, whatever ſecret hidden ways I take to bring about my counſel; I am ſtill doing, and *will not leave thee, till I have done what I have ſpoken to thee of.*

IV. The *fourth* general head propoſed was, To offer ſome *grounds* of the doctrine, upon which the believer may be aſſured, that God *will not leave him, till he hath done that which he hath ſpoken to him of*, and that he will be all that he hath promiſed to him at Bethel.

1. Believers may be aſſured of it, upon the ground of the *unchangeableneſs* of God. There may be many viciſſitudes and changes in thy caſe: it is only the communion-day above that ſhall have no more night. Thou wilt certainly change, and change ere it be long: but dareſt thou ſay, God will change as oft as thou doſt? Thinkeſt thou that he will change in his love, when

when thou changeſt in thy frame? No; he will reſt in his love, *Whom he loves, he loves to the end.* Thy ſecurity ſtands upon God's immutability; *I am the Lord, I change not; therefore the ſons of Jacob are not conſumed*, Mal. iii. 6.

2. Believes may be aſſured, that God will not *leave them, till he hath done what he hath ſpoken*; and aſſured upon the ground of God's *foreknowledge.* What makes men many times alter their ſentiments is, becauſe there are many things fall out contrary to what they projected; but God foreſaw what would be; he foreſaw, that even after a Bethel heart-burning interview with God, thou wouldſt grow lukewarm and indifferent; yet notwithſtanding of this, he met with you in Bethel, and ſpake with you there; and therefore he *will do what he hath ſpoken to thee.* He foreſaw what a prodigal, what a backſlider you would be, yet he gave his word to you; and therefore he will not go back.

3. You may be aſſured he *will not leave you*, believer, *till he hath done what he hath ſpoken*; becauſe he is *faithful:* Heb. x. 23. 1 Theſ. v. 23. *Faithful is he that hath promiſed, who alſo will do it.* Though, when his *children break his law, and keep not his commandments, then will he viſit their tranſgreſſions with the rod, and their iniquities with ſtripes: nevertheleſs his loving-kindneſs will he not utterly take from him, nor ſuffer his faithfulneſs to fail. Once hath he ſworn by his holineſs, that he will not lye unto David*, Pſal. lxxxix. 30,—35. *God is faithful who hath called you to the fellowſhip of his Son.*

4. Believers may be aſſured of this upon the ground of the *divine power*; or, becauſe God is *Almighty*, and able to do what he hath ſpoken. The apoſtle ſays, Rom. xi. 23. *The Jews ſhall be grafted in.* Why? *For God is able to graft them in again*, having once promiſed it, and ſaid that he will do it. It is enough to ſupport our faith, that he is able to do what he hath ſaid. Abraham's faith leaned upon the power of God, Rom. iv. 21. *He was fully perſuaded, that he that had promiſed was able to perform.* You may then be aſſured, believer, *that he will never leave you, till he hath done what he hath ſpoken*; unleſs you can ſuppoſe, that he hath out-promiſed his own power, and ſaid more than he is able to do.

5. It is evident he *will not leave you, till he hath done what he hath ſpoken*, if you conſider the *experience of his people*, and *your own experience.* The experience of God's people, from the beginning of the world, who have always found God to be as good as his word, and the ſame God, that he manifeſted himſelf to be at their Bethel-meeting with him. They have ſtill found him to be the God of Bethel, whatever jealouſies they entertained of his love; yet, upon their return, after their dark days was over, they found that his *word endureth for ever*, and that he never came ſhort of his promiſe; but that notwithſtanding all their temptations, they were continually with him, holding them by his right-hand, Pſal. lxxiii. 23. They ſtill found him welcoming the returning prodigal, ſaying, *This my ſon was dead, and is alive, was loſt, and is found.* Now, is it conſiſtent with their experience? And will he take a ſingular way with you? Yea, thou dareſt not deny, believer, but thou haſt found God to be ſtill the God of Bethel, even though many times you were fearing that God would never ſmile upon you again; yet, upon your looking back to his holy temple, you have been made to ſay, O he is the ſame, and his *love is not altered nor changed; and that he hath not forgotten his promiſe.* Hence, how many times have believers reaſon to ſet to their ſeal to David's exerciſe and experience, Pſal. xxx. 9, 10, 11. when he is crying, *What profit is there in my blood, if I ſhall go down to the pit?* They fell a praying, *Hear, Lord, and have mercy upon me; Lord, be thou my helper*; and then have been made to ſay, *Thou haſt turned for me my mourning into dancing, thou haſt put off my ſackcloth, and girded me with gladneſs.* May not then experience aſſure you, that *he will not leave you, till he hath done that which he hath ſpoken.*

6. The everlaſting *nature* of the covenant of promiſe may aſſure you of this; *Though my houſe be not ſo with God, yet he hath made with me an everlaſting covenant, well ordered in all things, and ſure*, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. The bargain was not left to your making a covenant with him, but God himſelf made it with you; and therefore you ſhall *be kept by his power, through faith to ſalvation.* Though thou ſhouldſt change a hundred times, God will not change one word of the ſweet bargain he made with you: becauſe,

7. It is his *bargain* made with Chriſt; *I have made a covenant with my Choſen, and my covenant ſhall ſtand faſt with him*, Pſal. lxxxiv. 3. And hence, *If his chidren break my law, I will viſit their iniquity with rods: nevertheleſs my loving-kindneſs will I not take from him*, ver. 30, 33. And becauſe I will not take it from him, I will not take it from them. Your aſſurance then of his not *leaving you, till he hath done what he hath ſpoken*, may ſtand upon the everlaſting love that he hath to Chriſt, and the ſtanding bargain between Chriſt and him. He cannot fail you, becauſe he cannot fail his Son Chriſt, who hath ſealed the covenant with his blood, and in whom therefore *all the promiſes are Yea and Amen, to the glory of God:* and ſo the glory of God in Chriſt, the glory of his mercy and truth in Chriſt, obliges him to do as he hath ſpoken.

8. There is one ground of aſſurance more that I offer, as it lies in the boſom of the text, namely, the *divine will* and *pleaſure; I* WILL *not leave thee, until I have done that which I have ſpoken.* I WILL NOT; it is my will and pleaſure not to leave you till all be done. You have a word, 1 Sam. xii. 22. *The Lord will not forſake his people for his great name's ſake:* Why? *Becauſe, it hath pleaſed the Lord to make you his people.* Thus it is ſaid, Deut. vii. 7, 8. *The Lord ſet his love upon Iſrael;* Why? *Becauſe he loved them:* he will, becauſe he will. *And who hath reſiſted his will?* His will is uncontroulable: and hath he manifeſted his will in this, that *he will not leave you, till he hath done what he hath ſaid?* Then you may be aſſured of it, for he will do all his pleaſure; and well may you ſay, *Thy will be done.* The covenant of grace is made up of *I wills*, Ezek. xxxvi. 25, and downwards: I WILL *give thee a new heart; a new ſpirit* WILL I *put within you:* I WILL *take away the heart of ſtone;* I WILL *give you a heart of fleſh:* I WILL *put my Spirit within you*, &c. ten or twelve *I wills.* And this part of the covenant, delivered by Jacob in the text, is like a crowning promiſe put upon the head of all: *I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have ſpoken to thee of.* And what better aſſurance would you have than this, that God ſays, *I will?* What he will do, muſt be.

V. The *fifth* general head propoſed, was, To make

make *application* of the whole in ſome *inferences*. If it be ſo as I have been ſaying, hence ſee,

1. Whence it is that ſome may ſeem to be, of all men, the *moſt miſerable*, who are yet of all men the *moſt happy*; I mean *believers* in Chriſt, that are acquainted with Bethel-meetings with God, and to whom God hath ſpoken favourably and graciouſly.—They may ſeem to be moſt miſerable, in reſpect of the dark and diſmal nights that may follow upon their ſweet converſe with God; and yet are the moſt happy perſons in the world, in reſpect of their having God, binding and obliging himſelf *never to leave them*, till he hath performed all the gracious promiſes of the covenant to them: *This is the honour of all the ſaints;* God will not leave them, though they ſeem to be left by all the world. And God will do what he hath ſpoken to them of, though clouds and darkneſs, and mountains of difficulty ſtand in the way.

2. See whence it is that ſome may ſeem to the moſt *happy perſons* in the world, who are yet the *moſt miſerable*; I mean, *unbelievers*, whether they be profane or profeſſors, that have no acquaintance with God in Chriſt. They may ſeem to be moſt happy people for a while, in reſpect they know not what it is to have a dark day, a day of trouble and adverſity; they have peace and proſperity in the world: *They are not troubled as other men, neither are they plagued like other men*, Pſal. lxxiii. 5. They have no fear either from church or ſtate. They have eaſy conſciences, that can comply with every thing, right or wrong, that is impoſed upon them, whether by civil or eccleſiaſtical authority. They can ſell truth, to buy peace, and ſo they live at eaſe; and yet they are the moſt miſerable, becauſe they are left and forſaken of God, and are not the children of the promiſe, to whom God hath ſpoken peace; but the heirs of the threatening, againſt whom God hath denounced judgment, to whom he hath ſpoken wrath; yea, and *ſworn in wrath, that they ſhall not enter into his reſt: for there is no peace, ſaith my God, to the wicked.* And whatever temptations the people of God may be under to fret or grieve at their proſperity; yet, whenever the believer goes to *the ſanctuary, then will he ſee their end, and how they are ſet but in ſlippery places, and ſuddenly caſt down into deſtruction.*

3. Hence ſee, that the *ground* of faith ſtands immutable amidſt all changes. The moſt dark and diſmal days cannot hinder the accompliſhment of the divine promiſe; neither need any dark providence, or heavy diſpenſation, hinder the exerciſe of faith, and the life of faith in the divine promiſe. Nay, theſe croſs providences may rather further the life of faith, than hinder it: for, faith is never properly exerciſed; but upon the ſuppoſition of dark providences, croſſing and ſeeming to oppoſe the accompliſhment of the promiſe: becauſe, in ſuch a caſe, the ſoul hath nothing to do but to believe; nothing to look to but the promiſe; nothing to confide in but a promiſing God, and this is downright and honeſt believing; like that which our Lord Jeſus called the ruler of the ſynogogue unto, when news came that his child was dead, *Fear not, only believe*, Mark v. 36.; for then it is time for God to ſhew himſelf. Faith hath a *But* that can ſtand out againſt all the arrows of croſs providence that are ſhot againſt it; *Thou, O God, ſhalt bring them down into the pit of deſtruction: bloody and deceitful men ſhall not live half their days;* BUT *I will truſt in thee*, Pſal. lv. 23. He had been ſpeaking of many hard things in his way, ſuch as his being pained, becauſe of the voice of the enemy, and *the oppreſſion of the wicked*, ver. 3. *How they caſt iniquity upon him, and in wrath hated him;* yea, *but I will truſt in thee.* As God will accompliſh his promiſe notwithſtanding all the *Buts* that are in the way; ſo there is ground for faith to truſt confidently, becauſe God hath ſpoken; therefore no matter, though men and devils really, and dark promiſes ſeemingly, ſpeak to the contrary.

4. Hence ſee who are the *greateſt bleſſings* to a church or nation. Surely theſe to whom God hath ſaid, that he *will not leave them.* God hath not altogether left the church or the land where any ſuch are in it: but if they were gone, then God is gone alſo; and *Wo to them when I depart from them, ſaith the Lord.* Some are fond to have God's people perſecuted, and his ſaints baniſhed out of their coaſts: they cannot bear their faithfulneſs and honeſty, they are a torment to them; but yet what ſhould become of a church or land if God's faithful remnant were gone: his preſence would go with them, and none would remain behind to whom God hath ſaid, *I will not leave them.* Then would that church be left of God, and wo would be to them. May we not ſay with the prophet, Iſa. i. 9. *Except the Lord had left us a very ſmall remnant, we had been as Sodom, we had been like unto Gomorrah?* Surely when a church begins to caſt out the faithful from among them, then they begin to deſtroy themſelves, and to bring down wo upon their own heads.

5. Hence ſee, where lies the *ſafety* of God's children, when they are caſt out by their friends and brethren, as Jacob was in a manner caſt out at all hands; he was the object of his friend Laban's envy, and his brother Eſau's ſpite and rage, which occaſioned his being caſt out of his Father's family, and the country of his kindred for twenty years. Well, but where was his ſafety? Why, when all other comforts left him, God ſaid, *I will not leave thee till I have done what I have promiſed.* God's promiſe was his inheritance, and God's preſence was his guard, amidſt all frowning providences: and ſo it is, and will be, with all the true ſpiritual ſeed of Jacob. Whoever leaves them, God will not leave them; whatever men ſpeak reproachfully againſt them, yet God ſpeaks comfortably to them: yea, and whatever men do againſt them, God will do for them, and do all that he hath ſpoken to them of.

6. Hence ſee the *different ſtate* of the church *viſible* from the church *inviſible* upon earth; or the difference between the true and faithful children of God, and any particular viſible church. Why, all true believers have this promiſe ſecured in their perſons, that God will never leave them till he hath accompliſhed all his promiſes of grace and mercy to them. He hath ſaid, *I will never leave thee nor forſake thee;* but it cannot be ſaid of any particular viſible church, that God will never leave them. God hath left many particular churches, and called them, LO-AMMI, ſaying, *Ye are not my people, and I will not be your God*, Hoſ. i. 9. And how far he may leave the church of Scotland, who can tell? The glory ſometimes departs from the *threſhold* to the *mountains;* and God ſeems to be making fearful removes from the preſent generation. I would not love to give any juſt offence,

offence, nay, nor to grate the ears of any hearers with reflections upon any that are but poor, mortal, ſinful men, like ourſelves, ſubject to the like paſſions, and clothed with the like infirmities: but I would deſire to keep mine eyes on a higher hand than any ſinful inſtruments of the church's miſery and confuſion. They could do nothing if God were not provoked by our ſins to leave them to themſelves, and to their violent meaſures. *Who gave Jacob to the ſpoil, and Iſrael to the robbers? Did not the Lord, he againſt whom we have ſinned?* May we not ſay of the church of Scotland, *Her rowers have brought her into great waters?* Ezek. xxvii. 26. But it is our ſins that have provoked God to leave the rowers and managers, who could do nothing either againſt the ſacred office of miniſters, or the Chriſtian rights of people, except it were given from heaven, as Chriſt ſaid to Pilate, *Thou couldeſt have no power againſt me, except it were given.* As I love not to offend or grate any, as I ſaid, ſo I would not be chargeable with ſinful ſilence in ſuch a time, when God ſeems to be ſaying, *Cry aloud, and ſpare not; tell the houſe of Iſrael their ſins.* Wo would be to us, if we *ſhould be afraid of man, that ſhall die; or the Son of man, that ſhall be as graſs*, Iſa. li. 12. May we not conſider, as a matter of lamentation, how far God ſeems to have left the church of Scotland and her judicatories? I ſhall not aſſert, at this time, what I ſhall ſpeak by way of ſuppoſition, and leave it to every one to judge whether it be matter of lamentation before God in caſe the ſuppoſition ſhould be found a truth. And I ſhall ſpeak in the firſt perſon of the *plural* number, that I may take in myſelf as having a hand, as well as others, in provoking the Lord to leave us.

If God hath left us and our judicatories to make *unſcriptural* and *unwarantable acts*, denuding the Lord's people of their juſts rights and Chriſtian privileges; would it not be lamentable? If he hath left us ſo far as to make theſe acts *terms of communion*, ſo as none ſhall have communion with us that dare oppoſe theſe unwarranted proceedings.—Again, if he hath left us ſo far as to indulge *Arians* and *Blaſphemers*, and deal gently with theſe that are guilty of fundamental errors, and yet to proceed violently and furiouſly againſt ſome of the friends of truth, and to ſhew hardly ſo much regard for the ſupreme authority and dignity of the Son of God, as we ſhew for the ſupreme authority and dignity of our erring aſſemblies; if this were ſo, would it not be lamentable?—If God hath left us ſo far as to deſtroy ourſelves by ſacrificing a *covenanted reformation* and *covenanted principles*, together with the *ſacred office of miniſters*, and the *ſpiritual rights of people*, that would adhere thereto, and all unto what we call church authority and good order, which yet is but another name for church tyranny, and dreadful confuſion; would not this be very lamentable?—If God hath left us to caſt out of our boſom ſome that are, perhaps, the *friends and favourites of heaven*, and that, becauſe of their faithful teſtimony againſt the evils and defections of the day; would not this be lamentable, and evidence that God hath very far left us?*—Theſe and many other things I might ſuppoſe.

What is the world ſaying, but that our *rowers have brought us into great waters?* Ezek. xxvii. 26. What is this they are ſaying of the judicatories of the church of Scotland in our days? Are people ſaying, that God hath left us and our judicatories, ſo far as to make unſcriptural and unwarrantable acts, and impoſe ſinful terms of communion? *&c.* Are they ſaying, that Bethel is turned to Bethaven? That Philadelphia is turned to Laodicea? It would be good news if there were no truth in what the world are now ſaying of us. But if there be any truth in it, then ſurely God hath left us very far; and who knows how far he may yet remove? Better ſword, famine, and peſtilence among us than that God ſhould utterly leave us. But how far ſoever he may leave a viſible church, yet he will never leave his inviſible remnant: for to them he hath ſaid, *I will not leave thee till I have done that which I have ſpoken to thee of.*

7. Hence ſee reaſon to try what *ſide* you are upon, whether you be a *Jacob* or an *Eſau*. They were both born of the ſame mother, and lay in the ſame womb, but the one was bleſſed and the other curſed. You may be of the ſame mother-church, yet *born after the fleſh, and not after the Spirit*. If you be the true ſeed of Jacob, then you will know ſomething of a Bethel-interview with God. Hath God ever brought you to a wilderneſs, and there met with you, and ſpoke comfortably to you? Have you ever ſeen the glory of God in Chriſt as a ladder to heaven, *The way, the truth, and the life*, ſo as you were made to cloſe with him, and aſcend up to God by this ladder? *For, by him we believe in God, who raiſed him from the dead, and gave him glory, that our faith and hope might be in God.* Have you heard God ſpeaking to you, and communicating his mind, or diſcovering himſelf as a promiſing God in words of grace to your humiliation, ſanctification, and conſolation? O man, woman, if all places be alike to you, ſo as you never met with God in a place that might be called BETHEL; and if all words of ſcripture be alike to you, ſo as you know no word on which *he hath cauſed you to hope, you are yet a ſtranger to Iſrael*: but if you can point at the place where the Lord God of the Hebrews met with you once a day, ſo as you can ſometimes look back upon it with pleaſure, ſaying, O! I thought it was a BETHEL, a *houſe of God*; and if you point at the word with which God opened your heart, as he did the heart of Lydia, and made it the porch both of holineſs and comfort, it is good. Did he make the word to you, as it was to Job, *Better and more precious than your neceſſary food*; and as it was to Jeremiah, *The joy and rejoicing of your heart*; and as it was to David, *Sweeter than the honey, or the honeycomb*, and the very ground on which *he hath cauſed you to hope?* and are you from that time to this ſtill *hoping in his word*, when the Lord reſtores your ſoul out of its ſleepy fit? Why, then, it ſeems you are a child of promiſe, to whom God hath ſaid, *I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have ſpoken to thee of.*

8. Hence ſee the duty of all who hear me, both unbelievers and believers.

[1.] Ye that are *unbelievers*, and know not the God of Bethel, but are *ſtrangers to the covenant*

* That theſe particulars, ſuggeſted here only by way of *ſuppoſition*, are but too juſt, nay, poſitive *facts*, may be ſeen evinced above, p. 70, 149, 322, 454, 631, 648, 661, 670.

of promiſe, living without God and without hope in the world; living in the luſts of the fleſh; poor, wretched, worldly creature, drunkard, whoremonger, Sabbath-breaker, or hypocrite, that may be comes to communions, but never had communion with God there, and never came out of Sodom to this day, that was never brought to a wilderneſs of fear and deſpair, and then to a Bethel of hope and comfort in God, as a promiſing God in Chriſt; I would tell you your duty in two words.

(1.) It is your duty to *conſider the dangerous ſtate you are into.* And I muſt tell you a terrible word for awakening your ſeared conſcience, if God would bleſs it for that end. As you have been hearing that God is bound, by his own *promiſe*, never to leave his children, till he doth that which he hath ſpoken to them of in the goſpel: ſo, on the other had, that ſame God is bound and obliged, by his *threatening*, if you remain in that ſtate, never to leave contending with you, until he hath done that which he hath ſpoken of in the law; that is, you are under the *curſe of the law*, and God is obliged to curſe you. He that is faithful to his promiſe, and will accompliſh it to all that flee in to Chriſt, is as faithful to his threatening, and will accompliſh it to all that remain out of Chriſt. What a trembling heart would you have, man, woman, if you were but in Paul's caſe, when more than forty men bound themſelves with an oath, that they would not eat or drink till they had killed him? If ſo many men were bound under oath to kill and deſtroy you, I ſuppoſe it would take ſleep from your eyes, and make you reſtleſs how to eſcape their fury; and yet their oath could relate but to a temporal life. But tremble and fear to think, that the great God is bound, by ſolemn oath, to damn and deſtroy you to all eternity, if you remain in that Chriſtleſs ſtate; *He hath ſworn in his wrath, that you ſhall not enter into his reſt*, Heb. iii. 11.

(2.) It is your duty to *flee from this wrath to come*, by fleeing to Bethel, to the God of Bethel, to a promiſing God in Chriſt. You will never go to heaven, if you go not to Bethel by the way; I mean, if you remain ſtrangers to Chriſt. Think not theſe are words of courſe that we are ſpeaking to you; for, as *knowing the terrors of God, we perſuade you* to flee out of Sodom, and away from the divine wrath: ſo, I hope, knowing the *comforts of God*, as the God of Bethel, we would perſuade you to come and ſee what is to be ſeen at Bethel, and to come and hear the voice of a promiſing God that is to be heard there. *What we have heard and ſeen, may we not declare unto you*, that there is ſuch a thing as Bethel-interviews with God? And wo to us who are miniſters, if we be preaching to you an abſolutely unknown God, an unknown Bethel, an unknown Jeſus! If we know neither the terrors nor comforts of God at any time, I think we would have no commiſſion to ſpeak any of them to you, my dear friends, whom I never expect to ſee all again in our preſent circumſtances, till we ſee Chriſt coming in the clouds of heaven. In the fear of God, and in the faith of our meeting together before his tribunal, I would tell you, that the great day's meeting we ſhall have, will be terrible to you; if before you leave this world, you know nothing of a Bethel-meeting with God, as a promiſing God in Chriſt.

Therefore, let me *exhort* you, in the laſt of the feaſt, and in the proſpect of the great day, to come to Chriſt, in whom *all the promiſes are Yea and Amen, to the glory of God.* Come to him, by owning that you cannot come of yourſelf. Come to him, by crying to him, that he would draw you. Come to him, by believing that you cannot believe as you ſhould. Come to him, by believing that you are curſed, wretched, and undone without him, and that you ſhall be bleſſed and happy in him. Come to him, by believing that you have no righteouſneſs but guilt, no ſtrength but weakneſs; and that *in the Lord only you have righteouſneſs and ſtrength.* Come to him, by believing that you have nothing, and that he hath all; and that you can do nothing, and he can do all for you. Come to him, by imploring him to be your *Prophet, Prieſt, and King; your wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification, and redemption.* Come to him, not upon ſuch and ſuch terms and conditions, that you are ready to dream you muſt come up to; but come to him, by coming down to his terms; that is, to be willing to be ſaved by free grace. *Come down, Zaccheus, for this day ſalvation is come to thy houſe:* ſo, ſay I, come down, ſinner, from the tree of legal qualifications, and legal hopes, built upon your own naughty duties. Come down, for you cannot ſave yourſelf by all your climbing, nor bring ſalvation to yourſelf; but *this day ſalvation is come to your houſe:* ſalvation is come to you, becauſe you cannot come to it; ſalvation is come to your hand; ſalvation is come to your heart. The Saviour is knocking at the door of your heart, and calling you to come down, and take the free ſalvation that is come to you; *Whoſoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely.* It may be this ſhall be the laſt communion you ſhall ſee in time, and the laſt communion-offer that ever you ſhall hear; or, if you be ſpared in time, it may be the laſt communion you ſhall have with peace in the church of Scotland; it may be ſo, and it may be otherwiſe; only we have had long forty years peace, and it is poſſible the preſent emergencies in this church may be the beginning of ſorrows: but whatever be a-coming, as death and judgment certainly is coming upon you ſpeedily, it is ſafeſt for you *to come to Jeſus the Mediator of the new covenant;* let not the laſt offer be ſlighted: Oh! let us not part with one another, till there be good ground to hope, we ſhall not part with Chriſt. Alas! I fear before this day eight days, yea, perhaps, *before the cock crow twice*, this offer of Chriſt will be forgotten, and out of your head. Some pitiful trifle in a world will take all out of your heart; but I here take your conſcience to witneſs, forget as you will, that this offer ſhall not be altogether in vain, though it ſhould be ſlighted; for, when the book of conſcience ſhall be opened at the great day, this ſhall be called to remembrance, that ſuch a day at Abbot's-hall, after a communion there, Chriſt and ſalvation, from ſin and wrath, came to you to be freely received, and yet you rejected it; and this will contribute to glorify the juſtice of God in condemning you, and make it evident to all the world, *that he is clear when he judges.*

Wo is me, if there be not ſo much as a deſire kindled in your heart after our glorious Lord! If you think eternal ſalvation worth your while, O ſinner, and this offer of it no contemptible thing, then I may *adviſe* you to ſet ſome little time

time apart, after this occaſion is over, and betake yourſelf to ſome place, whether in the houſe or the field, where you may have a little retirement from the world, and there cry to God, that he may follow this offer and this occaſion, with power upon your heart for drawing you to the Lord and his way; while you are thus employed, who knows, but before you come from your knees, the place may become a BETHEL, a *houſe of God*, where you will ſee and know him as a promiſing God in Chriſt Jeſus; for, in this way ſome have had a meeting with him that they will never forget. O! be reſtleſs in waiting on him in the uſe of all appointed means, till he manifeſt himſelf to you ſavingly; for, when once he doth ſo, you may be ſure he will never leave you, till he hath perfected the good work according to his promiſe.

[2.] To you that are *believers* in Chriſt, and know what it is to have ſome Bethel-interviews with God, either at this occaſion, or formerly. Are you in this happy ſtate, and have God for your cloſe companion, who having begun to do you good, *will not leave you, till he hath done all that he hath ſaid to you?* Your duty is both to be *joyful* in your *promiſing God*, and *fruitful* in the *work of faith*.

(1.) In the faith of this promiſe, you ought to be *joyful*. Is it nothing to you, that God himſelf is your everlaſting companion, ſaying, *I will not leave you?* That he is a promiſing God to you, and hath condeſcended to ſpeak to you? That he is your agent, to do what he hath ſpoken? And that he hath bound himſelf never to *leave you, until he hath done what he hath ſpoken?* O! whatever dark days may come, it is your duty to be joyful in him: *Though the earth ſhould be removed, and the mountains caſt into the midſt of the ſea; here is a river that makes glad the city of God;* that makes glad the children of God: *God is in the midſt of them*; and hath ſaid, *I will not leave you.*

OBJECT. *Alas! but may a child of God ſay, How can I take in this comfort, when I find the Lord hath left me? Though he ſaid once,* I will never leave you, *yet it may be a deluſion; for I feel the contrary in many ſad effects of his abſence.*

O unbelieving believer, will you, with Thomas, never believe, till you feel! The ground of your faith is God's promiſe, and not your feeling. But, for ſatisfying the ſoul, that may be under a dark cloud of deſertion, ſaying, *The Lord hath forſaken, and my God hath forgotten;* ſin prevails, and God is out of ſight; I would have you to remark, That there are tokens of God's preſence with you, believer, even when you do not obſerve them, by reaſon of the clouds that are upon you: For example, whence is it that you are not *ſwallowed up* like a ſhip in a whirlpool; and that there is ſome ſecret grain of hope in the heart, even when your unbelief is ready to ſay, *My hope is periſhed?* Why, the reaſon is, he hath not altogether left you.—Whence is it that you are like the *burning buſh*, all in a flame many times, and yet not conſumed; burning, but not burnt; flaming, but not conſumed? You do not obſerve this; yet it is obſervable, that you are preſerved to this day, to this hour, amidſt the flames of temptation, and the floods of corruption: why? the matter is, he hath not yet left you.—Whence is it that you can never give *over duties altogether*; and, however the tempter prevail to ſlacken your hand, yet you cannot for your heart give up with all religious people, and with all religious duties, wherein you think communion with God may be had? Why, the reaſon of this is, he hath not altogether left you.—Whence is it that you do not *break God's priſon*, through utter deſpondency, and go away, and take your pleaſure with the reſt of the wicked world? Even when you are in the priſon of deſertion and unbelief, you dare not think of bidding farewel to God, or departing wickedly from him, or of bidding the Almighty depart from you; nay, is there not ſomething in your heart, even at your worſt, that ſays, O! if he would come! O! when will he come? This ſays, he hath not altogether left you.—Whence is it that you cannot *agree with ſin?* The more it prevails upon you, the more you abhor it, and abhor yourſelf for it, and dare not give way to it. Doth not this evidence there is ſome ſecret power and preſence of God with you, and that he hath not yet left you.—Whence is it that when you *ſtray from your true reſting-place*, you cannot *reſt any where elſe*, and can find no quiet in your mind, till you be back again? Poſſibly you fall a ſeeking reſt and peace in the creature, in the world, in recreations and diverſions, and perhaps in your duties, and yet there was ſomething in your heart, that ſaid, Oh! it is not here, it is not here; you find vanity written on all, till you return to your firſt Huſband.—Again, Whence is it, that at your *worſt* the leaſt word of news from him concerning his *return*, makes your heart *leap within you for joy*, as the babe in Elizabeth's womb, at the ſalutation of Mary, while the news of his return, and the hope of his coming again gives you a glad heart? Surely he is not far off; and even when you are moſt ſecure and ſtupid, moſt dead and dull, there is a ſecret wiſh at the bottom of your heart, O for ſuch a day again, wherein the candle of the Lord ſhined on me! *O that it were with me as in months paſt!*—Whence is it, that the *outward ſhell of ordinances* cannot content your heart, without the *kernel of communion and fellowſhip with God?* And that the dead letter of the word cannot pleaſe you, without the living Spirit accompanying it? Why, he hath not left you to be content with any thing without himſelf.—Whence is it, that the *intereſt of Chriſt*, is *your intereſt*, and that you cannot join with the defections of the day, nor ſide with the errors of the times, but ſtill deſire to be on Chriſt's ſide? Why cannot you turn with the tide of the times? Even becauſe the Lord hath not altogether left you.—In a word, Whence is it, that the *leaſt diſcovery* he makes of himſelf is *joyfully welcome to you*, when he, as it were, but ſoftly knocks, ſilently tirles at the door of your heart; *My Beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved for him?* Song v. 4. When he ſeems to be on his way to you, you are ready to ſay as Laban to Abraham's ſervant, Gen. xxiv. 31. *Come in thou bleſſed of the Lord.*—Well, whence are all theſe things, but from this, that he is *ſtill preſent*, though you ſee him not, and that he hath never altogether left you, but is ſtill remembering his promiſe, *I will not leave thee?*

(2.) It is your duty to be *fruitful* in the *work of faith*. O believer! give glory to God, by believing that he *will not leave you, till he hath done that which he hath ſpoken to you of*. Dark and cloudy days, that may follow upon Bethel-interviews

terviews cannot hinder God's doing what he hath ſpoken; and therefore, let it not hinder your believing that he *will do what he hath ſpoken to you of*. Hath he ſpoken to you of *pardoning your ſins?* And hath he ſpoken to you of *ſubduing your corruptions?* Hath he ſpoken of *ſupplying all your wants?* Hath he ſpoken to you of *bearing all your burdens?* Hath he ſpoken to you of *healing your diſeaſes?* Hath he ſpoken to you of your *proviſion* and *through-bearing in the world?* Hath he ſpoken to you of your *protection* in time of danger? Hath he ſpoken to you of *ſatisfying your deſire?* Hath he ſpoken to you of *guiding you by his counſel*, and *bringing you to his glory?* Hath he ſpoken to you of your *trials*, that he *will ſupport and uphold with the right-hand of his righteouſneſs?* Hath he ſpoken to you of your *ſeed*, that he *will be your God*, and the *God of your ſeed?* Hath he ſpoken to you of your *death*, that *death ſhall be ſwallowed up in victory?* Hath he ſpoken to you of *eternal life*, that you *ſhall be for ever with him?* Hath he ſpoken to you of his *love*, that he hath *loved you with an everlaſting love?* Hath he ſpoken to you of his *Spirit*, that *his Spirit ſhall be in you as a well of water, ſpringing up unto everlaſting life?* Hath he ſpoken to you of his *bleſſing*, that he hath *bleſſed you*, and ye *ſhall be bleſſed*, and that *in bleſſing he will bleſs you?* Hath he ſpoken to you of his *preſence*, that he *will never leave you nor forſake you*, that he *will be with you in trouble?* Hath he ſpoken to you of his *care* about you, that he *will make all things work together for your good?* Hath he ſpoken to you of his *abſence*, that he *will return*, that he *will ſee you again, and your heart ſhall rejoice?* Hath he ſpoken to you of his *anger*, that it *endureth but a moment*, and that with *everlaſting kindneſs he will have mercy on you.* —— Whatever he hath ſpoken, O give him the glory of his truth, by believing that whatever he ſeems to be doing by outward frowning providences, yet he *will never leave you, till he hath done what he hath ſpoken to you of.* It is your duty to keep your eye ſhut upon dark providences, and to keep your eye open upon the clear promiſe?

Has he ſaid, he *will not leave you, till he hath done what he hath ſaid?* Then wait upon him in the due uſe and improvement of all means, till he do his work, and do not leave him. Return his promiſe by your practice, ſaying, Lord, haſt thou ſaid, *I will not leave thee, until I have done what I have ſpoken?* Behold, through grace, I reſolve I will not leave thee, until thou haſt done what thou haſt ſpoken: *He is a God of judgment, and bleſſed are all they that wait for him.* Hath he ſaid, and promiſed to this effect? Then, O put a favourable conſtruction upon all his frowning diſpenſations! According to your faith of his promiſe, and of his favour therein, ſuch will be your faith of his favour amidſt all afflicting providences. Whatever diſtreſs and difficulty you meet with; yet let faith ſtill ſay, for all this, I hope he will do as he hath ſpoken: for all this, I will not quit my hold of him, but hope in his word.

O believer! remember that whatever God hath ſaid to thee, he hath ſaid it with a *ſurely*, as he ſaid to Jacob, Gen. xxxii. 12, *I will* SURELY *do thee good.* And when Jacob came to a ſtrait, he put God in mind of it, *Thou didſt ſay, I will ſurely do thee good*; and therefore let your faith be acted with a *ſurely*, grounded upon the truth and veracity of God, ſaying with David, Pſal. xxiii. 6. SURELY *goodneſs and mercy ſhall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the houſe of the Lord for ever. We live by faith and not by ſight*; and therefore, though dark days ſhould come, you ought to believe when you cannot ſee, *And bleſſed is ſhe that believed, for there ſhall be a performance of theſe things which were told her from the Lord*, Luke i. 45. *The word of the Lord endureth for ever*, Pſal. xix. 9.

Let the faith of the promiſe appear in your ſanctification, holineſs of heart, ſpeech, and behaviour. *Having theſe promiſes, dearly beloved, let us cleanſe ourſelves from all filthineſs of the fleſh and ſpirit, perfecting holineſs in the fear of God*, 2 Cor. vii. 1. Let it be evident to all the world you converſe with, that *now you are clean, through the words that he hath ſpoken to you.* He that hath this faith and hope, purifieth himſelf; for faith brings all its purity out of Chriſt; or, which is all one, out of the promiſe, which is *Yea and Amen in Chriſt.* The faith of God's love will work by love to a holy God, and his holy ways: therefore, O believer! let your life be a life of faith; and reſolve, through grace, to live and die in the faith of his love, which he himſelf expreſſeth in this promiſe, *I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have ſpoken to thee of.*

SERMON LXIII.

The *Combination* and *Conjunction* of JOYS; or, the joyful Approach of the SAVIOUR, chearfully welcomed by the *Church's Echo of Faith* *.

PSAL. xl. 7. — *Lo, I come!* — SONG ii. 8. *The voice of my Beloved! Behold, he cometh!*

WE have a communion-ſolemnity in view: but if the queſtion be propoſed, *How ſhall we have communion with God at this occaſion?* Two things are neceſſary to it. 1. His *coming to us graciouſly*: there is no communion with him to be expected, unleſs he come: ſo he ſaith in the firſt text here, *Lo, I come.* 2. Our *apprehending his approach*, and giving him

* This Sermon was preached on Saturday the 27th of April 1734. being the preparation-day before the celebration of the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper at Abernethy, upon the 28th. *Never before publiſhed.*

welcome

welcome entertainment, upon his coming: then, and not till then, have we communion with God, when we hear his voice, and see him, as it were, on the tops of the mountains, and say, *The voice of my Beloved! behold, he cometh!*

In the words complexly viewed, we have two things more generally. 1. Here is intimation *given* to the church, by the Lord Jesus; *Lo, I come!* 2. Here is notice *taken* by the church; *Behold, he cometh!* Here is the *joyful voice* of the Son of God; *Lo, I come!* And here is the *joyful echo* of the church; *The voice of my Beloved! behold, he cometh!* Mark the *frame* HE is in when he speaks of his coming; it is a *joyful* frame; *Lo, I come! I delight to do thy will, O my God.* And observe the *frame* SHE is in, upon the intimation of his coming; it is a *joyful* frame: *Behold, he cometh!* He speaks with a joyful *Lo; Lo, I come:* and she speaks with a joyful *behold; Behold, he cometh!*

These two words being all the subject I propose to speak of, at the time, I shall refer the further explication of them to the prosecution of this doctrinal observation.

DOCT. *That Christ's coming to his people graciously, in their time of need, is a joyful and delectable coming, both to him and them.*

The time wherein CHRIST said here; *Lo, I come!* was a time of great need, even when *sacrifice and offering would not*; when there was no hope of salvation from any other quarter, unless he himself had undertaken it: then said he, *Lo, I come!*—The time wherein the CHURCH here said, *Behold, he cometh!* was a time of great and felt need; for the Lord had withdrawn himself behind mountains of sin and guilt, till he paid a new visit, that made her cry out with joy, *Behold, he cometh!*

That Christ's gracious coming to his people, is joyful both to him and them, will appear in the sequel; only it is enough here to demonstrate it, that as HE is a *joyful* proclaimer of his own approach, saying, *Lo, I come!* So SHE is the joyful beholder thereof, saying, *Behold, he cometh!*

The method I would here endeavour to observe, as the Lord shall be pleased to assist, shall be the following.

I. To observe what *comings* of Christ to his people are joyful to him and them.
II. Show what makes his coming joyful to *him*.
III. What makes his coming joyful to *them*.
IV. What *expressions* of joy *in him* are imported in his, *Lo, I come!*
V. What *expressions* of joy in *them* are imported in their *behold*; BEHOLD, *he cometh!*
VI. Show whence is this *combination* and *conjunction of joys*; or, why it is that, like a resounding echo, his *Lo, I come*, is answered, with a *Behold, he cometh.*
VII. Deduce some *inferences* for the *application* of the whole.

I. The *first* thing proposed was, To observe what *comings* of Christ to his people are joyful to him and them. Here I shall mention only four comings of the Lord Jesus, namely, his coming in the flesh; his coming in the clouds; his coming in the word; and his coming in the Spirit.

1. His coming in the *flesh* was a joyful coming both to him and his people. The first text here is particularly applied to his coming in the flesh, Heb. x. 5, 7. *Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, a body hast thou prepared me; then said I, Lo, I come, (in the volume of thy book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God.* Which shows also, that this was a joyful and delightful coming, though it was upon that errand of being a sacrifice to divine justice for our sins, when no other sacrifice would do the business. And surely this coming of Christ is a joyful coming to his people, and brings ground of joy unto all people; *Behold*, said the angels to the shepherds upon Christ's coming in the flesh, *I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people; for to you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord*, Luke ii. 10. And it is probable, as many divines show, that these words of the spouse here, saying, *Behold, he cometh!* hath a particular reference to Christ's coming in the flesh. The Old-testament saints *saw his day afar off, and rejoiced* in the view they had of it by faith. They saw him coming skipping in the dark mountains of shadows, and ceremonies, and typical sacrifices, to be the substance of all the shadows. In a word, his coming in the flesh is the very root and foundation of the joys of all the redeemed: if he had not thus come, according to the promise, they would never had any ground of joy; but faith's view of this coming, or of God in our nature, God incarnate, *God made manifest in the flesh*, is a fountain-head of joy; *God being in Christ reconciling the world to himself*; being *bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh*; and we having access to God through him, who became like unto us in all things, except sin. O Sirs, do you believe that there is a man in heaven called IMMANUEL, *God-man?* We read of *joy and peace in believing*: surely you never believed there was such a man, God in our flesh, if it never afforded any joyful thought to you.

2. His coming in the *clouds* is a joyful coming, both to him and his people: this is what is called *his second coming*, Heb. ix. 28. *To them that look for him, he will appear the second time, without sin unto salvation.* And, indeed, this will be a joyful coming to Christ; for it is a coming to salvation: when he comes to save, he comes always joyfully. When he came first to save, by the price of his blood, he came leaping and skipping joyfully; and much more when he will come to finish the work of salvation, and to perfect the salvation of all the redeemed. His coming to marry his people is joyful to him, much more when he comes to consummate the marriage. Christ had an eye to this in his coming to suffer: *He endured the cross, and despised the shame, for the joy that was set before him*, Heb. xii. 2. even to the joy of an exalted state: and, you know, that the last step of his exaltation is his coming to judge the world at the the last day; then he will *be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe.*—And as it is a joyful coming to him, so it is to his people. It is true, it will be terrible to his enemies that slighted his coming to save, and neglected the great salvation; for, *He will come in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel*, 2 Thess. i. 8. His second coming will be dreadful to them that do not welcome his first coming: and, *Behold he cometh in the clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also that pierced him, and all nations shall wail because of him*, Rev. i. 7. But to his people, to his followers,

lowers and ſervants, to all that welcome him now, his coming is joyful; they will welcome him with joy, ſaying, *Even ſo, Come, Lord Jeſus.* They long for his coming; and they are called to lift up their heads with joy, becauſe *the day of their redemption draweth nigh.* They cry to him to haſten his coming, *Haſte, my Beloved, and be thou like a roe or young hart on the mountains of Bether.* No wonder, for then they *enter into the joy of their Lord.* Chriſt, who here ſays, *Lo, I come!* will as certainly come the ſecond time, as he came the firſt; and as he came the firſt time, in order to his coming the ſecond; ſo he ſpeaks of his ſecond coming with a *behold; Behold! I come quickly*, Rev. xxii. 20. And the church's joyful echo follows, *Even ſo, Come, Lord Jeſus, come quickly.*

3. His coming in the *word*, to court a people for himſelf, is a joyful coming to him and to his people; for then, as it is, Rev. xxii. 17. Both *the Spirit and the bride ſay, Come.* The Spirit of Chriſt, and the bride of Chriſt, joyfully invite ſinners to come to Chriſt: hence a goſpel day is called the *day of the Son of man.* And Chriſt, in the goſpel diſpenſation, ſays, *Lo, I come!* He comes riding in the goſpel chariot; he comes with out-ſtretched arms, ſaying, *Behold me! behold me!* — And his coming thus is joyful to all his people, Rom. x. 15. *How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of them that preach the goſpel of peace; that bring glad tiding of good things!* His coming in the word is joyful to them, in ſo much, that nothing in the world is ſo precious to them as the word; it is *ſweeter than honey and the honey comb. Thy word was found of me, and I did eat it, and it was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart:* this is their food; *Man lives not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.* This is their *comfort in their affliction.* His word quickens them; they hear his voice therein, and ſay, *It is the voice of my Beloved! behold, he cometh! leaping on the mountains, ſkipping on the hills.* But his coming in the word is only joyful and beneficial, as it is attended with what follows, namely, his coming in the *Spirit:* for,

4. His coming in the *Spirit* is a joyful coming; and this is that which makes all the former ways of his coming to be joyful. We have no joyful view of his coming in the fleſh, nor joyful hope of his coming in the clouds, nor joyful apprehenſion of his coming in the word, unleſs we have ſome ſhare of his coming in the Spirit, as a Spirit of faith and conſolation: his coming in the Spirit not only to court, but to win the heart; not only to deal, but to prevail with ſinners, by his convincing and converting power.—This coming is joyful to him; for, it is a day of the gladneſs of his heart; Song iii. 11. *Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold king Solomon, with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him, in the day of his eſpouſals, in the day of the gladneſs of his heart:* for then he *ſees the travel of his ſoul and is ſatisfied*, Iſa. liii. 11. And, O this ſhould encourage us to pray for the Spirit, the promiſed Comforter, ſince nothing gladens the heart of Chriſt more than the giving of the Spirit to *convince of ſin, righteouſneſs, and judgment*, and ſo to comfort his people.—And, on the other hand, this coming of Chriſt in the Spirit, cannot but be a joyful coming to his people; for then they are *anointed with the oil of gladneſs*, and get the oil of *joy for mourning, and the garments of praiſe for the ſpirit of heavineſs.* Then they get their bands looſed; their maladies healed; their doubts reſolved; their fears diſpelled, *&c.* When Chriſt ſays here, *Lo, I come!* let us view therein the promiſe of his coming in the Spirit: for, why did he come in the fleſh, but that he might come in the Spirit? Having come in the fleſh, and finiſhed his work, according to his word; he promiſes the Spirit, and ſends the Spirit; *He ſhall glorify me*, John xvi. 14. *When the Comforter is come, whom I will ſend to you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, he ſhall teſtify of me*, John xv. 26. His coming in the fleſh was the great Old Teſtament promiſe; and his coming in the Spirit the great New-Teſtament promiſe: and as the Old-Teſtament was but a porch to the New; ſo his coming in the fleſh was to pave the way for his coming in the Spirit; therefore, when you hear him ſay, *Lo, I come!* take up the meaning of it not only to be, *Lo, I come in the fleſh;* but alſo, *Lo, I come in the Spirit.* And, O Sirs, is this his voice! What ſay you to it? Is there any joyful echo in your heart welcoming him; ſaying, *The voice of my Beloved! behold, he cometh!* Surely if he comes in the Spirit to you, at this occaſion, it will be a joyful coming. —— I might here ſpeak of his coming in his *providence;* his coming at *death:* his coming firſt to begin, and his after coming to advance his work; but his joyful comings are only *ſo* by his coming in the Spirit. I go on,

II. To the next thing propoſed, which was to ſhow, what makes his coming *joyful* to HIM. And what makes him come with a joyful, *Lo, I come!* Why,

1. He *rejoiced from eternity in the thoughts* of his coming; and therefore cannot but rejoice in the accompliſhment of his word and deſign, Prov. viii. 23, 31. *Ere ever the earth was, he rejoiced in the habitable parts of the earth, and his delights were with the ſons of men.* It was in the council of peace he ſaid to his Father, *Lo, I come! I delight to do thy will;* and in the fulneſs of time he ſays in our hearing, *Lo, I come!* O to give a joyful welcome to that joyful *Lo!*

2. His coming is joyful to *him;* becauſe he comes clothed with a *commiſſion* from his Father; and he rejoices to run his errands. It is his Father's will that he executes when he comes; and therefore he ſays, *I delight to do thy will, O my God. This commandment have I received of my Father, to lay down my life for my ſheep.* And therefore, with *deſire he deſired this paſſover*, even to be himſelf *our paſſover ſacrificed for us.* He hath a commiſſion to come; for he is the Sent and the ſealed of God; *God ſo loved the world, that he ſent his only begotten Son; that whoſoever believeth in him, ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life. Him hath God the Father ſealed.* He comes in his Father's name, and his Father's ſeal appended to his commiſſion.

3. His coming is joyful to *him*, becauſe it is on a *glorious deſign* of glorifying the Father; and therefore, when he comes he ſays, *Now, is my Father glorified; now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him*, John xiii. 31. When he came, and was juſt ready to lay down his life, and having done his work, he ſaid, John xvii. 4. *I have glorified thee on earth, I have finiſhed the work thou gaveſt me to do.* He brought in glory and honour to all the perfections of God, and full reparation to all his injured attributes.

4. His coming is joyful to *him*, becauſe, as his

his coming was on a glorious design, with reference to his Father, God being glorified by his coming, whether in the flesh or by the Spirit; so it is on a *loving design* toward his people, to whom he comes. He comes to save them, and justify them, and sanctify them, and comfort them, and heal them, and help them; and all for love, because he has *loved with an everlasting love*, therefore he comes to draw with loving-kindness. Love makes him come joyfully: it was love made him come joyfully in the flesh, and love makes him come joyfully in the Spirit; love made him come at first, and, notwithstanding many provocations, love makes him come again, according to his word, *I will see you again*, John xvi. 22. *Now you have sorrow, but I will see you again, and your hearts shall rejoice. O the height, and depth, and length, and breadth of his love!* He comes joyfully, because he lives cordially. But I go on,

III. To the next thing proposed, namely, what makes his coming joyful to *his people*, what makes them welcome him with a joyful *behold*, BEHOLD, *he cometh!* Why,

1. Because his coming is their *life:* when he came in the flesh, *He came to give life, and to give it more abundantly*, John x. 10. And when he comes in the Spirit, he comes to give life, to give the *well of water springing up to everlasting life*, John iv. 14. Whenever he comes, life enters the dead and dry bones. We are like dead carcases, our spirits sinking within us; but whenever the Spirit of life comes in the word, then we get up, as it were, to our feet; then we have life; *He that hath the Son, hath life:* whenever he comes, and that we have him with us, then the life of faith, the life of repentance, the life of love, the life of joy, the life of humility, the life of holiness, and the life of comfort come: we live or die as he comes or goes. If life be sweet, then his coming must be sweet; and of all lives the life of God, a *spiritual life, hid with Christ in God*, is the most pleasant and glorious.

2. His coming must be joyful to *them*, because his *absence* is their *death;* yea, his absence is a *hell* to them that know what a heaven his presence makes: hence their many *Ohs* when he is away; *Oh! when will thou come unto me? Oh! that it were with me as in months past!* And hence their many *how longs*, when he is away; HOW LONG *wilt thou forget me, O Lord?* HOW LONG *will thou hide thy face from me?* Psal. xiii. 1, 2. They cannot live without him; or if his absence be to such a degree, as that they are careless, stupid, and unconcerned, yet they that know what his joyful presence is, will grant, that their careless times are their sad and sighing times; they are not their joyful times; they are not their life, but their death. and they never expect to have a joyful life till he come again.

When he is away from the church, then all goes to confusion: *The servants of the house begin to smite their fellow servants*, Matth. xxiv 46. Why, because the Lord delays his coming: they begin to smite them with sentences of *suspension*, or *seclusion*, as at this day*: when he is away, then the shepherds begin to *rule his people with force and violence*, Ezek. xxxiv. 4. And what is the effect of that? See ver. 6. *My sheep wandered over all the mountains: my flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did search, or seek after them.* Why, might not this smite the hearts of rigid rulers, to see the flock scattered here and there, upon the violent obtrusions of hirelings upon them†? No; none did search out, or seek after them. They even slight them as an ignorant mob, a rabble, that need not to be regarded, [and, indeed, if matters go on at this rate, if God do not stir up the insuing Assembly, (*viz.* 1734.) to take course with these disorders, the ruin of the church of Scotland is but beginning.] But whence are all these confusions? May we not say, as it is, Duet. xxxi. 17. *Are not these evils come upon us, because our God is not amongst us?* When he is away from a church, nothing but confusion and disorders take place; but when he comes back, then his work is revived, Zion is built up, reformation restored. When he goes away from a particular believer, Oh! what a hell of confusion till he returns! His presence gives rest, but his absence trouble; *Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled.*

3. His coming is joyful to *them*, because the *errand* on which he came is *merciful.* What does he bring when he comes? Why, he even brings *God* with him, and all the *fulness* of God: and so he brings the chief good with him. God is in Christ, and all the fulness of the Godhead in him; and therefore, when he comes, all good comes: when he comes graciously, he comes in the capacity of a friend, to help; a physician, to heal; a shepherd, to feed; *He feedeth among the lilies.* When he comes, his presence is a reviving and refreshing presence; an enlightening, inlivening, and enlarging presence; sometimes a confirming and comforting presence; a humbling and a sweetly-debasing presence; yea, it is an exalting and dignifying presence. The effects of his coming are most joyful; for, when he comes to his people, then their sins are pardoned, their wants supplied, their enemies conquered, their crosses sanctified, their kingdom secured; and therefore his coming must be joyful to them.

4. His coming is joyful to *them*, because his coming is all their *heaven upon earth;* yea, his presence is the heaven of heavens. What is heaven, but a being *like him, by seeing him as he is?* Now, this heaven is begun on earth when he comes; for then they *behold his glory, and are changed into the same image*, 2 Cor. iii. 18. How can they be but joyful at his coming when they consider *who he is:* he is enough to make a heaven whatever way they look to him: if they look to him *absolutely, He is altogether lovely; the brightness of his Father's glory.* When they look to him *comparatively, He is fairer than the sons of men; more glorious than all the mountains of prey.* When they look to him *relatively*, he is their Head and Husband; their God and Guide; their righteousness and strength; their light, life, joy, and all. O says the *strong* believer, *My beloved is mine, and I am his:* he is mine, and I will not part with him for the whole creation. O says the *weak* believer, the *doubting* believer, O if he were mine, I would not part with him for a thousand worlds. In a word, he is such a heaven to them that nothing can make up

* A short account of what is here alluded to, may be seen above, p. 661.

† That the Lord's heritage was grievously oppressed at this time, may be seen laid open, p. 631, 648, 670.

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the loss of his presence: ministers cannot do it; ordinances cannot do it; angels cannot do it. Ordinances are but the shell, without the kernel, when Christ is not in them; all creature-comforts cannot supply his room. Naturalists say, The loadstone cannot draw in presence of the diamond; surely, when Christ is present with a soul, all the pomp and pride, all the gallantry of the world, will have no influence on the soul. Offer the believer mountains of gold and silver instead of Christ, *Get thee behind me, Satan,* will be his answer: *Thy money perish with thee,* that lays it in balance with the Son of God. Offer me something better than Christ, then you will see what I will do.—There are so many thousand excellencies in Christ, that might be so many thousand reasons why his coming is joyful, that they cannot but say upon the notice of it, *Behold, he cometh!*

IV. The *fourth* thing proposed was, What *expressions* of joy in the Lord Jesus is imported in this, *Lo, I come!* What sort of joy does it express?

1. I think this, *Lo, I come!* expresses *present* joy: *Lo, I come!* It is something like that of John xiii. 32. *Now is the Son of man glorified:* there was a time when he said, *Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say?* John xii. 27. But when he comes graciously, he says upon the matter, Now is my soul satisfied, now is my heart glad; the *Lo,* is in the present time, and *I come* is in the present tense; *Lo, I come!* And if Christ be presently saying with reference to any company here, *Lo, I come to you!* O it is a present joy to him; he comes rejoicing; he comes leaping and skipping; his *set time of coming* is the time of the *gladness of his heart.*

2. It expresses *active* joy; *Lo, I come!* He rejoices to do good: it is his joy to do service to his Father and his friends. And if he rejoiced in his work when he came to save by the price of his blood; how must he rejoice when he comes to save by the power of his Spirit? The natural sun is said to *rejoice as a strong man to run his race,* Psal. xix. 5. It is a metaphorical speech; for, the sun is not capable of joy; but, without metaphor, it is true of the Sun of righteousness, the Lord Jesus Christ; he is a *strong man,* the *man of God's right-hand,* whom he hath *made strong for himself:* and he rejoices to run his race; he rejoices to arise with healing under his wings: *Lo, I come!*—It is an active joy.

3. It expresses *certain* joy. The *Lo,* is a note of certainty; the thing is certain and true; *Lo, I come!* And his joy is certain; certain, true, solid joy. There is nothing more certain than that believers have sometimes *joy unspeakable;* but these are only streams that flow from the joy that is in Christ's heart. His joy is the fountain of their joy; *He is anointed with the oil of joy above his fellows:* and the fellowship they have with him is by some drops of that oil of joy. Can they be certain of the streams and the drops when these are allowed? How much more is it certain, that all true joy centres in him. Believers have sometimes a *fulness of joy;* but their fulness is the fulness of the streams, or of the vessel; but his fulness is the fulness of the ocean. If it be certain, there is a stream of joy in the believer sometimes, much more that there is the spring of joy in Christ.

4. It expresses *communicative* joy; designing his people should share of his joy, *Lo, I come!* The joy that Christ has, as Mediator, is a fulness of joy, designed for his peoples use, that *out of his fulness we may receive, and grace for grace,* and joy for joy; grace answering grace in Jesus; and joy answering joy in him. Yea, Christ, as Mediator, is anointed with the *oil of joy,* the *Spirit above measure,* that he may communicate this joy, and give to them the *oil of joy for mourning,* Isa. lxi. 3. *The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, for he hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek; to comfort all that mourn; to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.* Christ has a commission from his Father to communicate his joy; and therefore it must be communicative.

5. It expresses *triumphant* joy, *conquering* joy; *Lo, I come!* And nothing shall hinder my coming, nor stop me in my course. Mountains nor hills cannot hinder the sun rising; this points out his coming as a conquerer, notwithstanding principalities and powers in his way, he can easily throw them down; *Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? This that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save,* Isa. lxiii. 1. Behold it is I: *Lo, I come!*

6. It expresses *solemn* joy. He comes with a solemnity, *Lo, I come!* according to the council of a glorious Trinity. Now, when the purpose of heaven is come to the birth, and the decree breaks forth, and the fulness of time is come, he takes heaven and earth witness, as it were, to his solemn march on the errand: he says it with a loud *Lo!* that all the world of men and angels may notice, *Lo, I come!* And, indeed, all the elect angels break forth into joyful songs of praise at this solemnity: when he came in the flesh, they sang, *Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and good-will towards men.* And when he comes in the Spirit to convert a soul, there is joy in heaven over the soul that repents. —It is solemn joy.

7. It expresses *infinite* joy. If we consider who the person is that speaks, namely, GOD, assuming our nature in the person of his eternal Son. The joy of an infinite God must be infinite joy. Finite creatures cannot tell what infinite joy is; nay, the joy of saints is *joy unspeakable and full of glory;* what then must be the joy of the King of saints? It is infinitely above speech and expression, infinitely glorious. The joy of saints is unspeakably great; the joy of the man Christ, of the human nature, is unspeakably greater; but the joy of God, of God in our nature, is infinitely great above all finite apprehension. Finite thoughts are lost in this infinite depth.

8. It expresses *everlasting* joy, and *eternal* joy: joy from everlasting, before time; and to everlasting, after time. It is true, the *Lo, I come!* as I said first, imports *present* joy, with respect to our view of it, but with respect to God, nothing being past or future, but all things eternally present to him, this *Lo* expresses the *everlasting* joy he had, and will have for ever in this work now transacted in time. It is said, Psal. civ. 31. *The glory of the Lord shall endure for ever. The Lord shall rejoice in his work; the Lord Jehovah shall rejoice in all his works together,* (as we have it in the metre.) Why? his glory is everlasting glory, his joy everlasting joy in all his works; especially in that work wherein all his glory shines

ſhines moſt brightly, his ſaving work, of which he is here ſpeaking, when he ſays, *Lo, I come!* —Thus you ſee what ſort of joy is expreſſed in this, *Lo, I come!*

V. The *fifth* thing propoſed, What expreſſions of joy is imported in the *echo* from the church, *The voice of my Beloved! behold, he cometh!* What ſort of joy does this expreſs?

1. It expreſſes joy with *ſurpriſe*. O but his coming fills the believer with a ſweet ſurpriſe, like that, *Or ever I was aware*, Song vi. 12. How abruptly does the church here ſpeak, like one ſuddenly raviſhed! *The voice of my beloved! behold, he cometh!*

2. It expreſſes joy with *wonder* and *admiration: Behold, he cometh!* Wonder, O heavens and earth, that he ſhould come to the like of me! And wonder that he ſhould come back again, after I have heaped up mountains and hills of provocation in his way. *Is this the manner of man, O Lord? and what can David ſay more?* What can I ſay, but ſit down and wonder!

3. It expreſſes joy with *faith; Behold, he cometh!* The eye of faith firſt ſees him coming, and then the tongue of joy ſings, *Behold, he cometh!* Faith cometh by hearing; what? even the voice of Chriſt, the joyful ſound of the goſpel. Chriſt rides in that chariot; and the believer, by faith, hearing the noice of his chariot wheels; yea, the ſweet voice of him that rides in the chariot, who has grace poured into his lips, then he cries out, *The voice of my beloved! behold, he cometh!*

4. It expreſſes joy with *love*. And, indeed, as faith is the head, ſo love is the heart of the new creature: and the joy here is a loving joy; for it is in the view of Chriſt as her Beloved, *The voice of my Beloved! behold, he cometh!* He is the Beloved of the Father, who ſays, *This is my beloved Son;* and the true believer is of the Father's mind, ſaying, *This is my Beloved, this is my friend, O daughters of Jeruſalem.* And what but joyful love, makes her here ſpeak, with her heart at her mouth, *The voice of my Beloved!*

5. It expreſſes joy with *praiſe* and *adoration* (as well as wonder and admiration;) *The voice of my Beloved! behold, he cometh!* O bleſſed be the comer, as it is, Pſal. cxviii. 26. *Bleſſed is he that comes in the name of the Lord.* It is a *behold* of adoration, as well as admiration; and, indeed, they both go together, an admiring heart, is an adoring heart: as the preſence of Chriſt makes a heaven in the heart; ſo it ſtirs up the heart inſtantly to the work of heaven, which is to ſing his praiſe, and to glorify his name, ſaying, O glory, glory, glory, to him for coming to the like of me, that was afraid he would never give me a viſit. O! let all the world praiſe him with me; *Behold he cometh!*

6. It expreſſes joy with *humility*; *Behold, he cometh!* and cometh even *to me: What am I, and what is my father's houſe?* Behold he cometh to me! I had no power to come to him, no heart to come, and I would have remained for ever at a diſtance from him, if he had not condeſcended graciouſly to come unto me: I could do nothing but depart from him by an evil heart of unbelief; but he comes; *His own arm bringeth ſalvation:* and he comes with all the ſalvation I need. Self is ſunk to nothing at the appearance of this glorious HE; *Behold,* HE *cometh!*

7. It expreſſes joy with *contempt of the world: Behold, he cometh!* and his appearing darkens all the glory of the world, and makes it diſappear, as the ſtars at the riſing of the ſun. *I count all but loſs and dung, for the excellency of the knowledge of him.* O how little does the believer think of the world, when Chriſt comes! (πάντα ζημίαν πάντα σκύβαλα,) all is *dung and dog's meat*, as the apoſtle phraſes it, Phil. iii. 8.; earthly crowns, kingdoms, thrones, and ſceptres are but little deſpicable toys. Here, here, is an object worth the beholding; let mine eyes be for ever turned away from beholding vanities: *Behold, he cometh!*

8. It expreſſes joy with *deſire* that others may ſee and behold him; *Behold, he cometh!* O that all the world would come and ſee what I ſee, come and enjoy what I enjoy! They that ſee the glory of Chriſt, though they ſlight a world of vanities, yet they pity a world of periſhing ſinners, and would gladly be inſtrumental in bringing others to Chriſt; *Come,* SEE A MAN *that told me all things that ever I did; is not this the Chriſt?* ſaid the woman of Samaria. Thus David, *Reſtore to me the joy of thy ſalvation; then will I teach tranſgreſſors thy way, and ſinners ſhall be converted unto thee.*

In a word, this, *Behold, he cometh!* expreſſes joy with all the *qualities of heavenly and ſpiritual joy*. —It expreſſes *unſpeakable* joy, as appears by her broken ſpeech, *The voice of my Beloved!* —It expreſſes *glorious* joy; for it flows, from a view of his glory, *Behold, he cometh!* —It expreſſes *holy* joy; for ſhe rejoices to ſee him come ſkipping and leaping upon the mountains and hills of ſin and guilt, and levelling all the high towers of ſtrong corruption in his way. O how glad to ſee him coming down, and making the mountains to melt before him! So it is a holy joy; the very oppoſite of all carnal and ſenſual joys. —It expreſſes a *quickening* and *ſtrengthening* joy; for now her heart is open, her lips are open, whatever indiſpoſition for duty took place before; now *the joy of the Lord is her ſtrength.* —Again, it expreſſes a *ſolid* and *well-grounded* joy; it is no fancy, no deluſion, nor enthuſiaſm; no: the word and Spirit both concur to this joy. *The voice of my Beloved!* there is the word: *Behold he cometh!* there is the Spirit. Words cannot give the believer joy without the Spirit; and the Spirit will not without the word: the joy of the Holy Ghoſt is ſtill grounded upon, or agreeable to the word. —Finally, it expreſſes a *welcoming* joy; *Behold, he cometh! Lo, I come*, ſays Chriſt; *Behold, he cometh!* ſays the church: *Even ſo, come Lord Jeſus, come quickly:* come and welcome with a thouſand good-wills. O may he be a welcome gueſt here!

VI. The *ſixth* thing propoſed was, To ſhow *whence* is this *combination* and *conjunction* of joys: Or, why is it, that, like a reſounding echo, his *Lo, I come!* is anſwered with a *behold, he cometh!* Whence is this? Why,

1. It proceeds from the *mutual* RELATION *between him and his people*, between him and his church: he is the Bridegroom; and ſhe is the bride; he is the Huſband, and ſhe is the ſpouſe. He has commanded other huſbands to *leave father and mother, and to cleave to his wife;* and he has done ſomething like that himſelf: he that ſaid, *Thy Maker is thy Husband*, left his Father's boſom for the ſake of his bride, ſaying, *Lo, I come!* and the conjugal tye being mutual, the believer having

having the Spirit of his glorious Husband, whenever he hears the voice of an approaching Jesus, is obliged to say, *The voice of my Beloved! behold, he cometh!*

2. It proceeds from the *mutual* SYMPATHY *between him and them:* hence, what affects him, does affect them; what touches them, touches him; *He that touches you, touches the apple of mine eye*, says Christ: they stand kindly affected also to him. This mutual sympathy and love, flows from the *union* between Christ and them. He is the Head and they are the members of his body; and both Head and members being animated by one and the same Spirit, his joy must be their joy. When they come to have his glorious presence in heaven, they are said to *enter into the joy of their Lord:* and when they have his gracious presence on earth signified to them with a joyful *Lo, I come!* they have some begun enterance into his joy; that makes them say with joy, *Behold, he cometh!*

3. His gracious coming is joyful both to him and them, because of the *mutual* ONENESS *of* NATURE *between him and them.* As he is a partaker of their human nature; so they are *partakers of his divine nature*, 2 Pet. i. 4. Hence, as he knows their frame, and what sort of a voice is most suited to their capacity, and accordingly speaks to them by the whispering of his Spirit in the word; so they *know his voice from the voice of a stranger*, John x. 5. They know the sound of his feet upon the mountains.

4. His gracious coming is joyful both to him and them, because of the *mutual* AGREEMENT *in* DESIGN *between him and them.* His ultimate end and design is the glory of God in their salvation; their ultimate end is the same, even that God may be glorified in their salvation. Now, when he comes to pursue this design so joyfully, they cannot but welcome him joyfully: *Sing, O heavens; and shout ye lower parts of the earth; break forth into singing, ye mountains; for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel*, Isa. xliv. 23.

5. His gracious coming is joyful both to him and them, because of the *mutual* INTERCOURSE *between him and them at meeting:* he hath always some good news to bring them from the Father, which he is glad to tell them, and they are glad to hear; and they, on the other hand, have something to tell him which they cannot tell the world. And as they are glad of his coming to have an opportunity to tell him their mind; so he is glad to hear them: *O my dove, that art in the clifts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me hear thy voice, and see thy countenance; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely*, Song ii. 14. He has something to do with them, and they have something ado with him; and therefore, when he joyfully draws near to them, they joyfully draw near to him; and visit each other with endearing embraces. Truly, indeed, his visits are always visits of kindness, and theirs are ordinarily of business; his business is to give, and their business is to get; but then the visits are most sweet, when they are visits of love on both sides.

6. His gracious coming is joyful both to him and them, because of the *mutual* INTEREST *and* CONCERN *they have both in the covenant of promise*, which is a fountain of joy, and belongs primarily to Christ, in whom the covenant stands fast, and in whom all the promises are, *Yea*, and *Amen;* and secondarily to believers in him, who are all *the children of the promise.* It is promised to Christ, that *he shall see of the travel of his soul, and shall be satisfied*, Isa. liii. 11. And it is promised to the believer, clothed with the character of a meek person, that he *shall eat, and shall be satisfied*, Psal. xxii. 26. Now, when Christ comes graciously to his people, both he and they must be satisfied; for he comes to accomplish the promise made to himself and to them. Hence mutual satisfaction cannot but take place.

In a word, his joy is the fountain of theirs; their joy arises from the powerful influence of his joyful approach, upon their joyful reception of him; his joyful, *Lo, I come!* does instantly create their joyful, *Lo, he cometh!* he having put an echoing principle within them. The joyful sound of his, *Lo, he cometh!* cannot but meet with a joyful resounding and rebounding of their, *Lo, he cometh!*

VII. The *seventh* thing proposed was, To make some *application* of the subject, by deducing some *inferences.*

1. Is it so as it has been said, *That Christ's coming to his people graciously, in their time of need, is a joyful and delectable coming, both to him and them*, then we may see, what it is would make a *sweet communion-day* among us, amidst these *sad* and *lowring days* wherein we live. We live in sinful and sorrowful days; but Christ's joyful approach, with a *Lo, I come!* would make a joyful day among us at this occasion: and, O that he would speak powerfully, that many here may be made to say, *The voice of my Beloved! behold, he cometh!* He can make the gospel-trumpet to convey his voice. Indeed, if the devil, and his instruments, could get their will, you would not enjoy a gospel-ministry; and, if our rowers, that have brought the church of Scotland into deep waters, had got their will, this and some others would have been vacant congregations *; there would have been no communion solemnities here: when men would have shut the gospel-door, O may God himself come and open the door, and open the mouth of ministers, and make his voice to be heard; his joyful, *Lo, I come!* I come to give you a little reviving in your bondage; when men are most unkind, I come to show my kindness; as it is said, Dan. ix. 25. *The wall shall be built in perilous times.* The times we live in are perilous times, in respect of sin, error, apostasy, and defection from Reformation-purity and principles; a time wherein the rights and privileges of poor people are injured, the office of the ministry retrenched, faithful ministers ejected, and the power of presbytery invaded; a time of confusion in church and state, at home and abroad †; a time wherein God's wrath is threatened to be poured out: these are indeed perilous times; but hath the Lord said, *The wall shall be built up in perilous times?* O may this perilous time be a building time; according to the word, *When the Lord shall build up Zion, he will appear in his glory.* Let us seek a glorious appearance of the Lord at this occasion: and what do we know but he is saying,

* Alluding to the sentences passed upon the four brethren, formerly narrated, p. 661.

† The justness of the charge here exhibited, and a short account of the facts here alluded to, may be attained, by consulting what has been formerly narrated, p. 149, 454, 631, 648, 661, 670, 671, 683.

even

even with reference to this very time, *Lo, I come!* O may we hear his voice, and say with joy, *Behold, he cometh!*

2. Hence see the *sweetness of fellowship with God in Christ;* why, it is a partaking of his joy and happiness, his glory and triumph; it is a meeting his joyful, *Lo, I come!* with our joyful, *Behold, he cometh!* Happy are the sheep of Christ, who know his voice: And, Oh! how miserable are you who hear, and yet do not know the joyful sound! What makes the word and ordinances sweet to the believer? Why, it is their hearing his voice therein; his joyful voice, therein; his joyful voice, that gives them a joyful heart. But, what makes these same ordinances such a burden and weariness to you, poor graceless man? Why, you have never heard the voice of Christ, his loving voice, his majestic voice, his powerful voice, that goes out through, and in through the heart, and penetrates and ransacks the secret recesses of the soul. What makes believers lament the absence of Christ? Why, then their joy is removed; they are always either rejoicing in his presence, or lamenting his absence, except when they fall into a nap of security, till his joyful voice awake them again. But, alas! what makes you, poor Christless sinners, live an unconcerned life, though Christ should be never so long away? Why, you are not acquainted with his coming and going, nor with the sweetness of communion with him. But, O poor soul, may it not stir you up to seek after acquaintance with him; to hear that the believer's joyful communion is no less than a partaking of the *joy of his Lord.* Christ's joy is their joy, though not of the same *measure;* for Christ is *anointed with the oil of joy and gladness above his fellows;* yet it is of the same *quality;* for they have fellowship with him in his joy, whenever he comes to them.

3. Hence see the difference between the *law* and the *gospel;* or between the voice of God in the law, and the voice of God in the gospel: his voice in the law is a terrible and dreadful voice; for therein he comes in wrath, with threatenings and curses in his mouth: but the voice of Christ in the gospel is a charming voice, a joyful sound of salvation to sinners, and a door of hope. Whatever word tends to work despair, and to leave a man hopeless, is the voice of the law; but the gospel shows the door of hope in the valley of Achor, and that with a pleasant sound of grace, mercy, pardon, and pity: *Lo, I come!* Hence, as the law is never preached to good purpose, except in a subserviency to the gospel; so gospel-believers are these who first have believed the law, or heard God's voice in the law, which hath made them despair of all help in themselves, and their own righteousness and duty: and next, they have believed the gospel, or heard Christ's voice therein, which has brought them to a lively hope, yea, to *joy and peace in believing.*

4. Hence see both the *nature* of *faith* and of *unbelief.*—On the one hand, we may, from this doctrine, see the nature of *faith,* in its correspondency with its objects; both its immediate object, the word; and its principal object, Christ, the speaker, whose voice sounds in our ears by this gospel. The word says, *Behold, he cometh!* and faith says, *Behold, he cometh!* Christ says, *Behold! Lo, I come!* and faith says, *The voice of my Beloved! behold, he cometh!* The gospel is nothing else but a proclamation of Christ's coming; his coming to give life, his coming to save sinners by the price of his blood, and the power of his Spirit; and faith is a setting the seal to a present *lo,* with a present *behold.* The first act of faith looks neither *backward* to what is anterior or past, such as the decree of God, or the design of Christ, his intention in dying; nor does it look *forward* to posterior things, as if it believed a state of salvation that is to come; but it looks to a *present* truth, a present saying, as the gospel is called, a *faithful saying,* and so a present *lo; Lo, I come!* and offer myself to you, man, to you, woman; *Lo, I come!* and bring salvation with me. Faith, under the influence of the Spirit, says, *The voice of my Beloved! behold, he cometh!* I hear the voice of God speaking to me through such a minister, and inviting me the chief of sinners. And I joyfully welcome a coming with salvation unto me: there is a persuasion and appropriation in it to the man's self; and according to the measure of this particular application to itself, such is the measure of joy. There would be no joy at all, if the soul should put away the message from himself; but receiving it to himself, he rejoices in the voice of Christ as his Beloved.—But next, it shows us also the nature of *unbelief,* on the other hand; the evil heart of unbelief contradicts the word of Christ; Christ says, *Lo, I come!* Unbelief says, O he will not come; no, no: he will never come to the like of me. Indeed, a believer may say, and hath good reason to say, I fear my sins provoke him to stay away; and it will be a wonder if he come to the like of me. But it is gross unbelief to say he will not come; I do no expect so much good at his hand: and hence unbelief is said to make *God a liar:* it contradicts and blasphemes. O to get faith this day, to welcome Jesus saying, *Lo, I come!* and to expect good at his hand.

I might next apply it for *trial* and *examination.* What know you of this joyful coming of the Son of God? It is this coming of the Lord Jesus that only can make your coming to a communion-table profitable and warrantable: if you know nothing of his joyful approach graciously to you, you cannot approach with his allowance to his table; for, if he never came to you, by his Spirit, you never came to him by faith; and so you are an unbeliever: and if you remain in this case, you never had a right to his table here, nor shall have a share of his table above.

QUEST. *How shall I know, if ever he came thus to me?* For helping you in this important inquiry, I would ask you these few things following.

1. Have you ever apprehended the *distance* between Christ and you? Was you ever made sensible of the dreadful distance between him and you; a dismal distance; a damnable distance; an invincible and insupereable distance? Have you seen an utter impossibility of saving yourself from it, unless the Lord had come to you? This is the Lord's ordinary way: when he brings to light, he makes sensible of darkness; when he brings to life, he makes sensible of deadness and lifelessness; when he brings to faith, he makes sensible of unbelief; when he brings to love, he makes sensible of enmity; when he brings to holiness, he makes sensible of wickedness; and when he brings to acquaintance,

quaintance, he makes ſenſible of eſtrangement; and before he comes near, he makes ſenſible of diſtance.

2. Have you heard his voice ſaying, *Lo, I come?* Have you heard, not the voice of miniſters only, but the voice of the chief Shepherd; and know it to be his voice, by the majeſty of it, by the power that attended it, by the ſweetneſs that was in it? Has the goſpel come to you not in *word only, but in power?* 1 Theſſ. i. 5. Was there ſuch light, life, liberty, and joy accompanying the voice, as made you ſure, at the time, that it was not the voice of man, but of God, who ſpake like himſelf?

3. Have you ſeen him coming, and apprehended him, by the *light of the Spirit*, revealing the *Son in you?* Have you ſeen the glory of God in the face of Jeſus Chriſt? Have you ſeen his fulneſs, ſuitableneſs, and ſweetneſs; his glory, worth, and excellency, by a light ſhinning not into the head only, but the heart?—It is a ſpiritual light, *fleſh and blood cannot reveal it;* education, and external revelation, however ſubſervient it may be, yet cannot contribute unto it, without ſupernatural revelation.

4. Have you joyfully welcomed a *coming Jeſus?* ſaying, in effect, *The voice of my Beloved! behold, he cometh!* Have you apprehended the mountains that were in the way between him and you; particularly the mountains of ſin and guilt? Has this accented your joy, that he came over all the mountains, and melted down the mountains, and made your heart to melt down before him alſo, becauſe of your heaping up ſuch mountains between him and you.

5. What *intercourſe* have you had with him? what *mutual embracement?* Did you get him in your arms, and wreſtle with him for the bleſſing? Did you get grace to call him your *Beloved;* and to ly in his boſom, and melt in tears of joy? I know there may be intercourſe and fellowſhip with him, even where this is not the attainment; but ſomething like this ordinarily takes place, when he and his people meet together, after ſome black interveening clouds have kept them long aſunder; when his joyful *Lo*, meets with that joyful ſalutation, *Behold, he cometh! it is the voice of my Beloved!*

6. What are the *fruits* and *effects* of his coming? *Beholding his glory*, was you *changed?* Surely, if there was never a change wrought upon you, but that you remain as vain, frothy, and carnal in your converſation and deportment as ever, he has not come to you. But has his coming imbittered ſin, and made you differ with yourſelf, and ſubmit to his righteouſneſs for your juſtification, and to his holineſs for your ſanctification? His great errand is like his name, JESUS, to *ſave his people from their ſins:* from the *guilt* of ſin, by his merit and righteouſneſs; and from the *power* of ſin, by his ſpirit and grace. What joy has his coming raiſed in you? Surely, the joy of his ſalvation, as it is a ſin-killing joy, ſo it is a ſoul-ſtrengthening joy; *The joy of the Lord is their ſtrength*, Neh. viii. 10. Did this joy ſtrengthen you to believe? and ſtrengthen you to pray? and ſtrengthen you to hope? and ſtrengthen you to wait upon him? and ſtrengthen you to ſerve him? and to run the way of his commandments with enlargement of heart?

QUEST. *Are there any ſigns of his coming? What are the prognoſticates of his coming?*

ANSW. (1.) It would be a token of his coming; if we were ſenſible of, and afflicted for his *abſence*, ſaying, *O that I knew where I might find him!* a longing deſire after him, ſaying, *O! when wilt thou come? He will ſatisfy the longing deſire.*

(2.) Another ſign of his coming is, if we were *ſeeking* after him, and *wreſtling* with him for the bleſſing; he is near to them that call upon him; and theſe who ſeek him ſhall find him.

(3.) If we were *waiting* for him in his appointed way; for, they who wait upon him, ſhall have to ſay, *This is our God*, Iſa. xxv. 9.

(4.) If we were finding ourſelves to have a *name* to which the promiſe opens a door of hope. Is there any hope of his coming for a poor *inſolvent bankrupt*, who fears that the word of the Lord is againſt him? Why, that name is in the promiſe; *To this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite ſpirit*, Iſa. lxvi. 2.—Is there any hope of his coming to a poor *needy creature*, who can find no relief to its ſoul? Yes, that caſe is in the promiſe; *When the poor and needy ſeek water, and there is none, I the Lord will hear, I the God of Jacob will regard.*

We ſhall now ſhut up the whole diſcourſe with a word by way of *exhortation.* Is Chriſt ſaying, *Lo, I come?* O Sirs, hear and believe, ſo as you may cry out joyfully, *The voice of my Beloved! Behold, he cometh!* For motives,

1. Conſider who it is that *ſpeaketh;* it is God in our nature, IMMANUEL, *God with us.* The *word of ſalvation* is to you ſinners, as well as to you ſaints: his voice is, *Lo, I come* to ſave ſinners; *I am not come to call the righteous, but ſinners to repentance:* yea, *To you, O men, do I call; and my voice is to the ſons of men*, Prov. viii. 4.

2. He ſays it with a *Lo!* that all the world may give attention to it; *Liſten, O iſles, unto me; and hearken ye people from afar*, Iſa. lxix. 1. He is ſpeaking to the iſles, particularly to the iſle Britain, that has long refuſed to hear his voice. The goſpel is to be preached to *every creature.*

3. The reaſon why he is ſaying to you in this goſpel, *Lo, I come*, to ſave ſinners, is, that ſinners may welcome him and ſay, *The voice of my Beloved! Behold he cometh!* Even the firſt welcome of faith may be in theſe terms, and ſhould be ſo; for, his manifeſting himſelf thus, in the *word*, is the *ground* of faith, though his manifeſting himſelf by the *Spirit*, is the *cauſe* of faith, and abſolutely neceſſary to create that faith. But, as *faith comes by hearing;* ſo, hear, O ſinner; hear this word as the voice of the Spirit of Chriſt: *hear what the Spirit ſays to the churches.* Liſten to the word, till you hear and underſtand that it is the Spirit of Chriſt; or Chriſt, by his Spirit, ſpeaking to you, and ſaying, *Lo, I come* to you.

OBJECT. "Chriſt ſpeaks not here to me, but "to his Father, ſaying, *Lo, I come! I delight to "do thy will, O my God.*"

ANSW. It is the better for you and me, and the ſurer ground of faith and hope; for, it is a word to his Father concerning us, and about his coming to ſave us. It were ſure enough, if it were ſpoken immediately to us; but it is ſtill the ſurer, that it is ſaid to the Father concerning us: and he will not retract what he hath ſaid to his Father. Therefore,

4. Conſider, that his coming in the *Spirit*, to accom-

accompliſh ſalvation by power, is as *ſurely* to take place, as his coming in the *fleſh* has already taken place; therefore, when he ſays, *Lo, I come*, to ſave by the power of my Spirit! Let faith ſay, *Behold, he cometh*, to ſave me!

OBJECT. "But has he purpoſed to ſave us "*all?* If not, how can there be ground for us "*all* to believe?"

ANSW. Whom he has purpoſed to ſave, is a ſecret; but whom he calls to believe, and look to him for ſalvation, is no ſecret; *Look unto me, and be ſaved,* ALL *the ends of the earth*, Iſa. xlv. 22. And faith, as I ſaid before, is not to look to any ſecret, either paſt or to come, but to the word of ſalvation, to a preſent *Lo; Lo, I come!* And if you venture on his word, without more queſtions, we can aſſure you, from his word, you are ſafe: take him at his word, when he ſays, *Lo, I come!*

5. Conſider, that *mountains* are no *hinderances;* he comes *ſkipping on the mountains, and leaping on the hills.* There is a mountain of darkneſs in your mind; a mountain of obſtinacy in your wills; a mountain of carnality and earthlineſs in your affections; mountains of guilt lying on your conſciences; and mountains of objections, doubts, and fears, in your hearts: but all theſe are nothing to him. Therefore, O take his word for it, *Lo, I come!* and ſay, *Behold, he cometh! ſkipping on the mountains.* He can come over them all with one leap, with one ſkip.

6. Conſider, that it is his *joyful voice*, both in the Old and New Teſtament, *Lo, I come!* He was glad to come in the fleſh of old, and he is as glad to come in the Spirit now, according to his promiſe: and, O Sirs, will you not gladly welcome him? O! is he ſaying ſo gladly, *Lo, I come?* What are you ſaying, poor ſoul? If you cannot ſay, *The voice of my Beloved!* then, O will you ſay, It is *the voice of the Father's Beloved*, who has ſaid, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleaſed?* And if you welcome him, as the Father's Beloved, you are quite ſafe. If you cannot ſay, *Behold he cometh* juſt now; yet, will you ſay, *He that ſhall come will come;* and wait upon him in his own way? He waits to be gracious; and *he is a God of judgment; bleſſed are all they that wait for him.*—Again, if you cannot ſay, *Behold he cometh* to my obſervation; yet will you ſay, *Even ſo, come Lord Jeſus, come quickly?* And thus pray for his coming graciouſly and mercifully; *Come, Lord Jeſus;* come to merciful judgment againſt all my luſts, and prepare me for thy general judgment. Come in the Spirit. Come in power and great glory at this occaſion. O he comes, ſkipping and leaping! Let your heart leap within you at the thoughts of it.

OBJECT. "But I do not feel; I do not ſee "his coming."

ANSW. *Bleſſed are they that believe, and have not ſeen.* If you do not ſee and feel, yet do you not hear him ſay, *Lo, I come?* Faith comes by *hearing*, and not by *ſeeing:* while you hear his word, you hear his feet upon the mountains: therefore, againſt hope believe in hope, ſaying, *Lord, I believe; help mine unbelief: It is the voice of my Beloved! behold he cometh!*

Well, Sirs, *What think you, will he not come to the feaſt?* Have we no reaſon to think that he will come? Yea, I think we have.—Why, it is a time of *need* among his poor people; and his throne of grace is erected for a time of need: therefore we are called to *come boldly to it, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*—It is a time of *trouble* and *diſtreſs*, and he is a *preſent help in the time of trouble;* and a *refuge for the oppreſſed.*—It is a time wherein many of his people are in a *wilderneſs of darkneſs and diſpondency;* and he has ſaid, *I will bring her to the wilderneſs, and there will I ſpeak comfortably to her;* or, IN TO HER HEART.—It is a time wherein *many of his people*, from all corners, and, I hope, many praying people, are met about his hand; and he has ſaid, *Where* TWO *or* THREE *are met together, in my name, there will I be in the midſt of them.*—It is a time wherein *ſome of his ſervants*, and *many of his people* are like *outcaſts* in the church, deſpiſed and caſt out by the judicatories; and he hath ſpoken in his word of *gathering the outcaſts of Iſrael*, Zeph. iii. 18. Iſa. lvi. 8. Pſal. cxlvii. 2. *The Lord doth build up Jeruſalem: he gathereth together the outcaſts of Iſrael.*—Why then, ſhall we not expect his coming, when, at the ſame time, he is ſaying, *Lo, I come?*——May faith's joyful echo in our hearts ſay, *The voice of our Beloved! Behold, he cometh!*

SERMON LXIV.

The *Time* of NEED, a *Time* of LOVE. *

EZEKIEL xvi. 8.

Now, when I paſſed by thee and looked upon thee; behold, thy time was a time of love.—

MY friends, if you have been believing communicants this day, your Lord has been giving you a *love feaſt.* But now, ſince the table is drawn, and the feaſt ſeems to be over, leſt you reckon his love withdrawn alſo, I am come, upon the back of the feaſt, to give you a love-letter, written with his own hand, and directed to you, that you may lay it up in the cabinet of your hearts, and never either forget nor jealous his love at any time, which he hath ſhown to you at this, or ſome other time of your need. The words of the letter are, *Now, when I paſſed by thee, and looked upon thee; behold, thy time was a time of love.*

* This Subject was handled in Five Sermons. The firſt was preached on the Sabbath evening, immediately after the celebration of the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper at Dunfermline, July 14. 1734. The other four were delivered after the ſolemnity. *Never before publiſhed.*

The moſt remarkable event that befel the Jewiſh church of old, as to its outward condition, was the ſhadow of the ſpiritual mercies, deſigned for the true Zion of God; and therefore, I am to ſpeak of the bleſſings whereof this is an emblem: it is a New-teſtament mercy in Old-teſtament dreſs. Under this ſhadow is hid the moſt ſubſtantial ſpiritual bleſſings.

In the words we may obſerve the four following particulars.

1. A *miſerable* time aſcribed to the ſinner, called, *Thy time.*

2. A *merciful* time aſcribed to the Saviour, called, *The time of love.*

3. The *happy conjunction*, or *meeting*, between that miſerable time, and this merciful time, *Thy time was a time of love*, and wherein I ſhowed my love.

4. The *ſtrangeneſs* and *wonderfulneſs* of this conjunction, BEHOLD! *thy time was a time of love.* It is matter of aſtoniſhment, and worthy of a note of admiration.

I reſerve the explication of theſe particulars to the proſecution of the following doctrine.

OBSERV. *That it is matter of wonder and admiration, that God ſhould ſhow his love to ſinners, at ſuch a remarkable juncture, that their time of need and miſery, appears to be his time of love and mercy.* BEHOLD, THY TIME WAS A TIME OF LOVE.

The method I would incline to handle this ſubject in, under the divine favour, ſhall be the following.

I. We ſhall ſpeak a little of the SINNER'S *time of need* and *miſery*, as it is deſcribed in the context.

II. Of GOD'S *time of love*, as it is here alſo repreſented and ſhadowed forth.

III. Make it evident, that he ſhows his love at ſuch a *remarkable juncture*, as makes it appear, their *time of need* is his *time of love.*

IV. Show that this is matter of *wonder* and *admiration.*

V. Deduce ſome *inferences* for application of the whole.

I. We are to ſpeak a little of the *time of need* and *miſery*, as here pointed out in the context.

1. The *time of need* here pointed out is, when we are in a *polluted ſtate;* repreſented by the infant caſt out of the womb; *I ſaw thee polluted in thine own blood, neither waſhed with water, nor ſalted, nor ſwaddled*, ver. 4. When grace and mercy take hold of a ſinner, it is even when living in the puddle and filthy mire of original and actual pollution: the underſtanding polluted with darkneſs, the will with enmity, and the affections with carnality and ſenſuality.

2. The *time of need* is when we are in an *helpleſs, naked*, and *deſtitute* ſtate, having no eye to pity, or have compaſſion upon us; *No eye pitied thee to do any of theſe things unto thee, to have campaſſion upon thee*, ver. 5. Grace and mercy ſtep in with help when we can contribute no help to ourſelves: when all refuge fails, and all help is gone, ſurely it is a time of need.

3. The *time of need*, here mentioned, is when we are in a *loathſome ſtate;* in an unpleaſant ſtate, as new born children wallowing in their blood; *Thou waſt caſt out to the loathing of thy perſon*, ver. 5. Grace then beheld with an eye of love and pity, even when we are loathſome to beholders.

4. The *time of need* is when we are in *extreme hazard*, upon the very brink and precipice of utter ruin, juſt chocked with our own blood, ready to die and expire, being expoſed, and *caſt out to the open fields*, ver. 5. And what was it but a field of blood, a field of danger, a field of death? And what is this time of need, but the time of death, wherein we are dead in ſin, and dead in law? which is plainly ſuppoſed, ver. 6. *I ſaid to thee, when thou waſt in thy blood, Live;* intimating, that the time of need was a time of ſpiritual death, and obnoxious to eternal death, upon the brink of hell and damnation.——This is the time of need here repreſented.

II. The next thing I would touch at alſo is GOD'S *time of love*, as here ſhadowed forth; that extremity is his opportunity; that time of need is the time of his ſhowing his love. And what this time of love is, may appear particularly from theſe four things in the context.

1. His *time of love* is a time of *love-calls*, wherein he calls to us, and cries, as he did to Lazarus in the grave, and ſays to us, *Live;* ver. 6. *I ſaid unto thee, when thou waſt in thy blood*, LIVE; *yea, I ſaid unto thee, when thou waſt in thy blood, Live.* Theſe love-calls are doubled, that they may be effectual; he ſays it, and repeats it again: and we are never called effectually, till we hear him twice. In the time of love, therefore he ſays unto us, *Live;* yea, he ſays to us, *in our blood, Live:* he ſays it outwardly, in the word, and then he ſays it inwardly, by the Spirit; he ſays it into the ear, and then ſays it again into the heart: then the heart that was a dead grave opens, and takes in the living Jeſus, the Spirit of life enters, and the dead ſoul begins to live and breathe ſpiritually. The quickening word creates in the ſoul a life of care and concern about ſalvation, *What ſhall I do to be ſaved?* A life of deſire, after Chriſt the Saviour; O ſays the poor ſoul, I would give a thouſand worlds for him! And afterwards, in various degrees, a life of faith, love, hope, and joy.

2. His *time of love* is a time of *love-viſits; When I paſſed by thee*, ſays the words here: it is an alluſion to paſſengers, that, on their way, meet with miſerable objects in a deplorable condition, and extend pity toward them: *I paſſed by thee.* It is ſpoken after the manner of man, but done after the manner of God, who is pleaſed to give gracious viſits to the ſoul, whom he once quickens by his word of power. It is true, all his viſits in this world are but like a *paſſing by;* they are but paſſing viſits, as it is ſaid to Moſes, Exod. xxxii. 23. *While my glory paſſes by, I will ſhow thee my back parts; for my face ſhall not be ſeen.* It is in heaven we ſee him *face to face*, without interruption; but here we are to be content if we get ſome view of his glory as it paſſes by.

3. His *time of love* is a time of *love-glances*, or of *loving looks; When I paſſed by thee*, and LOOKED *upon thee.* It is not a look of *obſervation* only, for he beholds all things; they are *naked and open before him*, but a look of *commiſeration.* It is a look wherein his heart follows his eye.—In the time of love, the Lord gives his people ſometimes an *appropriating* look, an *affectionate* look; *His countenance beholdeth the upright*, Pſal. xi. 7.—Sometimes a *directing* look, *I will guide thee with mine eye*, Pſal. xxxiii. 8. If he takes his directing eye off us, we never make a right ſtep.

—Sometimes

—Sometimes a *convincing* look, a *penetrating* look, ſuch as he gave to Peter, that pierced, melted, and diſſolved his heart; *Jeſus looked on him, and he went out and wept bitterly.*—Sometimes a *comforting* look, Iſa. lxvi. 2. *To this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite ſpirit, and trembleth at my word.* With a look he breaks the hard heart; and with a look he heals the broken heart.—Theſe are his love-glances.

4. His *time of love* is a time of *love-tokens:* and here are many tokens of conjugal love in the context; ſome antecedent, ſome concomitant, and ſome conſequent, to the marriage.

(1.) Some love tokens *antecedent* to the marriage; betwixt Chriſt and them. Such as, beſides what I have already named, theſe immediately following the text, *Thy time was a time of love; and I ſpread my ſkirt over them, and covered their nakedneſs:* there is the marriage *robe* wherewith he covers his naked bride, the garment of his righteouſneſs. *Yea, I ſwear unto thee;* there is the marriage *oath*, by which his word is confirmed, *That by two immutable things, by which it is impoſſible for God to lye, they might have ſtrong conſolation,* &c. And *I entered into a covenant with thee;* there is the marriage *bond*; the covenant that ſtandeth faſt in Chriſt: here all is done to her hand, when ſhe could do nothing. *I entered into a covenant with thee, ſaith the Lord God.* And *thou becameſt mine;* there is the marriage *relation* conſtitute, and the union betwixt Chriſt and his bride made up. I became thine, and thou became mine: I became thy Head and Huſband, and thou became my bride and ſpouſe; I manifeſted my good-will toward thee; and I made thee *willing in the day of my power.*

(2.) Some love tokens *concomitant* are here mentioned, from ver. 9,—14. *Then waſhed I thee with water*, ver. 9.; yea *I thoroughly waſhed away thy blood from thee.* This points out both pardoning grace, waſhing the conſcience from the guilt of ſin; and purifying grace, waſhing the heart from the filth of ſin; *Whom he loves, he waſhes:* hence the ſong of the redeemed is, *To him that loved us, and waſhed us in his blood.* And he waſhed us from our blood; it is *bloods* in the original: and he waſhes us from blood guiltineſs; both from the guilt of our own blood, and the guilt of the blood of Chriſt; in his blood he waſhed us from our blood.—Again, *I anointed thee with oil*, ver. 9. Here is another notable love token concomitant with the marriage, *His giving the Spirit*, the oil of gladneſs, wherewith he is anointed above meaſure; this he doth according to his promiſe, *I will put my Spirit within you*, and that not only to begin the good work, to quicken and renew, but to abide in us, and ſubdue ſin more and more, and advance grace more and more, to *help our infirmities*, to be a pledge and earneſt of the glorious inheritance, to guide us to the land of uprightneſs, and to comfort us under all our troubles in the wilderneſs, till we come to enter into the joy of our Lord.—Again, *clothing* neceſſary for benefit and comfort, mentioned ver. 10. and an inventory of more that ſerved for ſtate and magnificence, mentioned ver. 11, 12, 13. Whatever literally theſe things import to the Jewiſh nation, yet ſpiritually they refer to the precious graces and bleſſings wherewith Chriſt adorns his bride.—Yea, here is not only raiment, but *food*, ver. 13. *Thou didſt* EAT *fine flour, honey, and oil;* pointing out the beſt cheer, *The feaſt of fat things, and wines on the lees;* heavenly manna; the fleſh and blood of the Son of God. Whom he loves with a conjugal love, he gives them food and raiment, and all proviſions neceſſary.—Yea, not only ſo, but *beauty* and *renown*, ver. 14. *Thy renown went forth among the heathen, for thy beauty; for it was perfect through my comelineſs which I put upon thee.* What comelineſs, what glory does he put upon his bride? Even his own glory, according to that wonderful word, John xvii. 22. *The glory which thou gave me, I have given them.* What glory the Father gives the Son, the Son gives the bride; and ſo they are beautiful through his beauty, and glorious within, through his glory; righteous, through his righteouſneſs. O what love tokens are here!

(3.) Some love tokens *conſequential* are here alſo mentioned; not only conſequential to the marriage, but conſequential to our adulterous carriage after marriage; the love tokens poſterior to this is his *marvellous recovering* of his backſliding bride, after her whoriſh departure from him: ſee the ſum of the charge, ver. 15. *But thou didſt truſt in thine own beauty, and played the harlot becauſe of thy renown, and pouredſt out thy fornication on every one that paſſed by.* This charge of the bride's whoredom is enlarged to the 60th verſe of the chapter, in many particulars. And her departure from her Lord is uſhered in with diſtruſting of him, and truſting in her own borrowed robes, and created graces; and indeed, an *evil heart of unbelief* is the ſpring of departure from the living God: all our whoriſh departures from our glorious Lord and Huſband, ariſe from that ſource. But behold the love tokens of reſtoring grace and recovering mercy uſhered in with a *nevertheleſs*, ver. 60. NEVERTHELESS *I will remember my covenant with thee, and will eſtabliſh unto thee an everlaſting covenant:* though thou haſt broken covenant with me, I will remember my covenant with thee; thou haſt been ſo provoking, and I have been ſo provoked by thee, that one would think there was no reconciliation to be expected, but that the bargain was wholly broke, yet he was ever *mindful of his covenant*, that ſtands faſt in Chriſt; and his rememberance will create a rememberance in us; *Then thou ſhalt remember thy ways and be aſhamed*, ver. 61. O here is great love in putting us in rememberance, and putting us to ſhame! This is more fully expreſſed in the laſt verſe; *That thou mayeſt remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more, becauſe of thy ſhame, when I am pacified toward thee, for all that thou haſt done, ſaith the Lord God.* Behold! what rays of love ſhine out after that dark night of diſtance and ſinful departure! God is in Jeſus Chriſt pacified toward us for all that we have done amiſs againſt him; and when God deals thus graciouſly, what effect doth it produce? Why, whenever the father of the prodigal ran to him and kiſſed and embraced him, then the prodigal ſon was aſhamed, and confounded, ſaying, *Father, I have ſinned againſt heaven, and before thee.* The more ſenſe we have of pardoning mercy, and of God's being pacified, the more will grief and ſhame for ſin have room in our hearts, that ever we ſhould have offended ſuch a gracious Lord. The ſoul is confounded with the ſenſe of God's aſtoniſhing mercy, in returning to ſuch a deſperate backſlider, that plaid the harlot with ſo many lovers; and confounded in the view of its own madneſs and ingratitude;

tude; in ſo much, that theſe love-tokens of recovering and reſtoring mercy, conſequential to the bride's whoriſh breaking of her marriage-bond; theſe love-tokens that are like new converſions, may be even more remarkable than the firſt converſion, or the firſt love-tokens ever were.

Now, here is *God's time of love*; it is his time of love-calls, love-viſits, love-looks, and love-tokens; love-tokens antecedent, concomitant, and conſequential to the marriage. The *antecedent* tokens point out divine commiſeration, and his love of pity and compaſſion in our baſe and black eſtate. The *concomitant* tokens point out divine delectation, and his love of delight and complacency in our beautified ſtate by his grace. The *conſequential* tokens point out divine reſtoration, or his reſtoring and receiving love, after our apoſtaſy.——This ſubject of divine love, and of his time of love, is of vaſt extent, therefore I have confined myſelf to a glance at it, from the context only.

III. The next thing propoſed was, To make it *evident*, that he ſhows his love at ſuch a *remarkable juncture*, as to make it appear our time of need is his time of love; our time of miſery is his time of mercy; our worſt time, the time of manifeſting moſt kindneſs. This is plain from what I have already ſaid; yet it may be neceſſary further to evince it, both from the beginning of the good work, and from the progreſs thereof in the Lord's people, both when they are ſinners, and when they are ſaints: their worſt time is ſtill his time of love.

1*ſt*, When they are SINNERS, and when he begins the good work, it were enough to ſay that he comes to convince and convert them in mercy, when they are in a ſtate of nature and alienation from God, and rebellion againſt him; but I ſhall advance a few inſtances, to put the matter beyond queſtion.

1. We find God has ſhewed love and mercy to ſinners when they have arrived at a *monſtrous perfection of ſinning againſt him*; as we ſee in Manaſſeh, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 10,—13. *And the Lord ſpake to Manaſſeh and to his people, but they would not hearken; wherefore the Lord brought upon him the captains of the hoſt of the king of Aſſyria, which took Manaſſeh among the thorns, and bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon. And when he was in affliction, he beſought the Lord his God, and humbled himſelf greatly before the God of his fathers. And prayed unto him, and he was entreated of him, and heard his ſupplication, and brought him again to Jeruſalem into his kingdom. Then Manaſſeh knew that the Lord he was God.* God ſhewed mercy to him when he was at his worſt, uſing all magical arts, making the ſtreets of Jeruſalem run with blood; then God ſaid to him when he was in his blood, *Live*. He caſt the ſkirt of love over him, and his time was a time of love.

2. We find God hath ſhewed mercy and love to ſinners when they have been *embruing their hands in the blood of the ſaints*, madly perſecuting the church and people of God. Thus, you know, he ſhewed mercy to Paul, as he himſelf declares, Acts xxvi. When he rode to Damaſcus, God ſnatched him as a brand out of the burning, and ſhot a beam of love into his heart, when he might have deſtroyed him with a thunderbolt of wrath.

3. We find God has ſhewed mercy when ſin has, to appearance, been *beyond mercy*, by ſinners their embruing their hands in the *blood of the Son of God*, the Saviour of the world; yet he ſaid to them when they were in their blood, *Live*. For many of the Chriſt-crucifying Jews are convinced and converted, Acts ii. and made ſo many trophies of the riches and freedom of his grace. Their time of ſin and miſery was his time of love and mercy.

1. We find he has ſhewed mercy to ſinners that have ſpent *all their time in ſinning againſt him*; witneſs the thief on the croſs, and theſe called at the eleventh and laſt hour: mercy has ſtept in between them and the pit, when they were juſt ready to fall into hell. What aſtoniſhing mercy is this! that the Son of God ſhould ſay to a man that had ſpent all his days in ſin, to the very laſt day of his life, and then to tell him, *This day ſhalt thou be with me in paradiſe*. But whether ſooner or later there is none to whom he effectually ſays, *Live*, but he ſays it *when they are in their blood*; their very worſt time is his time of love.—But I paſs many other inſtances.

2*dly*, When they are SAINTS, or in the progreſs of his loving-kindneſs toward them, ſtill their time of need is his time of love; their worſt time his loving time. Hence,

1. Theſe and the like *declarations*, Pſal. iv. 1. *O God, thou haſt enlarged me, when I was in diſtreſs.* Pſal. cxvi. 6. *I was brought low, and he helped me.* Pſal. cxxxvi. 23. *He remembered us in our low eſtate; for his mercy endureth for ever.* Deut. xxxii. 36. *The Lord ſhall judge his people, and repent himſelf for his ſervants, when he ſeeth that their power is gone, and that there is none ſhut up or left.* Nothing left but black clouds of deſpair, and black ſigns of wrath, and black fears of ruin, then ſhine forth the fair beams of love.

2. For this cauſe is the *throne of grace* erected, that there we may find grace to help in time of our need, Heb. iv. 16. For this cauſe God takes names to himſelf, importing our time of need to be his time of love. Pſal. ix. 9. he is called a *refuge in time of trouble*. Iſa. xxv. 4. *A ſtrength to the poor, a ſtrength to the needy in their diſtreſs. A refuge from the ſtorm, a ſhadow from the heat, when the blaſt of the terrible one is as a ſtorm againſt the wall.* Iſa. xxxii. 2. He is called a *hiding place from the wind, a covert from the tempeſt; as rivers of waters in a dry place, and as the ſhadow of a great rock in a weary land.* He is our hope in an evil day.

3. Conſider, for further clearing this, the *harmony* between our time of need and his time of love: hence ordinarily your time of *darkneſs* is his time of *inlightening* love, according to that word, *To the upright there ariſeth light in darkneſs. Though I walk in darkneſs, the Lord will be a light unto me.*—Your time of *deadneſs* is his time of *quickening* love; hence that prayer, frequently in the Pſalms, *Quicken me, according to thy word.*—Your time of *fear* is his time of *favour*, according to that word, *Fear not, for I am with thee.*—Your time of *difficulty* is his time of *direction*, according to that word, *I will lead the blind in ways they know not; and in paths which they have not known.*

4. His time of love to his people, or of manifeſting his love, is ordinarily when their time of need is *moſt notable*. He does not always ſhow his love at the time that we think the time of need, but that he knows to be the time of need, which is when the time of need is moſt extreme. Hence his time of love is ſometimes,

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in their extremity of *guiltineſs*, when they have made him *ſerve with their ſins, and wearied him with their iniquities*, then he hath ſaid, *I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy tranſgreſſions, for my name's ſake*, Iſa. xliii. 25.—Sometimes in their extremity of *rebellion* and *incorrigibleneſs*; when, though he hides himſelf and ſmites, yet they have *gone on frowardly in the way of their hearts*, even then he has ſaid, *I have ſeen his ways, and will heal him*, Iſa. lvii. 18.—Sometimes in their extremity of *remiſneſs*, when they had neither heart nor hand for prayer and pleading with himſelf for his pity; *When he ſaw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no interceſſor; therefore his own arm brought ſalvation*, Iſa. lix. 16.—Sometimes in the extremity of *want* and *neceſſity*, Iſa. xli. 17. *When the poor and needy ſeek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirſt, I the Lord will hear, I the God of Jacob will not forſake.*—Sometimes in the extremity of *affliction*, when *deep calleth unto deep, and all his waves and billows paſs over them*, then he *commands his loving-kindneſs in the day-time, and in the night his ſong is with them*, Pſal. xlii. 7, 8.—Sometimes in their extremity of *deſertion*, when they are ſaying, *The Lord hath forſaken, and my God hath forgotten me*; then he appears ſaying, *Can a woman forget her ſucking child, that ſhe ſhould not have compaſſion on the ſon of her womb? Yea, they may forget; yet will I not forget thee*, Iſa. xlix. 14, 15.—Sometimes in the extremity of *temptation*, when burnt with fiery darts, and buffeted by Satan, he readily relieves with loving words; *My grace ſhall be ſufficient for thee, my ſtrength ſhall be made perfect in thy weakneſs*, 2 Cor. xii. 9.—Sometimes in the very *laſt extremity*, in the extremity of *death*, and the extremity of their extremity; when, like Lazarus, they are ſtinking in their graves of ſin and ſecurity, then he ſpeaks the quickening word, and ſays to the dead and dry bones, *Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon theſe ſlain, that they may live.*

QUEST. *May not God leave his own in their moſt extreme need, and in their laſt battle?*

ANSW. We cannot tell what God *may* do when he goes out of his ordinary road; *judgment is his ſtrange work*, eſpecially when it ſeems to be execute toward a ſaint; but God may ſuffer ſtrange and extraordinary things to fall out toward ſaints themſelves, as preſages of ſtrange and extraordinary wrath and vengeance coming upon a ſecure generation: but certainly it is God's ordinary way to help his people in their laſt extremities, and make their time of greateſt need his time of love, wherein he ſteps in for their ſalvation. Nay, what am I ſaying, that it is his *ordinary* way? Let me correct the word, in ſpite of the devil, and unbelief, and all dark and diſmal-like providences; I will take back the word and ſay it is his *conſtant* way. Though a ſaint in the laſt battle ſhould die diſtracted, and ſeem to be a ſacrifice to the devil and his inſtruments; yet that laſt extremity is the time of love, wherein he leads them through the darkeſt trance to the faireſt field of everlaſting joy and triumph. When we conſider what power the devil got over the body of Chriſt, to carry it hither and thither, what do we know how far he may get power over the body of a member of Chriſt? We find, upon Satan's application againſt Job, there was a twofold power given him; the firſt was, *all that he hath* is in thy power; the ſecond was, he *himſelf*; that is, his body; *Behold he is in thine hand, only ſpare his life.* If God had but allowed a third application, and had let out another link of the enemy's chain, the utmoſt would have been even take his life, and I will take him home. But this, by way of digreſſion, though yet, I hope, not far out of the way.

I have ſhown you, that all our time of need, both from firſt to laſt, is his time of love; *Thy time was a time of love.*

If any further enquire, *Why God chuſes to make ſuch a time of need and extremity to be his time of love?* I ſhall only anſwer in a word. God, in his ſovereignty, having fixed a time for the *decree's breaking forth*, wherein theſe with whom he travelled ſo long in the womb of his electing and redeeming love ſhould be brought forth, he keeps the time to the moment that he fixed upon; and he *waits to be gracious*; that is, he waits the time of love, and he makes it jump with our time of need and extremity, for magnifying the riches and freedom of his grace, and for engaging the ſinner the more to himſelf, and to his ſervice; and he makes his time of ſhowing love at firſt, and always afterwards, to the end of the believer's life, to jump and agree with their extreme neceſſity, for accenting the ſong of the redeemed in heaven, *To him that loved them, and waſhed them in his blood*, and pulled them out of the fire, and plucked them out of the devil's hands, and raiſed them from the bottom of hell, to the battlements of heaven; from the depths of miſery to the heights of glory; he makes the depths of his love to anſwer the depths of their extremity. As by this means he ſhews his glory, ſo he ſtains the pride of man, makes his viſits more precious, kills our enmity with his kindneſs, quickens love to him, and learns us to truſt in him even at the worſt; and ſhows the height of his thoughts above our thoughts, as the heaven is higher than the earth, he having thoughts of peace towards us, when we reckoned he hath thoughts of wrath, and deſigns to ruin us.——Thus he ſhows his wonders.

IV. The next thing was, To ſhow that this is matter of *wonder* and *admiration*, which is the fourth thing in the text, BEHOLD! *Behold, thy time was a time of love.*

1. It is wonderful, if we conſider the *nature of* GOD, *the Lover*. If we look to his ſpotleſs holineſs, and that he is of *purer eyes than that he can behold iniquity*, O how myſterious and wonderful is it! that he ſhould ſhow his love to any of Adam's black poſterity, ſo ſpotted with iniquity?—If we look to his infinite *juſtice*, that he can no more ceaſe to puniſh ſin, than he can ceaſe to be God; juſtice being as eſſential to his name as mercy. How wonderful is his love! If he had not found a ranſom, there would have been no vent for his love; but grace reigns through Chriſt's righteouſneſs.—Again, if we look to his infinite *highneſs*, it makes his love wonderful: his majeſty is infinite; he is *the high and lofty One that inhabits eternity*. Surely we may cry, when he comes to ſhow his love, *Lord, I am not worthy that thou ſhould come under my roof.*

2. It is wonderful, if we conſider the *nature of* MAN, the *loved object*, to whom he ſhows mercy. What are we by nature? enemies to God, rebels to the crown of heaven, children of the devil; who but a God could anſwer his own queſtion? *How ſhall I put you among the chil-*

dren, and give thee the pleasant land? How shall I give thee a title to heaven, that art so justly intitled to hell? If we look upon our baseness, O the wonders of his kindness! May we not say with wonder, *Will God in very deed dwell with men on earth*, on the earth his footstool? May we not sing, as Psal. cxiii. 6. *Who is like unto the Lord our God, that dwelleth on high, who humbleth himself to behold things that are in heaven?* And much more may we say, Who is like unto him, that humbleth himself to show his love to worms on the earth? Whence is this that the King of glory should look upon vile dust? If we view the opposition we make to his love, the resistance he meets with from the devils of hell without us, and, the devils of lusts, sin, and corruption within us, and how we fight against his love and kindness, is this the manner of man to show love in this case? O wonderful! O condescending Jesus! O patient Christ! whom we have kept so long at the back of the door, that yet he should both forgive and forget all the wrongs we have done him, saying, *Thy sins and iniquities will I remember no more!* We commit the fault, and he makes satisfaction. And if we view not only the bad entertainment he gets from us, at the first discoveries of his love; but the affronts he meets with afterwards, from time to time, the abuses of his goodness, *turning his grace to wantonness, grieving his Spirit*, and madly following other lovers, till *he hedge up our way with thorns*, that we may not overtake them: O wonderful! that after this, love should reclaim us, and make us say, *We will go and return to our first husband, for then it was better with us than now*, Hos. ii. 7.

3. It is wonderful, if we consider, that a *time of love* is denied to *millions of better creatures than us.* It was never allowed to fallen angels; there was never such a word as that, *Behold, the tabernacle of God is with* angels that fell; but, *Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men*, and among men. Has he not past many nations, and come to us, proclaiming the joyful sound of everlasting love in Christ Jesus? in so much, that nothing hinders our enjoyment of it, but unbelief, and hardness of heart; and amongst us, are there not some more highly privileged than others? O believer, wonder that he hath passed by a thousand, and shewed his love to you the worst of them all, and even when you was at your worst. O wonderful distinguishing love! that passes by twenty houses, and falls upon one! that passes by twenty souls, and comes upon yours! Many a heart here this day never yet was touched or fired with this love, and your heart may be set a burning within you.

4. It is wonderful, if we consider, the *long train* of the time of love; both the train of blessings it infers, and the train of times it includes. What a train of blessings does the time of love infer? or, what good is done to the soul? It brings life, and light, and pardon, and peace; justification, adoption, and sanctification; grace, glory, and every good thing; it brings God, and Christ, and the Spirit, and with them all things. The time of love is the time of gifts, when God gives Christ and all things with him. What a long train and tract of times it includes? The time of love has a beginning only in our view, but to God it has neither a beginning nor an end: the time of love began before time, in the heart of God from all eternity purposing, and in the heart of Christ from all eternity transacting with the Father in our room; therefore, he has said, Jer. xxxi. 3. *I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee.* The time of love to us is when he lets down the cords of his love, like a heart-string, to draw up our hearts to his heart: and as the time of love runs through every period of the believer's life, while he is here, in so many fruits and effects of divine love, let out from time to time; so it is never at an end, so long as his love to Christ endures; though he *visit their transgressions with rods, yet his loving-kindness will he not take away from him*, nor consequently *from them;* for, *his seed shall endure for ever*, Psal. lxxxix. 32, 33, 36. The love that he shows in the time of love, includes love before time, from all eternity; and love after time, even to all eternity; therefore it is justly wonderful, and expressed with a *behold! Behold, thy time was the time of love!*

V. I come to the *fifth* thing, which was the *application.* Is it so, as has been said, *That God shows his love to sinners at such a remarkable juncture, that their time of need and misery appears to be his time of love and mercy*, then,

1. Let us apply it for *admiration.* O let us admire and adore the wonders of redeeming love! It deserves our highest admiration; when we have spent our thoughts upon it, it is fit we should supply the defect of our thought with admiration. Let us admire the *height, and depth, and length, and breadth of this love of God in Christ;* that the guilt of criminals should be transferred upon the innocent, and he exposed to the stroak of justice: that the immortal God should be clothed with mortality; the wonder of angels exposed to the reproach of men; that he who was in the *form of God* should appear in the *form of a servant;* and the Lord of life become obnoxious to the pains of death, and all that the love of God might vent toward sinners, and that he should take occasion to show his love to sinners when they are at their worst.—Herein let us see and admire the *freedom* of the grace and love of God; that he should take hold of such profane persons, such polluted persons, such loathsome persons! O that the time of loathing should be the time of love!—Herein see and admire the *power* of the grace of God, that can conquer sinners at the height of their rebellion, and overcome their enmity, and supply all their needs.—See and admire the *wisdom* of the grace and love of God, that he should consult the concerns of his own glory and our good so wonderfully. He consults the glory of his justice while mercy vents through a ransom, and grace through righteousness, that magnifies the law, and satisfies the justice of God: he consults our good wonderfully by showing his love at a time wherein his love may do us most good; see and wonder at the wonderfulness of his mercy, love and grace.

2. Let us apply it for *examination.* Try what share you have had of this wonderful love of God in Christ; and whether *your time of need* has been *his time of love*, either now, at this occasion, or formerly. For gaining time, I forbear offering marks and evidences of this, and only propose, that you reflect upon what has been said concerning the *time of need* and the *time of love.*

(1.) What

(1.) What ſenſe have you ever had of the *time of need?* Have you ever ſeen yourſelf in your *polluted* ſtate, *lying in your blood?* Your *helpleſs* ſtate, *no eye to pity you?* Your *loathſome* ſtate, *caſt out to the loathing of your perſons?* Your *dangerous* ſtate, *in the open field*, lying open to the wrath and vengeance of God? Have you ever got a ſenſe and conviction of your *dead* ſtate, as being under the power of ſin, and under the ſentence of the law? The time of love is uſually uſhered in with a ſenſe of ſin, and fear of wrath. Was you ever pricked in your hearts, and made to cry, *What ſhall I do to be ſaved?* If you never felt a time of extreme need, it ſeems you never have known a time of love. But,

(2.) What experience have you of the *time of love* upon the back of your extreme need? Got you ever a loving call with power? A quickening word, when you was in your blood? A word that put life into your dead ſoul? Got you ever a *love-viſit*, and a view of the glory of the Lord Jeſus, and of God in him? Though it was but a paſſing viſit; yet has he paſſed by you, ſo as to give you a ſight of his *back parts*, by the bye? for, *Now we ſee through a glaſs darkly.*——Got you ever a *love-look*, that made you look again unto him; a look that pierced and pained your heart, and made you ſick of love to him, and deſire after him?——Got you ever any *love-tokens*; whether got you theſe I mentioned, that may be called *antecedent* to the marriage? Did he ever caſt *his ſkirt over you*, and make you flee under the covert of his blood and righteouſneſs? Did he ever ſwear to you, and enter into covenant with you, by making you to take *hold of his covenant*, and word of grace and promiſe?—What know you of the love-tokens *concomitant* to the marriage? Did he never *waſh your heart* and *conſcience* in his blood, by giving you *joy and peace in believing?* Did he never *anoint* you with the oil of his Spirit, ſo as the chariot-wheels of your ſouls have been made to run ſweetly and ſwiftly, by reaſon of this anointing, in the duties of religion? Has he never *ſatisfied your longing ſoul?* Though you have not got what you would be at, yet by giving you ſo much as made all the world taſteleſs to you, and Chriſt above all things precious? (If he has not fed you with joy, has he fed you with godly ſorrow and mourning for ſin?) Has he never *beautified your deformed ſoul*, by letting you ſee your own vileneſs and deformity, and that all your beauty, ſtrength, righteouſneſs, and ſtore was only in himſelf; and made you to ſee that all your excellency lay only in him, in whom *all the ſeed of Iſrael are juſtified, and ſhall glory?*—What know you of the love-tokens *conſequent* to the marriage, and, perhaps, to your whoriſh departure from him? Did he ever *ſhame* you for your unkindneſs by his ſurprizing returns, ſo as you was confounded and aſhamed when he was pacified toward you? Did ever the *renewed ſenſe* of his love and grace, manifeſted to a rebel and runaway like you, melt your heart, and lay you in the duſt before him?——Try what love-tokens he has given you in the time of your extreme need. *Behold, thy time was a time of love.*

I ſhall now cloſe with a ſhort *advice*, to you who *never met with a time of love*, in point of power engaging your heart to the love of Chriſt. Though you have enjoyed a time of love, in goſpel offers, and loving courtſhips, yet you have deſpiſed his loving offers to this day. O what art thou doing, ſinner, while deſpiſing the riches of divine love, goodneſs, forbearance, and long-ſuffering? The ſcripture tells you what you are doing, Rom. vii. 5. thou *art treaſuring up wrath to thyſelf againſt the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.* Oh! you that were never convinced of a time of need, nor affected with your diſmal ſtate, as lying in your blood, nor concerned about a time of love, or a day of power, remember, that there is a time of wrath, and a day of death, and judgment a coming; and if you remain deſpiſers of the grace and love of God, the wrath coming upon you is both the wrath of God and of the Lamb; not only the wrath of an *angry God*, which is terrible vengeance, but the wrath of the *ſlighted Lamb of God*, which is double vengeance: *How ſhall you eſcape if you neglect ſo great ſalvation?* Terrible wrath is coming upon goſpel ſlighters in Scotland; upon goſpel deſpiſers in Dunfermline; do you hear of this wonderful love and yet ſlight it? Then, *Behold, ye deſpiſers, wonder, and periſh! He that believeth not ſhall be damned; the wrath of God abideth upon him.* Gave you never any entertainment to the news of grace and love, but to abuſe it to *laſciviouſneſs*, and *turn the grace of God into wantonneſs*, and to encourage yourſelves in ſin and wickedneſs? As ſure as you have now a day of grace, the day of wrath is a-coming; and perhaps this is the laſt hour of the day of grace, and of the time of love, and what will you do with it? Will you let it paſs away, and be for ever loſt? O ſinner! ſince the time of wrath is not yet come, though it is at hand; ſince the time of love is yet laſting, will you take and accept of divine grace and love, when he comes to give you now, perhaps, the laſt offer? And he has ſpared you out of hell till you get it; that either upon refuſal, you may be for ever inexcuſable; or upon acceptance, you may be for ever happy.

Well then, you that have miſpent all the time of life, and the time of love till now; he that yet continues the time of love with you, the time of love-offers is ſaying to you, *Behold me, behold me*, in order to marriage with me. Come and take me, for a match to your ſouls, to make it up for ever. O Sirs, will you match with him that can pardon all your ſins, and pay all your debt, ſupply all your wants, and heal all your wounds? Can cover all your ſpots, and cleanſe all your filthineſs, and looſe all your bands, theſe bands of ſin, hell, and death wherewith you have been bound all your days? Will you, that can do nothing, leave him that can do all things for you? Will you, to whom death and judgment ſeem to be terrible, in a little, will you have him that can make death ſafe, and judgment ſweet, and all trials by the way eaſy to you, by giving either a merciful ſupport under them, or merciful iſſue to them? O will you, that are liable to an eternity of torments, have him that can give you an eternity of joy and happineſs, in the viſion and fruition of himſelf? Will you have him to make you holy and happy? If you have no will to this bargain, then ſurely, though you periſh eternally, God does you no wrong, while he gives you your will, and lets you alone, ſaying, *Ye will not come to me that you might have life.* Nothing but his omnipotent power can make you willing; but ſince this goſpel is the organ

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of his power, and that if his drawing power be let down effectually by any means in the world, it will be by these cords of love and grace that are hanging down among your hands; therefore, Come, sinners.

To let down the cords as far as I can, by his warrant, be what thou wilt, *To you is the word of this salvation sent*; the grace and mercy of God is laid in your lap; if you shake it not away from you, by unbelief and enmity, you shall have it, be what you will: why? what are you, or what have you been? Are you a drunkard, swearer, Sabbath-breaker, whoremonger, adulterer, a filthy Magdalen, or bloody Manasseh, that have hitherto contemned the grace of God, and the Son of God? Are you the worst that ever breathed on the face of the earth; no matter; while this time of love lasts, grace is content to take you at your worst, and to make the worst time that ever you had, to be the best time that ever you saw. What are you, sinner? Are you a monster of sin? Are you a devil for sin? Be it so, since you are not yet a devil in hell, but a devil on earth, and a devil in flesh, that is not such a wonder as a God in flesh; and behold here is an incarnate God come to save incarnate devils. To you that are yet out of hell, he is saying, *Look to me, and be saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else.* To you that are yet in the flesh, and not yet damned spirits, the word of God says of this God in Christ, *O thou that hearest prayer, to thee shall all flesh come*, Psal. lxv. 2. All that are yet human flesh, are welcome to come to him; whatever sort of flesh you be, be you never such filthy flesh, or deviliish flesh; God has sent his own Son *in the likeness of sinful flesh*, that all sinful flesh may come to him, that he may form them into the likeness of an holy God.

If any trembling heart here be thinking, O is it possible that this call is to me, that this offer is to me? Yes, to thee, man, woman; to thee, lass, lad; to you that are farest off and neareft hand me; to every one of you within these walls, this offer of love and mercy comes in his name, that has said, *Go, preach the gospel to every creature*, to every rational creature under heaven. What say you? I was never so unfit to come or so unable; I am at the very worst in sin and misery, at the very height of wickedness and wo. What? is it the time of the greatest need of grace, power, and pity? Well, God who *waits to be gracious*, perhaps has been waiting till this moment, and waiting for this moment that your time of need may be his time of love, and your time of misery his time of mercy: are you content it should be so? Has this word taken hold of your heart, saying, Oh! *What shall I do to be saved?* O! a thousand worlds for Christ. Indeed, an offer of him is worth a thousand worlds, much more himself: do you see it to be so? and are you made willing to have him that he may save you from sin, as well as from hell? And to save you presently, that you may never be a slave to your sins any more but a servant to Jesus? Then we may say, *Behold his time is a time of love*, not only in point of offer, but a time of love in point of power.

I intended to have addressed myself to you whose time, either now or formerly, has been a time of love: but time does not permit; and this will fall in as natively afterwards.

SERMON LXV.

EZEK. xvi. 8.

Now, when I passed by thee and looked upon thee; behold, thy time was a time of love.

[The second Sermon on this text.]

THE time of life is short and uncertain, and we cannot improve it aright, if we be not acquainted with a time of love. The time of trouble is what we may all lay our account with; for, *Man is born to trouble*; and we cannot have true peace or rest therein if we know not a time of love. The time of death is approaching; and what have we to sweeten the thoughts of death, if we know nothing of a time of love? It is therefore most necessary we know it.

Having formerly improved this subject in an use of *admiration* and *examination*, we shall now, at this time, improve it in an use of *information*, by deducing two inferences.

1*st*, Hence see, that God, in *sovereignty*, may *disappoint his people*, and make the time of *seeming anger* and of *wrath-like dispensations* to be a *time of love*. As *his thoughts are not our thoughts, nor his ways our ways*; so, his time is not our time: we may hope he will manifest his love at such a time, and he may disappoint our hopes; and we may fear he will display his anger at such a time, and he may disappoint our fears, by manifesting his love. *He makes his time of seeming wrath toward his people to be his time of love.*

As this inference is suitable to the text, context, and doctrine; so being suitable to the circumstances of many here under visible evidences of God's anger in their families*; I shall insist a little upon this by answering these four questions. 1. What *seeming anger* may be showing toward his people whose time is notwithstanding a time of love? 2. What *love designs* may be carrying on by these *wrath-like* dispensations? 3. What *love* is there in these *angry-like* dispensation? 4. What *lessons* may we learn from this inference?

QUEST. 1. *In what respect may he seem* ANGRY *with these whose time, notwithstanding, is a time of* LOVE?

ANSW. 1. It is most angry-like when they *fall into sin*, when he *suffers them to sin*, and *leaves them to themselves*, as he did David, Peter, Hezekiah, 2 Chron. xxxii. 25, 31.; and leave them to *heart-hardness*; *Wherefore hast thou hardened our hearts from thy fear?* Isa. lxiii. 17.

2. When they are under many *grievous temptations*, and *buffetings of Satan*, as Paul, 2 Cor. xii. 7.; and Job, as you read, chapter first.

3. When they are under sad *desertion*, saying, as Psal. xxii. 1. *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? How long wilt thou hide thyself?* Psal. xiii. 1, 2.

4. When they are under great *outward affliction* on their persons, families, friends, names, estates, or otherwise, Psal. xxxiv. 19. *Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth them out of them all.* 2 Tim. iii. 12. *If any man will live godly in Christ Jesus, he must suffer persecution.*

You will, perhaps, say, Is there no difference between the afflictions of the godly and of the wicked? To this we reply, No difference as to the *matter* of them, and in their own *nature*; but vastly

* At the time when this sermon was preached, most of the children in Dunfermline were seized with the *small pox*, and vast numbers of them dying.

vaſtly different in their *uſe:* even as water in baptiſm taken out of a well, ſo much of the water of that well may be taken for waſhing the hands, ſo much for baptizing; it is the ſame water, but the latter is made uſe of as a *ſeal of God's covenant.* Thus, when a fever comes, the godly man's perſon, or child, may be as ſorely handled as the wicked; but the one is bleſſed, and not the other: the uſe of affliction to the one, and to the other, is vaſtly different, Jer. xxiv. The prophet here ſees a viſion of two ſorts of figs, the one was good figs, and the other bad, and naughty. And what are theſe but two ſorts of people, that were carried captive to Babylon? Some of them, as good figs, whom God took a care of when carried away, to whom he ſays, that he *will have his eyes upon them for good, and not for evil*; and that he will *bring them again:* but as for the other, he ſays, that his eyes were upon them *for evil* and not *for good*; and that he *would pull them down.* Thus, all the people go to captivity together; but yet never think he had no more reſpect to his own among them, than to others. Afflictions come upon the wicked, ſeeking ſatisfaction; but upon the godly, for correction. God out of love chaſtiſes them for their faults. There is a great difference when God, with a rod, ſtrikes his enemies out of anger; and when, with that ſame rod, he ſtrikes his children in love. Therefore, when judgments come upon a land, or a place, let not the godly themſelves think they ſhall be free; but as when a beſom comes to ſweep a houſe, if there be droſs and dirt in it, and alſo diamonds and ſome gold among it, both of them may be ſwept to the door together; but this is the difference, the dirt rots away, but the diamonds or gold remains of as great worth as it was at firſt, till it be ſought and got again.

The godly may lay their account with ſuch troubles and afflictions as the wicked meet with. Why?

(1.) Theſe who are partakers in *ſin*, muſt be partakers in *puniſhment*; for, though the godly were guiltleſs in men's eyes, yet before God, and in their own eyes, they are guilty, and ſinful as others are; for, it is hard to live with the wicked, and not be infected with their plagues, and ſo they muſt have part of their judgment.

(2.) There is no promiſe made to any of that ſort, as to *exempt* them from the croſs. Hence the true Iſraelites and Canaanites cannot be diſcerned by theſe outward things; yet ſay not there is no difference between the afflictions of the one, and the other, as I have ſhown above.

QUEST. 2. *What* LOVE DESIGNS *may be carrying on by thoſe* WRATH-LIKE *diſpenſations?*

ANSW. 1. The firſt love deſign thereby is to make *ſin bitter*, and bring off their hearts from it, and make them leave it. *Fooliſhneſs is bound up in the heart of a child*, even of God's children; *but the rod of correction drives it off*, Prov. xxii. 15. See Jer. ii. 19. *Thine own wickedneſs ſhall correct thee, and thy backſlidings ſhall reprove thee: Know then and ſee that it is an evil and a bitter thing, that thou haſt forſaken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, ſaith the Lord God of hoſts. By this ſhall the iniquity of Jacob be purged*, Iſa. xxvii 9.

2. The next love deſign is, to *heal their hearts:* to humble the lofty heart, and ſoften the hard heart: therefore he puts them in the fire to melt them; they are naturally hard, ſtout, light, and proud: God melts them with this fire; *Thou haſt tried us with fire, as ſilver is tried.* See Job xiii. 16. *For God maketh my heart ſoft.*

3. The third love deſign is, to make them *weary of this world*, by finding they meet with ſuch bad entertainment in it; *Ariſe ye, and depart, for this is not your reſt, for it is polluted, it ſhall deſtroy you even with a ſore deſtruction*, Mic. ii. 10. Hence John xvi. 33. *In the world ye ſhall have tribulation, but in me ye ſhall have peace; be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.*

4. Another love deſign is, to *awaken them*; but he gives them ſomething ado, and keeps them buſy and fighting: *Theſe are the nations God left to prove Iſrael by them; ſlay them not, leſt my people forget*, Judges iii. 1. Jer. xlviii. 11. They would ſtink and corrupt if they were not carried into captivity, and *emptied from veſſel to veſſel.*

5. The next love deſign is, to *exerciſe faith and patience*; Rom. v. 3. *We glory in tribulation, knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope.* James i. 2, 3. *Count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations; knowing that the trial of your faith worketh patience; but let patience have her perfect work.*

6. Another love deſign is, to *bring them to themſelves, by prayer, and other duties*, otherwiſe they would miſtake themſelves, Hoſ. v. 15. and vi. 1. *In their afflictions they ſhall ſeek me early, ſaying, Come let us return to the Lord, for he hath broken, and will heal.* True, indeed, hypocrites may cry, when they are afflicted; *When he ſlew them, then they ſought him; and they returned and enquired early after God:—Yet they flattered him with their mouths*, Pſal. lxxviii. 35, 36. But even the children of grace need to be ſpurred up by the rod; and then they cry to their Father in another manner than hypocrites, in a kindly and cordial manner, Iſa. xxvi. 16. There it is ſaid of his people, *Lord, in trouble have they viſited thee; they poured out a prayer when thy chaſtening hand was upon them:* then *they viſited thee;* they were growing ſtrangers to God before the trouble came; they made him few viſits, and were like to grow out of acquaintance with him: but now they begin to renew their acquaintance with him; they *poured out a prayer:* formerly, before trouble came, they prayed, but their prayers were but drops; they came but ſlowly forth, drop by drop, like water out of a ſtill; but now their prayers are poured out like water out of a fountain: they pour out their prayers, and pour out their hearts in prayer before the Lord, when his chaſtening is upon them; *They poured out prayer;* in the margin it is a SECRET SPEECH: they may meet with God in public duties and ordinances, but eſpecially their main intercourſe with him is in ſecret; there they ſpeak with God, and commune with him: and thus by afflictions and chaſtiſements their communion with God is advanced.—In a word, ſuch are his love deſigns, by trials and wrath-like diſpenſations, that thereby he makes *his mercy the ſweeter to them* when it comes; and *their love to God the greater*, becauſe of his power and pity manifeſted to them in their afflictions.

QUEST. 3. *What* LOVE *is there in theſe afflictions, in puniſhments and chaſtiſements? What love appears in them?*

ANSW. Beſides what I have ſaid, 1. There is love in the *meaſure* of the affliction; while it is not

not in fury, but in measure, and in pity; *Fury is not in me.—In measure when it shooteth forth, thou wilt debate with it: He stayeth his rough wind in the day of his east wind*, Isa. xxvii. 4, 8. *As a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him*, Psal. ciii. 13.

2. There is love in bringing them under *one evil*, to *save them from a greater*; 1 Cor. xi 32. They are *chastised of the Lord, that they may not be condemned with the world.* See Heb. xii. 6, 7, 8.

3. There is love in making them thus *sharers* of the *mercies of the covenant*; for afflictions are a covenant promise; See Sam. vii. 15. and Psal. lxxxix. 31, 32. For which the saints have prayed, as Jer. x. 24. *Correct me, Lord, but in judgment; not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing:* Thus Psal. vi. 1. and xxxviii. 1.

4. There is love in that thus he *favours* and *honours* them to take them under his correction and care: See Job vii. 17. *What is man, that thou shouldst magnify him? and that thou shouldst set thy heart upon him?* Why? how doth he magnify and favour him? It follows, ver. 18. *And that thou shouldst visit him every morning, and try him every moment.*

5. There is love in his giving *sweet cordials* between-hands to bear up their spirits; particularly, some cordials of the new covenant; some words on which he causes them to hope, Psal. cxix. 49. *Remember thy word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope.* Hence it follows, ver. 50. *This is my comfort, in mine affliction; for thy word hath quickened me.* He quickens and refreshes with his words of grace.

6. There is love in the *constant presence of grace* that he allows them under their trouble, according to his promise, Heb. xiii. 5. *I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.* Psal. xci. 15. *I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him.* When the goldsmith has cast the gold into the fire, he leaves it not there; nay, then he waits best upon it, that he may suffer it to get no more of the fire than he sees meet.

In a word, such love there is in their afflictions that he is therein carrying on *all the love designs* that I was mentioning on the former head, and thus preparing them for the heavenly kingdom; *Our light affliction, that is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*, 2 Cor. iv. 17. They would die and rot in their sins, if they were not *poured out from vessel to vessel.*

QUEST. 4. *What* LESSONS *may we learn from this inference?*

ANSW. 1. That we ought not to seek so much to be *rid of troubles*; we ought to submit and comply with the troubles that are upon us, seeing they are such excellent things, so profitable and medicinal: we ought neither to lothe at, nor fret under God's physic.

1. We ought to *accept of the punishment of sin*, saying, *I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned.* We should turn up our cheek to him that smiteth, and not weary of the Lord's chastisments, seeing it is for sin; *Why should a living man complain? a man for the punishment of his iniquities?* Therefore,

3. We ought to *quite sin*, saying, *What have I any more to do with idols?* God's designs, by trouble, to destroy some idol: join with him in seeking the destruction thereof; *I will go, and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offences, and seek my face*, Hos. v. 15.

4. Give *way to the Lord Jesus Christ*, and make *open doors* for him; for this is the great design of all afflicting dispensations: for they are so many knocks at the doors of our hearts. Give way to him in a fourfold capacity.

(1.) As a *reprover*, Rev. iii. 15, 16, 17. Take with the charge of lukewarmness in being neither cold nor hot.

(2.) As a *Counsellor*, Rev. iii. 18. Hearken to his counsel, as a Prophet, and buy his *eye-salve*; his counsel, as a Priest, and buy his *white raiment*; his counsel, as a King, and buy his *tried gold.*

(3.) Give way to him as a *Corrector*, a loving corrector, Rev. iii. 9. *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten:* he corrects us for our faults, and for our amendment. Be patient, which is a continued submission, and if sense fail, hold by the word.

(4.) Give way to him as an *importunate Suitor*, Rev. iii. 20. *Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me.* He knocks by his word, and by his Spirit, and by his rode; invite him to come in, saying, as Laban in another case to Abraham's servant, Gen. xxiv. 31. *Come in, thou blessed of the Lord: wherefore standest thou without?* O come in and do not stand knocking, but make king's keys, and exert thy power and come in with salvation.——So much may suffice for the first inference. Hence,

2*dly*, I infer, that neither the *sinning* nor the *suffering circumstances* of the people of God, in this world, is *inconsistent with his special love* to them. *Thy time*, (though in the context both a sinful and afflicted time,) *was a time of love.* By the love of God here, I do not understand, either *benevolence* or *good-will*, for this is common; *God so loved the word, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.* He has sworn that he has *no pleasure in the death of sinners.* God may take pleasure in the execution of his justice, but doth not in the punishment of the creature; *As I live, I have no pleasure in the death of sinners.* Nor do I here understand his love of *beneficence*; for, he does good to all, *He makes his sun to shine upon the good and evil; and sendeth his rain upon the just and unjust.* Nor his love of *destination* towards the elect unconverted; because, whatever be his thoughts of peace, and designs of manifesting love to them, yet he can take no preasure in them, as they are in themselves, while out of Christ. But I understand his love of *complacency* and *delight.* Now, I say, his people's *sinning* and *suffering circumstances* here, are not *inconsistent with his complacential love* to them.

For the further clearing of this inference, I would 1. Show that the *sinning circumstances* of his people here, are not inconsistent with his love. 2. Give a discovery of *these persons* whose sinning circumstances are indeed inconsistent with his love. 3. Show that the suffering and afflicted circumstances of God's people are not *inconsistent* with his love to them. 4. Give a discovery of *these* whose carriage in their afflicted circumstances is indeed inconsistent with this complacential love of God.

[1.] We are to show that the *sinning circumstances* of God's people here, are not inconsistent with his love. This may be cleared in the four following remarks.

Remark 1. "That none of God's children in "this world, are *free of sin:*" they have a *body of death in them*; the *company* of *two armies*; *two nations struggling.* See Rom. vii. 15,—25.

Remark

Remark 2. "That they not only have sin, but "it may be *powerful* and *prevalent:*" POWERFUL, so as to carry them captive; *I see a law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity unto the law of sin, which is in my members*, Rom. vii. 23. PREVALENT, as David says, *Iniquities prevail against me.*

Remark 3. "That God observes and regards "the *truth of grace* in his people, though the "*measure* may be small; and he loves all his "children, though some of them are babes, "1 John ii. 12, 13, 14." Hence they are ready sometimes to speak thus, "I *pray* indeed; but, "alas! I do not *wrestle*, like Jacob; nor *water* "*my couch*, like David: I *believe*; but I have not "*joy and peace in believing:* I *fear*; but I am not "in the *fear of God all the day long:* I *love* Christ; "but, O my love goes out after other things." Thus it is the *weakness*, not the *want* of grace, that troubles and perplexes them: yet God loves his children though weak.

Remark 4. "That the *life* of the believer is "*hid with Christ in God.*" It is not so much in himself as it is in Christ; and hence they are ready to conclude their sinful circumstances such, as are not consistent with divine love; but their life is most in their head. Four things the saints complain of, and they get ease only in Christ.—Alas! I am *guilty;* well, where get you ease but in Christ, as made of God your *righteousness?*—Oh! I have much *pollution;* well, where is your relief but in Christ, as made of God to you *sanctification*, the fountain of holiness!—Alas! there is much *folly* about me; where is your relief but in Christ, as made of God unto you *wisdom?*—Oh! I have no *strength* for *duty* or *difficulties;* well, where lies your strength but in Christ? *In the Lord have I righteousness and strength;* he is the *glory of their strength.* Hence the greatest part of the believer's inherent righteousness, in this world, lies in his faith, going out of himself to Christ for all. This shows, that however sinful his circumstances are, yet he is a favourite of heaven.

[2.] We are next to give a discovery of *these persons* whose sinning circumstances are indeed inconsistent with his love. There are six sorts of sinners, whose sinful case is indeed inconsistent with God's complacential love.

1. These whose religion lies all in *externals;* and whose hearts were never exercised before God about sin and wrath; *This people draw nigh unto me with their mouths, and honour me with their lips; but their hearts are far removed from me*, Mat. xv. 18. Their hearts were never engaged to approach to God.

2. These who never knew the *power* of the gospel, but are only taken up with the outward pomp of it; pompuous words, the excellency of speech, the flourishes of eloquence, that tickle their fancies: they never got good of the word who never had better to say than this, O! there was a neat sermon; it was gilded with all the flowers of rhetoric, and embellished and set off with all the graces of oratory; an handsome and eloquent discourse; but never could say of any sermon, *Did not our hearts burn within us?* We were touched and conquered thereby. They know nothing that know not the power of the word; *The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power:* See Thess. i. 4. *The gospel came not in word, but in power.*

3. These who *persecute the people of God*, and have no favour for them, no complacency in them; though they can be civil to them as to others, yet they are far from preferring them to others, in esteeming them, or delighting in them. This is the brand of a natural man, for it is otherwise with God's children, *To the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent in whom is all my delight*, Psal. xvi. 3.

4. These that can live *peaceably* in *any one sin*, without remorse, without repentance, or reluctance; or by bribing their judgment to defend it, or offering to God a satisfaction, like the whore in the seventh of the Proverbs, *I have a peace-offering, this day have I performed my vows; come let us take our fill of love*, ver. 14, 18. God's children may have sin prevailing, but never have it peaceably reigning in them.

5. These that were never brought off from the *pollutions of the world*, such as drunkenness, whoredom, swearing, lying, cheating, stealing, Sabbath-breaking, *&c.* Some may escape these, through the knowledge of Christ, and yet be apostates, the *latter-end worse than the beginning*, 2 Pet. ii. 20. Sure then, they are in a sad state that never escaped sin at all: they are not the spots of God's children.

6. These that being *strangers* to a *working* faith, are never brought beyond the *legal* or *gospel-hypocrite.*—By the *legal* hypocrite, I understand, the man that is full of *good works*, yet they have not *faith for their root:* these are cast; for, *Without faith it is impossible to please God.*—By a *gospel-*hypocrite, I understand, these that *profess faith in Christ*, yet their faith has no *good works*, as the *fruits thereof:* these are cast; because, *As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works, is dead also.*

[3.] We come to show, that the *suffering* and *afflicted circumstances* of God's people are not *inconsistent* with his love to them. This may be clear from the following remarks.

Remark 1. "That God has *connected* sin and "suffering:" By his DECREE; *Though hand join in hand, sin shall not go unpunished:* by the LAW; *The soul that sinneth shall die, or suffer:* by the GOSPEL; *If his children break his law, and keep not his commandments; he will visit their iniquity with the rod:* by his PROVIDENCE, wherein he declares himself a God that will *by no means clear the guilty.* What God has joined, we naturally separate, saying, *We shall have peace, though we walk after the imagination of our hearts.* This was the first heresy the devil bred in the world, *You shall not surely die*, though you sin; but God has connected sin and suffering.

Remark 2. "God's own people may lay their "account with *suffering*, while they have *sin.*" Though, through Christ, in a way of faith and repentance, they are freed from *hell*, and *eternal damnation*, yet they are not *always* freed from *temporal punishments* and *chastisements;* nay, *You only have I known of all the nations of the earth; therefore will I punish you.* Though he *pardons their sins, yet he may take vengeance on their inventions.* Therefore,

Remark 3. "There are many *rods* they are "visited with." Sometimes *desertion*, sometimes *affliction*, sometimes *temptation*, *sickness*, *death* of friends and children; *Many are the afflictions of the righteous; but the Lord delivereth them out of them all*, Psal. xxxiv. 19.

Remark 4. "God has *glorious* and *merciful de-* "*signs* in afflicting them." Glorious with reference to himself; and merciful with reference unto them.—As to *himself*, it is to clear his justice,

ſtice, and manifeſt his equity in the adminiſtration of his government, and that the world may not think he bears with ſin in his own, or indulges them in their rebellion; therefore, though David repented of his adultery and murder, and get a pardon; yet becauſe his ſin was ſcandalous and offenſive, and made the enemies of the Lord to blaſpheme; therefore he muſt be puniſhed with the ſword of a bloody enemy, and a bloody ſword muſt not depart from his houſe.—As to *them*, it is to do them good, to humble and prove them, to imbitter ſin to them, to make them forſake ſin and flee to Chriſt, and that in their *affliction they may ſeek him early*, ſaying, *Come, let us return to the Lord, for he hath broken, and he will heal us; he hath ſmitten and he will bind us up*, Hoſ. v. 15. and vi. 1. compared.

[4.] We now proceed to give a diſcovery of *theſe* whoſe carriage in afflicted circumſtances is, indeed, *inconſiſtent* with this *complacential love of God*.

1. Such as grow *worſe* by their afflictions, and, inſtead of turning unto God, turn from him; that gnaw their tongues and blaſpheme, like theſe, Rev. xvi. 10. Is it not with many, as with Ahaz, 2 Chron. xxviii. 20, 22. In his *diſtreſs he ſinned yet more?* It is to be feared, many are worſe inſtead of being better by the rod.

2. Such as are neither better nor worſe, but rather *ſtupid* and *ſottiſh*, never affected though afflicted. A child of God may become, in ſome reſpects, ſenſeleſs for a little, with the acuteneſs and ſeverity of his affliction; but he comes to his ſenſes again, and is ſtirred up to a ſuitable affectedneſs before the Lord: but it is ſad when people are no way touched and moved with the hand of God upon them. It is a ſtubborn child that will not weep when the father chaſtiſes; *Thou haſt ſmitten them, but they have not grieved*, Jer. v. 3. Some are paſt feeling, they are, as it were, threſhed on, and yet they feel it not.

3. Such as feel their miſery and trouble, but do not *ſee the cauſe of it*; and therefore never take the right way to be rid of it; but, being ſenſible of external trouble, look out for external help, as Ephraim *ſaw his wound*, and *went to king Jarib*; but none ſays, *Where is God my Maker?* Job xxxv. 9, 10. Though *they cry, by reaſon of the arm of the mighty, yet none ſaith, where is God my Maker, who giveth ſongs in the night?* Few prayers to God, little amendment.

4. Such as in their affliction *turn to God*, but it is not with their *whole heart, but feignedly*, Jer. iii. 10. They pray and cry fervently for eaſe and relief, yet hold faſt iniquity; or, if they forſake ſome ſins, yet not all; their main buſineſs is to get eaſe from trouble: thus Pharaoh cried, turned, confeſſed; *Pray for me that this death may be removed.* Some never deſire a prayer to be made for them till they fear they are on their death-bed: they go to God in affliction, like one that goes to a great man about buſineſs, not about a loving viſit; and if the buſineſs be done, they part and leave him, and perhaps never wait upon him again; they have got their buſineſs done, and they ſeek no more: ſuch are ſelfiſh ſeekers; that ſeek Chriſt only for the loaves.

5. Such as ſeem to *turn cordially*, and *to return*, but it is *not to the Moſt High:* they not only pray that God would remove the outward trouble, but they acknowledge ſin, and reſolve never to be ſo bad again; but it is merely a moral turning, whereby many deceive themſelves: they think their forſaking of ſome ſins, and reforming of ſome things, and performing of ſome duties, wherein they may be wonderfully affected, that this is true grace, but it is not ſo; it is a turning, indeed; but not to the *Moſt High*. Diſtance from God is the great evil; and nearneſs to him, through Chriſt, is that wherein our great happineſs lies. Now, though men ſhould go never ſuch a length in reformation, if they live at a diſtance from God, it will be of little ſtead to them; the great deſign of the rod is not obtained: our righteouſneſs muſt proceed from the influence of another covenant. People may turn to duty, and not to God, and they may turn to God, and yet not to Chriſt; or to God in Chriſt; as Chriſt ſaid to the diſciples, *Ye believe in God, believe alſo in me.* If we believe in God, and yet not believe in Chriſt, we believe not in the Moſt High; for God is moſt highly exalted only in Chriſt; *He that honours not the Son, honours not the Father.* He that turns not to Chriſt by faith, never turns rightly to God by repentance.

6. Such as ſeem to turn to God and Chriſt, but *turn away from him again*, 2 Pet. ii. 20,—23. And like theſe Pſal. lxxviii. 34, 37. *When he ſlew them, they ſought him; yet their heart was not right with God, neither were they ſtedfaſt in his covenant. If any man draw back, my ſoul ſhall have no pleaſure in him.* It is true, God's children may have many changes in their frames, and back-drawings in their hearts; but ſtill they have a fixed purpoſe of heart to follow the Lord: like the mariner, that ſets out for ſuch a port, though he may be toſſed at ſea, and carried backward with contrary winds, yet his fixed purpoſe leads him to make for the deſigned haven, at which he at laſt arrives. God's children may draw back, but they are not as theſe that draw back to perdition; *The backſlider in heart ſhall be filled with his own way.*

SERMON LXVI.

EZEK. xvi. 8.

Now, when I paſſed by thee and looked upon thee; behold, thy time was a time of love.—

[The third Sermon on this text.]

AS a *throne of grace* is erected for a *time of need*, Heb. iv. 16. *let us come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need:* So a *time of love* is ordered for a *time of need*, and a time of trouble: and, indeed, as none will apply to a throne of grace, but theſe that are poor and needy, and are really ſenſible of their poverty, and need, and neceſſity; ſo none will duly value and reliſh a time of love, but theſe that are brought to diſtreſs and trouble, eſpecially under apprehenſions of divine anger, wrath, and diſpleaſure: hence our time of miſery, and his time of mercy, are here joined together; *Behold, thy time was a time of love.*

We have already improven the ſubject in ſeveral uſes: We ſhall now proceed to another uſe of the doctrine, and that is of *examination.* Try then, if your *time of trouble* and *diſtreſs* has been a *time of love:* for I cannot well ſeparate theſe which the text and context join ſo cloſely.

Firſt, We may view this *negatively.* There are

are ſome whoſe time of trouble is evidently *no* time of love; as,

1. Theſe whoſe trouble and diſtreſs never make them find more of the *vanity of the world* diſcovered to them; nor their hearts ever more ſeparate therefrom than formerly. If your farms and merchandiſe, your worldly concerns, (Mat. xxii. 5.) keep your hearts as much away from the goſpel-feaſt, or from Chriſt, as ever, thou haſt got little good of thy trouble. If trouble in a world was bleſt to thee, the world would become more taſteleſs to thee; Jer. iii. 22, 23. *Behold, we come unto thee; for thou art the Lord our God: Behold, in vain is ſalvation looked for from the hills and multitude of mountains.* Intimating, that as the Lord draws to himſelf, he looſes from the world.

2. Such as were never more *awakened* by their trouble to a ſerious concern about ſpiritual and eternal matters, ſurely they cannot read a time of love in their trouble; they continue aſleep, ſtill ſecure and careleſs; they are ſo far from being turned to God, that they are not riſen to their feet. See how David in his trouble is awakened to a concern about death and eternity, Pſal. xxxix. He ſees his *age as nothing*, and *every man vanity*; then he ſaid, *Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in thee.*

3. Such whoſe trouble never put them to *pray more frequently* and *fervently* than they were accuſtomed to do, and in another manner; when there is no change in their prayers. It is true, ſome in trouble may turn from ſottiſhneſs to ſerioufneſs; natural ſerioufneſs for help and deliverance; but never from natural to ſpiritual ſerioufneſs, ſo as to pray in a ſpiritual manner, for ſpiritual bleſſings, and wreſtle with God for the bleſſing: it is ſaid of the hypocrite, that *he doth not cry when God injoins him.* See Dan. ix. 13. *All this evil is come upon us, yet made not we our prayer before the Lord our God, that we might turn from our iniquity, and underſtand the truth.* And Hoſ. vii. 7. *All their kings are fallen; yet there is none among them that calleth unto me.* When God makes our chief enjoyments fail, and yet we turn not to him by faith and prayer, is it a time of love? Nay, rather of wrath and anger. You may pray indeed, and yet be guilty of this here challanged, becauſe you pray not better than you did. If the Spirit of prayer was poured out upon us in affliction, it would be a ſign of love.

4. Such as under trouble have no more *hatred of ſin*, nor heart-parting with it, and heart-exerciſe about it, cannot ſay their time of trouble is a time of love. Love to God grows with hatred of ſin; but if you are no more burdened with ſin than ever, your time of trouble hath not been a time of love. The troubles of God's people are to purge away the droſs of ſin, Iſa. xxvii. 9. But if the bellows are burnt, and the metal conſumed, and your iniquities not taken away farther from the heart, it is ſad.

4. Such as under their trouble are brought to no more *love to God* and *duty*, ſo as to ſerve him better and more cordially in theſe duties, which before they either omitted, or ſlightly performed; if your ſervice be as faulty as formerly, you come under that charge, *I have ſo and ſo ſmitten thee, but thou haſt not returned unto me.*

6. Such as find not *Chriſt more ſweet and precious* to them, by the means of their affliction: the bitterneſs of trouble never made Chriſt ſweet to them, the grievouſneſs of their trouble never made Chriſt precious to them. Is there the ſame ſtrangeneſs between Chriſt and you that ever there was? No fellowſhip with him as your only help, and he in whom only God is well pleaſed and reconciled? Then your time of trouble has not been a time of love. Alas! many wear off the ſorrow of their affliction, partly by length of time, and partly by mirth and diverſion, as Saul called for muſic to drive away the evil ſpirit; partly, by ſupply of comforts, yet remaining, and this lulls them aſleep; but they know not what it is, like Hannah, to come to the Lord with a burdened ſpirit, and get eaſe from him; *They looked to him, and were lightened, and their faces were not aſhamed*, Pſal. lxxxiv. 5.

Secondly, Let us conſider this *poſitively*; the time of trouble and diſtreſs may be known to *be* a time of love. 1. More *generally*, by the gracious *effects* of a ſanctified trouble. 2. More *particularly*, by conſidering the *particular troubles* we have been under, and their particular uſefulneſs, through grace, to us.

1ſt, More *generally*. Try it by the gracious *effects* of a ſanctified trouble. I ſhall mention ſome of theſe by which you may try yourſelves.

1. If your time of trouble and diſtreſs has been a time of love, then your trouble has *humbled* you. God's deſign, by all the troubles in the wilderneſs, was to humble them, as well as to prove them, and do them good in the latter end; *Who fed thee in the wilderneſs with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter-end*, Deut. viii. 16. *Pride and folly is bound up in the hearts of the children of men, but the rod of correction drives it from them*, Prov. xxii. 15. He deſigns to hide pride from man, that he may *keep his ſoul from the pit*, Job xxxiii. 17, 18. We would be apt to ſay proudly with Pharaoh, *Who is the Lord that I ſhould obey him?* if he did not humble and lay us low. But happy is the man whom affliction humbles to the duſt for the pride of his heart; humbles him to a meekneſs of ſpirit, and ſubmiſſion to his ſovereign will; humbles him to a ſight and acknowledgement of his ſin and wickedneſs, and of unknown corruption, to make him know what was in his heart, Deut. viii. 2. See 2 Chron. xxxii. 32. Humbles him to a renouncing all confidence in himſelf, in his own righteouſneſs, ſtrength, and wiſdom.

2. If your time of trouble and diſtreſs has been a time of love, then your trouble has *taught* and *inſtructed* you; *Bleſſed is the man whom thou chaſteneſt, and teacheſt out of thy law*, Pſal. xciv. 12. Many a good leſſon he teaches his own at that ſchool; *Whom he loves, he chaſtens*; and whom he chaſtens in love, he teaches. He gives them many ſweet diſcoveries of himſelf; he ſhows them their weakneſs, and his power; their guiltineſs, and his righteouſneſs; their emptineſs, and his fulneſs; their baſeneſs, and his highneſs; their blackneſs, and his beauty; their folly, and his wiſdom; their treachery, and his faithfulneſs; their ſinfulneſs, and his holineſs; their miſery, and his mercy; their inſufficiency, and his all-ſufficiency, *&c.* What has he taught you by your trouble and affliction? Has he taught you the ſinfulneſs of ſin, that not only it brings evil, but is evil, an evil againſt God? Jer. ii. 19. *Thine own wickedneſs ſhall correct thee, and thy backſliding reprove thee: know therefore, and ſee, that it is an evil and a bitter thing,*

thing, that thou haſt forſaken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, ſaith the Lord God of hoſts. —Has he taught you the *emptineſs* of the creature, and the vanity thereof, that *all fleſh is graſs?* Iſa. xl. 6. You may have a ſtrong imagination of this in your head, *that all fleſh is graſs*, but, have you ſo learned it as to have a deep impreſſion of it on your heart?—Has he taught you the abſolute *uſefulneſs* of Chriſt, his fulneſs, worthineſs, and ſuitableneſs? When the apoſtle is brought, Rom. vii. 24, 25. to an *O wretched man that I am! who ſhall deliver me?* then follows, *I thank God, through Jeſus Chriſt:* here is my up-making; here is my help and deliverance; has the God of heaven famiſhed all your gods of earth, and ſtarved you as to creature-comforts, ſo as to make you hunger and thirſt after the fulneſs, ſweetneſs, and righteouſneſs of Chriſt? Then your time of trouble has been a time of love.—Has he, by your trouble, taught you to *pray*, to weary of the earth, and to long for heaven, and to ſeek him early, and to ſeek him diligently, to ſeek him humbly, and to pour out your heart before him?—Has your trouble taught you what is the *one thing neceſſary*, and ſet you in queſt of that, with David, Pſal. xxvii. 4. *One thing have I deſired of the Lord, that will I ſeek after, that I may dwell in the houſe of the Lord all the days of my life?*—Has your trouble taught you the *redemption of time?* In tranquillity, many golden hours are loſt; but has your trouble taught you to *redeem your time, becauſe the days are evil?*—Has your time of trouble taught you to *improve your Bible*, as well as your time; to ſearch it more diligently, to underſtand it more clearly, and to reliſh it more ſweetly? *This is my comfort in my affliction, thy word has quickened me.*—Has your trouble taught you to *prepare for death* and *eternity*, by drawing out your ſoul toward an eternal God? You have heard of God before, but do you now ſee him? Moſes never ſaw God ſo clearly as when he deſcended in a cloud; ſome never ſee God ſo clearly as when he deſcends in a black cloud of affliction: therein we may ſee his holineſs, in hating ſin; his juſtice, in correcting for ſin; his faithfulneſs to his covenant, Pſal. lxxxix. 30,—33.; his power in ſupporting; his mercy in comforting.

3. If your time of trouble and diſtreſs has been a time of love, then it has taught you to *forſake* ſin, ſaying, *What have I any more to do with idols? This is all the fruit to take away ſin.*—Has he taught you to *turn to himſelf*, and his way, (by hedging up your way with thorns, Hoſ. ii. 6, 7.) ſaying, *I will go and return to my firſt huſband, for then it was better with me than now. It is good for me to draw near to God.*—Has he taught you to turn to *yourſelf*, and to your right ſenſes? Indeed, true converſion brings a man to his wits; it makes a change in the underſtanding, making him know, believe, and apprehend otherwiſe than he did: you before thought ſin but a ſport; but do you now underſtand it is the greateſt of evils? You imagined a glory in a preſent world; but do you now apprehend the emptineſs of it, and where true ſubſtantial comfort lies?—Has affliction awakened you out of your *dream*, ſo as you apprehend things to be quite otherwiſe than you took them to be in your ſleep? Converſion is a bringing a madman to himſelf, Luke xv. 17. The prodigal is ſaid to *come to himſelf:* true grace makes as great a change upon a man, as the reſtoring of a man to his wits does, Mark v. 15. It is like the man called LEGION, clothed, and ſitting at Chriſt's feet, and in his right mind. And, indeed, when a man comes to his right mind, he comes to a right carriage and countenance: we read of ſome, that the very ſhew of their countenances witneſſed againſt them: you will know ſome wicked men by their very outward countenance; for, ordinarily a proud, haughty, and unhumbled air is about them; whereas the grave, heavenly, gentle, and ſweet behaviour and countenance of God's people does ſometimes ſpeak out the habitation of the Spirit of Chriſt in their hearts, and will diſtinguiſh them from the hypocrite, that but affects outward gravity. When a man comes to his right mind, then he comes to a right *language*, the language of heaven, inſtead of the language of Aſhdod; the earthly mind ſpeaks earthly things natively; but the heavenly-minded man ſpeaks heavenly things as natively; for, *Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth ſpeaketh.* A new heart gives a man a new *tongue*; a new heart brings him to new company, and makes him give up with his old, idle, graceleſs companions, and affect fellowſhip with them who fear God. A new heart brings him to a new *walk*, and converſation in heaven. It is true, the external change is leſs diſcernable in theſe who have been civilly and religiouſly educated; yet there is even as great a difference between that man before and after converſion, though he was never ſo civil before, as there is between art and nature, or between ſome old art, he learned at the ſchools, and a new nature, he has got from God.

4. If your time of trouble has been a time of love, then your trouble brought you to *ſubmit* to trouble, and chearfully to welcome it as God's ſend; eſpecially if it ſhall accompliſh God's gracious deſign, to welcome it kindly as coming from his hand, eſpecially if he himſelf come along with it: this is called a receiving it at the hand of God; Job ii. 10. *Shall we receive good at the hand of God? and ſhall we not receive evil?* We kindly receive good at his hand, and every good thing we received, we ought to have acknowledged the hand of God in giving it, and ſo ought we to receive evil: for example, affliction and trouble is God's thunder to awaken ſecure ſinners; now, do you welcome it with this view, and for this end? "Lord, let "me, by this means, be awakened out of ſe- "curity, and quickened to call upon thee?—Affliction is God's *forge* and furnace to ſoften hard hearts, and to refine baſe metal: do you welcome affliction coming on this errand? Saying, "Now, Lord, let my hard heart be bro- "ken; let me be purged and purified, and come "forth as gold."—Affliction is God's pruning-knife, for lopping off luxuriant branches; do you welcome affliction, providing it has this errand? Saying, "Lord, let me be pruned "and purged; if by this means I may bring "forth more fruit."—Affliction is God's *ſchool*, where he diſciplines his children, that they may learn obedience by the things they ſuffer: do you welcome affliction on this errand? Saying, "May I receive correction, and be made an "obedient child to my heavenly Father, and "have evidence of my being not a baſtard, but "a true child of God. No matter what be the "affliction thou orders, if thereby I be a par- "taker of thy holineſs."—Affliction is God's

winnowing

winnowing wind, or fan, to unchaff his corn, that it may be fit for his garner: do you welcome it as coming on this errand? saying, "Lord, "let my chaff be blown away, even all the "chaff of my pride, unbelief, worldlineſs, and "carnality, *&c.*"—Affliction is God's *eye-ſalve* for clearing the ſight of his people, that they may ſee things to be what they are: now, do you welcome affliction, if it may accompliſh this end? Saying, with Job, in his affliction, chap. xxxiv. 32. "*That which I know not teach* "*thou me; ſhow me wherefore thou contendeſt*; tell "me what is the quarrel and ground of con-"troverſy; and *if I have done iniquity, let me do* "*ſo no more.* What I know not of God, O teach "thou me! What I know not about myſelf; "what I know not about Chriſt, and the myſ-"teries of the kingdom of grace, or about the "myſteries of the kingdom of providence, teach "me; make me know thy way that is in the "ſanctuary, and thy way that is in the ſea."

2*dly*, We now proceed more *particularly*, to conſider the *particular times* of trouble we have met with in our life-time, and whether or not theſe have been times of trouble to us. The text leads me to obſerve our particular times, *Thy time was a time of love*; thy time, who art the favoured and beloved of God. What time of theirs? The text allows me to ſpeak of any time that has paſt over thy head, and enquire if it has been a time of love, of ſpecial love. I ſhall therefore ſpeak a little, 1. Of ſome particular *periods* of your time. 2. Of ſome particular *trials* and *troubles* of your time, and enquire if they have been a time of love. As to the

[1.] The particular *periods* of your time; ſuch as you are, or ſhall be capable to diſcern, are, the times of *youth*, the time of *middle-age*, the time of *old age*, and the time of *death*; and I would offer you a word of trial concerning each of theſe. By theſe we may be led to reflect upon the time of love either paſt, preſent, or to come in this world.

(1.) There is the time of YOUTH, that is over with ſome, and preſent with others; and would you know if your time of youth has been a time of love? Here let young perſons conſider what is preſent, and older perſons conſider what is paſt; and both try if their time of youth is, or has been, a time of love. Alas! I fear few have it to ſay; becauſe the moſt part ſpend their youth in childiſh trifles and vanities, little better than catching buterflies. But if there be any here, whoſe time of youth has been a time of love, it may be known by theſe four ſcriptural marks.

1. Have you been made to *remember your Creator in the days of your youth*, according to the commandment of God, Eccleſ. xii. 1.? Have you been brought to a ſerious rememberance of God your Creator, God your Redeemer; and to remember him ſo as to love him above all things? For God has a kindly rememberance of young kindneſs; *Thus ſaith the Lord, I remember thee, the kindneſs of thy youth, and the love of thine eſpouſals*, Jer. ii. 2. To remember him ſo as to ſeek him above all things; for God ſays, *I love them that love me; and they that ſeek me early ſhall find me.*

2. Have you been made to remember the *day of judgment* in the day of your youth? according to that advertiſement, Eccleſ. xi. 9. *Rejoice, O young man in thy youth, and let thy heart chear thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the ſight of thine eyes; but know thou, that for all theſe things God will bring thee into judgment.* Have you been brought to know, that for all the ſins of your youth, God will call you to judgment? Have you got the humbling knowledge of it ſo as you have born the yoke of humiliation in your youth? Lam. iii. 27. *It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth.* Have you got the upſtirring knowledge of it, ſo as to make you reſtleſs till you was reconciled with the judge, and got your judge to be your friend; God himſelf to be your God in Chriſt?

3. Have you been at the *ſchool* with young Timothy, of whom it is ſaid, 2 Tim. iii. 15. That *from a child he knew the holy ſcriptures, which are able to make you wiſe unto ſalvation, through faith which is in Chriſt Jeſus?* Theſe whoſe time of youth has been a time of love, are verily the ſtudents of the ſcriptures, and of the mind of God therein.

4. Have you been *affected* with the word, as young Joſiah was? of whom it is ſaid, 2 Kings xxii. 19. That *his heart was tender, and he humbled himſelf before the Lord, when he heard the word of threatening* read againſt Jeruſalem? *To this man will I look*, young or old, *even to him that is poor, and of a contrite ſpirit, and that trembleth at my word.* Did the word of threatening touch your heart with fear; and the word of promiſe touch your heart with love, delight, and deſire? And does this work of God upon your heart continue, though not always at the ſame height, and exerciſe, yet through all the ſtages of your after-life, and perſevere to a progreſs in the way of the Lord, and acquaintance with him? For ſome begin with the Spirit and end with the fleſh; they ſeem to begin their days in heaven, and end them in hell: but where it is a ſound work of God, it is durable; *The path of the juſt is as the ſhining light, that ſhineth more and more unto the perfect day.*—By theſe things you may try if your time of youth is, or has been, a time of love.

(2.) There is a time of MIDDLE-AGE, that is preſent with ſome of you, and over with others; will you try if that is, or has been, a time of love. Indeed, if your time of youth has been a time of love, then your time, or riper years, will be ſo too; for, *Whom the Lord loves he loves to the end.* But more particularly,

1. If your time of riper years be, or has been a time of love, then you have got grace to lament the *folly of your youth*, ſaying, with the Pſalmiſt, Pſal. lxxix. 8. *O remember not againſt us former iniquities.* As you have been convinced of the ſin of your nature, heart, and way, ſo you have been particularly challenged for, and made to go heavily under the burden of the ſins of your youth. Job was brought to ſay, chap. xiii. 26. *Thou writeſt bitter things againſt me, makeſt me to poſſeſs the ſins of my youth.* Was never the ſin of your youth bitter to you before the Lord, and made you cry, with David, Pſal. xxv. 7. *Remember not the ſin of my youth?* If you can look back upon the follies of your youth with pleaſure, and are never humbled before God for them, know that a ſin never imbittered, is a ſin never pardoned; ſin never hated, is ſin never purged: but if thy time of riper years, be a time of love, it will be a time of hating ſin, and of hating thyſelf for all ſin, and even the follies of thy youth, which others make a ſport of, as being nothing but the tricks of youth. *God will not be mocked.*

2. If

2. If thy time of riper years be a time of love, it will be a time of *ripening for eternity*, by redeeming the time that is paſt in idleneſs, wickedneſs, and folly; acccording to the call of God, Eph. v. 16. *See then that you walk circumſpectly, not as fools, but as wiſe, redeeming the time.* If you never began to redeem time, you never yet have had a time of love. O ſlighter and contemner of time, that knows not what to do with thy time, that idles and trifles it away, and has little or no remorſe what time thou miſpendeſt in idle work, idle talk, idle converſation, idle company; thou knoweſt nothing of a time of love; for time's redemption begins with it. And now, that thou are come to thy middle-age, it is full time to redeem time, as thou wouldſt not be plunged unawares into eternity.

3. If thy time of riper years be, or has been a time of love, then it will be your deſire and endeavour to give that *ſtrength of time* and days to God, and his ſervice, that others give to the devil, and their luſts. The time of middle-age is a time of ſervice amongſt men, then they are moſt fit for temporal ſervice in their day and generation: even ſo, if we be ſervants to God at all, that time of life is moſt fit and proper for glorifying, and honouring, and doing ſomething for his glory, and the good of our own ſouls, and the ſouls of others, and accordingly will be thus occupied, if our time in that period be a time of love: for, as his time of love begets love, ſince *we loved him, becauſe he firſt loved us*; ſo, accordingly to the meaſure of our love, ſuch will be the meaſure of our ſervice with delight, from a principle of love. There may be a variety of changes in the meaſure and manner of this loving ſervice; but this will be the habitual buſineſs of the man's life, whoſe time is a time of love, it will be a time of ſervice; and, as Jacob's love for Rachel made his ſervice pleaſant, much more will the love of Chriſt conſtrain to ſerve him.

4. If thy time of riper years be a time of love, then it will be a *growing time*; as you grow in years ſo will you *grow in grace*, and *in the knowledge of the Lord, and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt*, 2 Pet. iii. 18. This will hold true of all the children of grace, notwithſtanding of all their winter decayings, yet they have alſo their ſpring-times of reviving and reſtoration, vaſtly different from all the changes of frames and moods that may be among hypocrites; for, when the Lord reſtores his children's frame, he together with it, *reſtores their ſoul*, and *leads them in the paths of righteouſneſs, for his name's ſake*, Pſal. xxiii. 3. And there they walk and go on in the *ſtrength of the Lord*, and from *ſtrength to ſtrength, preſſing towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God.*— Thus you may try if the time of your middle-age be a time of love.

(3.) There is the time of OLD-AGE that ſome are brought to. You that are come to it will you try if your time of old-age be a time of love? In order to your trial, you may tell me,

1. What is the *ſorrow* of your old-age? Is the ſin of your youth, and of your riper age, the ſorrow and grief of your age? Is it your ſorrow and grief before God that ſo much time has been loſt, ſo many opportunities miſimproven, and ſo little good has been got and done by you? May you not ſay, with Jacob to Pharaoh, Gen. xlvii. 9. *Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been?* Do you reckon you have lived no longer than ſince you began to live unto God? Is it your grief that you have lived ſo little from him as your principle, and to him as your end, and that you lived ſo long without him?

2. What is the *joy* of your old-age? If it be a time of love, then as ſin will be the grief, ſo Chriſt will be the joy of your old-age: when your joy and comfort in the world is withering and dying. Is your joy in the Lord Jeſus beginning to live? *They are the true circumciſion, that rejoice in Chriſt Jeſus.* Sorrow for ſin, and joy in Chriſt the Saviour, are very conſiſtent; yea, true ſorrow for ſin, cannot be without joy in the Lord; and true joy in the Lord, cannot be without ſorrow for ſin: and if this be your ſorrow and your joy in old-age, it is a time of love.

3. What is the *crown* of your old-age? Solomon ſays, Prov. xvi. 31. *The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteouſneſs.* Is the righteouſneſs of Chriſt your crown? Is his righteouſneſs imputed for your juſtification, your crown to cover you before God? Is his righteouſneſs of grace imputed for your ſanctification, your crown for adorning you, and making you all glorious within, and being the principle of holineſs and righteouſneſs of life and converſation before men? Is this the crown of your old-age? And is Chriſt himſelf your crown, as *the Lord your righteouſneſs and ſtrength.*

4. What is the *ſtaff* of your old-age? Is the word of grace and promiſe the ſtaff you lean upon for ſupport and comfort in all your tribulations and difficulties? Do you walk and worſhip with this ſtaff: as *Jacob worſhipped, leaning upon the top of his ſtaff*, in a common ſenſe, Heb. xi. 21.; ſo do you worſhip, leaning on the ſtaff of the divine promiſe. And are you reſolved to walk through death, with this ſtaff, ſaying, *Though I walk through the valley and ſhadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me, thy rod and ſtaff they comfort me?* Pſal. xxiii. 4. Has God put this ſtaff in your hand, and you reſolve never to quit with it, but ſtill to lean upon his word, and hope in his word? If ſo, it is a time of love.

(4.) There is the time of DEATH a-coming; and would you know whether that will be a time of love? Some go to the devil, or his inſtruments, to know what death they will die; but if you go to God, and his word, you may know indeed what death you will die; I mean, whether you will die in the favour of God, or if your time of death ſhall be a time of love. Would you know what will come of you at death, and how it will fare with you? Whether you will fall in the lap of God's everlaſting love, or fall into the fire of his everlaſting wrath, when death comes, which may be nigh at hand? Why,

1. A time of love in life will certainly *end* in a time of love at death; for *death* cannot ſeparate from the *love of God*, once manifeſted, Rom. viii. 38. If you be ſure then of a time of love now, whether in youth, or riper age, or old age, you may be ſure that the time of death will be a time of love alſo; for, *He reſts in his love.*

2. And more particularly, if Chriſt be your life now, Col. iii. 3, 4. *Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Chriſt in God.* If to *you to live in Chriſt*, then

then to *die will be gain*, Phil. i. 21. Is Chriſt the hope of your life, the joy of your life, the ſtrength of your life, the glory of your life, the Alpha and Omega of your life? Have you come to him for life? And do you live on him as your life? And do you reckon your life without him, to be but death? Then your time of death will be a time of love.

3. If Chriſt be in you by his *Spirit*, then the time of death will be a time of love: for this is the *well of water ſpringing up to everlaſting life*, John iv. 14. *If any man hath not the Spirit of Chriſt, he is none of his.* But if you have the Spirit of Chriſt, he will *abide with you for ever*, John xiv. 16. This is the earneſt of the inheritance, as he is a ſanctifying and comforting Spirit; a Spirit of prayer and praiſe; a Spirit of grace and love, a Spirit of faith and of a ſound mind.

4. Your time of death will be a time of love, if the *ſting of death* be taken away by the *Lamb of God, who takes away the ſin of the world.* Now, is ſin taken away in the guilt and rule of it? How ſhall I know that, ſay you? Why, do you flee to Chriſt for *pardon* of ſin, as he is the *Lord your righteouſneſs?* And do you flee to Chriſt for *victory* over ſin as he is the *Lord your ſtrength?* And do you ever win to rejoice in his pardoning grace, having ſome peace of conſcience in the faith of his atoning blood? And do you ever win to rejoice in his victorious grace, having ſome begun victory, and ſome hope of full victory over ſin? Why then, according to the meaſure of this freedom from ſin, which is the ſting of death, ſuch may be the meaſure of your aſſurance, that the time of death will be a time of love; and you may ſing in the view of it with Paul, *O death! where is thy ſting? O grave! where is thy victory? Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord*, 1 Cor. xv. 55. If you know none of theſe things in any meaſure, you then have no ground, as yet, to conclude but that your time of death will be a time of wrath, and a porch to eternal death.

[2.] As to the next thing, *viz.* the particular *troubles* and *trials* of your time, by which you may try the *time of love:* I cannot now inſiſt upon them; I only mention theſe two at the time.

1. Perhaps your time, at preſent, is a time of *fear* and *perplexity* about your STATE, not knowing if it be a ſtate of *grace;* fearing you know nothing of communion with God, or of the power of religion; and you would underſtand, if it is poſſible that ſuch a time may be a *time of love*, and how it may be known? Why,

(1.) Some of the Lord's people may have communion with God, and experience of the power of godlineſs, and yet not be *aſſured* of it, becauſe they have not that meaſure of it they would deſire to have.—It is communion with God, when you have a *dealing* with God, and God with you; when you aſk, and he gives; you knock, and he ſometimes opens a door of liberty unto you.—There is ſomewhat of the power of religion, when at times you find your *indiſpoſition* for duty, and that you can no more pray than remove a mountain; yet, behold quickly the Lord looſes your bonds, turns your darkneſs to light, your hard heart to a ſoft heart; and you pour it out like water: here is the finger of God; and theſe things demonſtrate a *time of love*, an intereſt in God, acquaintance with him, fellowſhip with him, and the power of his way, though you diſcern it not.

(2.) Is thy fear in this matter not a *lazy, idle* fear, but an *active, diligent* fear, ſtirring thee up to be about the Lord's hand, and in his way? Some have an idle concern; they are eaſy tho' they know not their ſtate; they reckon it only the privilege of ſome, and attainable by few; and therefore no matter though they have it not. This looks like a total want of the knowledge of God and his way. But does your concern make you diligent? and are you as humble, holy, and circumſpect in your darkneſs, as others are in their light of aſſurance? There is *hope in Iſrael concerning thee*, that *thy time is a time of love*, notwithſtanding thy darkneſs.

2. Perhaps your time of particular trouble is a time of *heavineſs*, with reſpect to temporal calamities. I ſhall ſay no more of this at the time, but to refer you to Pſal. lvii. 1. What is your *refuge* in a day of *calamity?* If your time of calamity be a time of love, then ſuch will be your exerciſe. Two things take place in all God's children in times of calamity, if faith be any way exerciſed; and in none elſe but them.

(1.) They have a *refuge*, and God only is their refuge: they are obliged to abandon all other refuges; and tho' they may uſe means, as well as others, yet they have no other refuge but God, that they run to, as Pſal cxliii. 9. *I flee to thee to hide me;* or, as it is in the Hebrew, I HIDE ME WITH THEE. They have no other refuge but the ſecret of God's preſence, and the ſhadow of his wings: they are brought off from all confidence in themſelves, and in the creatures.

(2.) They are humbled to be *content* with a *refuge* without a *delivery;* even though the day of calamity be not over, yet they can rejoice in their refuge, till the day of calamity overpaſs. They can rejoice in God, as a promiſer, even when he is not yet a performer; and reſt on a promiſe, without the performance; in a refuge, without a delivery. — Try if you know any thing of this, and if your time of *trouble* has been a time of *love.*

SERMON LXVII.

EZEK. xvi. 8.

Now, when I paſſed by thee and looked upon thee; behold, thy time was a time of love. —

[The fourth Sermon on this text.]

BETWEEN the time of *life*, and the time of *death*, our concern ſhould be, that a *time of love* interveen. Solomon ſpeaks of *a time to be born*, and *a time to die;* intimating, that there is no time to *live*, that we can promiſe upon; and therefore, between our birth and our death, our main care ſhould be to have a time of love; for, if death prevent us before we know *that*, wo will be to us that ever we were born. As fire kindles fire, and one flame lightens another; ſo, nothing more reaſonably demands love, than love; and no love ſo powerfully commands love again, as the love of God: our love cannot but be beſt laid out upon one who is ſo far before hand with us, that even, before time, prevented us: he provided for our cure, before ever we had received our wounds; for our healing, before we had contracted

tracted our diſeaſes; for our deliverance, before, we had been ruined; for our redemption, before we were in thraldom; for our recovery, before we were loſt; for our riſing, before we were fallen; and for our advancement to heaven, before we were become heirs of hell. Thus was our kind Redeemer *rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth, and his delights were with the ſons of men.* The time wherein he vents his love is ſtrange, even the time when we are moſt worthy of his wrath, and unworthy of his love.

In the preceding diſcourſe, we mentioned two evidences, to know if the particular *troubles* and *trials* of our time were *times of love.* We intend at preſent to inlarge a little further upon this point. Try then if your *time of need* be his *time of love,* ſince infinite wiſdom uſes to make theſe two meet in the experiences of his own people, whoſe time in this world is a time of tribulation, wherein yet he has ſaid, *In me ye ſhall have peace.* What *time of need* is it with you? Why, ſay you,

1. "My time is a time of *want,* even of outward want and poverty. I have very hard "living in the world; and can ſuch a time be "a time of love?

ANSW. Yea, it may be a time of love, if your want and poverty be weaning you from the world, and wining you to Chriſt, in whom is all ſtore of proviſion; and if you be living upon his promiſe and providence. Know you what it is to live upon ſuch a promiſe as that, Iſa. xxxiii. 16. *Bread ſhall be given him, and his water ſhall be ſure?* Have you got the faith of his providence, that *he feeds the ravens and clothes the lillies;* and therefore you rely upon him for proviſion, though you ſhould be kept, as it were, from hand to mouth? Chriſt ſays to the church of Smyrna, *I know thy poverty; but thou art rich,* Rev. ii. 9. It may be ſaid of ſome, Chriſt knows their riches, but they are poor, not having Chriſt for their ſtock and ſtore: but happy they of whom he ſays, *I know thy poverty; but thou art rich;* rich in faith, rich in grace: however poor in hand, yet they are rich in bond, by virtue of the bond of the covenant, wherein they have Chriſt bound for their ſupport in a preſent world.—If you know any thing of this, your time may be a time of *want,* and yet a *time of love.*

2. "But, ſays another, my time is a time of "*inward want, ſpiritual want;* want of faith, "and want of grace; and can ſuch a time be "a time of love?"

ANSW. It may be ſo, if you are *humbled* under a ſenſe of your want, and really ſee your want and poverty in ſpiritual things, you may reckon the Lord thinks upon you with *thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you an expected end. I am poor and needy, but the Lord thinks upon me,* Pſal. xl. 17. Yea, you may reckon that the Lord looks towards you with an eye of pity; *To this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite ſpirit, and trembleth at my word,* Iſa. lxvi. 2. —And again, if your want and poverty *commends* Chriſt and his fulneſs to you; *To them that believe he is precious:* and even to them who believe their own want and his fulneſs; who believe their utter inſufficiency, and his infinite all-ſufficiency; who believe they are nothing, and he is all in all.—If you be kept empty, and ſenſible of your utter want, ſo as to have no confidence in yourſelves, or in the fleſh, and hence find no cauſe of rejoicing, but only in Chriſt, and his fulneſs, and dependant upon that, your time of want is a time of love. *Bleſſed are the poor in ſpirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven,* Mat. v. 3.

3. Say you, "My time is a time of *guilt;* I "have a ſenſe of much guilt lying upon my "conſcience; and can that be a time of love, "which is a time of the prevalency of ſin, and "the preſſure of guilt?"

ANSW. It may be a time of love in the following caſes.—If the prevalency of ſin be *humbling* you to the duſt, ſaying, *O wretched man that I am! who ſhall deliver me from this body of ſin and death?*—If the preſſure of guilt be leading you to the *fountain* of Chriſt's blood for cleanſing.—If the *pardon* of ſin be highly valued by you, above all things in this world, ſaying, *Bleſſed is the man whoſe tranſgreſſion is forgiven, and to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity.*—And if at any time the ſenſe of pardon, or the hope of pardon, *melt* your heart, and make you fear to offend any more, and afraid of falling into ſin, and lead you to ſay, *Henceforth we will not go back; quicken us, and we will call upon thy name,* Pſal. lxxx. 18.—Do you get any grace to *hate* ſin, and to reſolve a *war* againſt it? grace to *hope* for victory at laſt, though you ſhould fight all your life? And are you made ſometimes to *fight* in hope of full victory through Chriſt, ſaying, *I thank God, through Jeſus Chriſt.*——In this caſe, thy time of *ſenſible guilt,* and of the prevalency of ſin, may notwithſtanding be a *time of love.*

4. Say you, "My time is a time of *weakneſs;* "I find no ſtrength for duty, no ability for "work or worſhip that God calls me to; and "can that be a time of love?"

ANSW. Why, even that time may be proven to be a time of love.—If the ſenſe of thy weakneſs drives thee *out of thyſelf* to the ſtrength and ſufficiency of Chriſt, ſaying with the apoſtle, *Not that we are ſufficient of ourſelves, to think any thing as of ourſelves; but our ſufficiency is of God,* 2 Cor. iii. 5.—Do you know, when you are *weak in yourſelves,* then to be *ſtrong in the Lord; ſtrong in the grace that is in Chriſt?*—When you find in yourſelves no grace to *pray,* yet even then have you gone to prayer, and found ſtrength before you was aware, ſo as you could ſay, *In the day when I cried, thou anſweredſt me; and ſtrengthenedſt me, with ſtrength in my ſoul,* Pſal. cxxxviii 3. I found my ſoul weak and without ſtrength; but when I began to try in that caſe, he ſtrengthened me with his ſecret power, his inviſible hand.—Did you find, that he who brings *light out of darkneſs,* brought ſtrength out of weakneſs? And is your weakneſs ſometimes the *occaſion* of magnifying and ſetting off the ſtrength of Chriſt? according to 2 Cor. xii. 9. *My grace ſhall be ſufficient for you, and my ſtrength ſhall be perfect in thy weakneſs.*—And are you thence ſometimes made to *glory in your infirmities, that the power of Chriſt may reſt upon you?* and content that your ſtock of ſtrength is not in your own hand, but in Chriſt's? *Bleſſed is the man whoſe ſtrength is in thee.*——In this caſe, your time of *weakneſs* may be a *time of love.*

5. "Perhaps your time is a time of *difficulty,* "about ſome piece of work, ſome ſtep of your "pilgrimage, wherein you know not what to "do; can ſuch a time be a time of love?"

ANSW. Yea, it may, in the following caſes. Are you getting grace to ſpread the caſe *before the*

the Lord, to acquaint him with your case, according to that call, *In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy steps?*—Do you *commit* the guiding of your ways to him, according to that, Psal. xxxvii. 5. *Commit thy ways to the Lord; trust also in him, and he will bring it to pass?* Though you see *no light*, nothing but *darkness*, it is a sign he will direct according to his promise; *I will lead the blind in ways they know not; and in paths which they have not trode.*—Are you *waiting* on him for his promised conduct, according to that promise, *They shall hear a voice behind them, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it?* Thy time of *difficulty* is a *time of love*; *He will guide thee with his eye.*

6. Say you, "My time is a time of great *affliction*; affliction on my body, affliction on "my soul, affliction in my family; how shall "I know if this time of affliction be a time of "love?"

ANSW. It is so, in the following cases. Are you helped to *cast your burden on the Lord*, to roll this case upon him?—Do you see the *wisdom* of God in afflicting you, the *holiness* of God, the *faithfulness* of God, the *mercy* and *love* of God in your affliction? Do you see his *name?*—Are you brought to *submit* to God, and put yourself in his hand, to lay the rod on your back as he pleases, if it be needful? And especially to look to him for *sanctifying* the rod, and concerned rather to have affliction sanctified, than removed, saying, O let the wind blow, till my chaff be blown away; let the fire burn, till my dross be purged out, &c.—Thy time of *affliction* is a *time of love.*

7. "Oh! but my time, say you, is a time "of *rebellion* and *incorrigibleness*; though I have "been afflicted, yet I am not the better; I find "my heart rebelling against his chastisements; "and that though *he hides himself*, and *smites*, yet "*I go on frowardly in the way of my heart*, as it is "said, Isa. lvii. 17. I find corruption irritated "by the cross, and enmity strong; can such a "time be a time of love?"

ANSW. It may be terrible, indeed, to think of thy rebellion against word and rod; yet thy time may notwithstanding all this be a *time of love*; if thy enmity be afflicting to thee, and thou heavily lamentest it before the Lord, saying, Lord, thou seest nothing will do with "me; no word, no rod; such is the power of "sin and enmity: nothing but a sovereign step "of grace will overcome me; therefore, *See my* "*ways, and heal me*, in a way of sovereign grace:" And dost thou therefore cast thyself down at the throne of sovereign grace, that thou mayst be conquered, pitied, and saved in this way? Art thou complaining of thy enmity before God, and of thy incorrigibleness, and waiting upon God for more and more of his power to be exerted for destroying it, and delivering thee? *There is hope in Israel concerning thee*, that thy time is a *time of love: He will see thy ways, and heal thee.*

But, say you, "My time is a time of *divine* "*absence* and *anger*; I think the Lord has cast me "off; and can such a time be a time of love?"

ANSW. Yea, it may be a *time of love* notwithstanding these apprehensions of thine: if in this case thou art endeavouring, through grace, to look to the temple of God, saying, with Jonah, chap. iii. 4. *I said, I am cast out of thy sight; yet will I look again to thy holy temple.*—Art thou *out of the belly of hell crying to God*; and *against hope believing in hope*, looking and longing for the rising of the Sun of righteousness, and a reviving in thy bondage?—And while he is absent and angry, can you say, *The desire of your soul is to his name?* A believer, at his lowest, may be known by his hidden and holy desire.

QUEST. *When is the desire holy?*

ANSW. 1. When you desire to be *justified*, that you may be *sanctified*; or to be *pardoned*, that you may be *purified*. 2. When you desire to be *saved*, that God may be *glorified*; or to have *happiness*, that God may have *honour.*

Again, try the *time of love* by the REMARKABLENESS of that time. And here I would offer two things, for helping your trial. 1. The remarkable *parts*. 2. The remarkable *attendants* or *properties* of the time of love.

1st, Try the remarkable PARTS of it; I mean, 1. The *commencement*, or morning of it. 2. The *progress*, or mid-day, of the time of love; for it never has an evening.

1. One of the remarkable *parts* of it is the *commencement* thereof; preparatively, by the law; effectively, by the gospel.

(1.) *Preparatively*, by the law; giving a view of sin, and the wrath of God for sin; for people never value the revelation of the love of God in the gospel, unless they have got a revelation of the wrath of God in the law: has ever *the commandment come?* Was you ever brought to the foot of Sinai, and there got you a discovery of your sin and guilt, and of the wrath of God you deserve, making you tremble, and fear hell and damnation, saying, *Oh! what shall I do?* I cannot live, and I dare not die; *what shall I do to be saved?* Have you come under the spirit of bondage and conviction?

(2.) *Effectively*, by the gospel; the law breaks the hard heart, but the gospel melts it. A stone only broken, may be still a hard stone: but the gospel melts, the Sun of righteousness dissolves, and that partly, by the *revelation* of mercy to the sinful, guilty creature; partly, by the particular *offer* of mercy: here is mercy for you, a Christ for you, salvation for you, that deserved damnation; O this melts! And partly, by the *Spirit* of faith, given to fall in with the gospel, and receive Christ for *wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption*, and to inlist with Jesus Christ.—Then the *time of love* is *commenced* in the soul.

2. The other remarkable *part* of the *time of love* is the *progress* thereof. The time of love is continued, and the design of love carried on more and more. And that,

(1.) By *teaching* ordinances; as *faith comes by hearing*; so the *increase* of faith by hearing more and more.

(2.) By *sealing* ordinances, and solemn occasions; they see his *power and glory in the sanctuary*; get *here a little and there a little.* And,

(3.) By *crosses* and *judgments*; for, *By this shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged; and this is the fruit of all, to take away sin. It was good for me that I was afflicted, for now have I learned thy law.*

(4.) By *mercies* outward and inward; they are brought to *fear the Lord and his goodness*; get new discoveries of his glory from time to time; new communications of his grace, new restorations after decays; *He restoreth my soul*; and new conversions, as it is said to Peter, *When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren*; and David, *Restore to me the joy of thy salvation; then will I teach transgressors thy way.* They get new excitations and upstirrings;

upſtirrings; new drawings, new quickenings; new gales of the Sprit. By theſe means the time of love is continued, even to the believer's ſenſe now and then; and the deſign of love carried on.——This is the *progreſs* thereof.

2*dly*, Try the *time of love* by the remarkable *attendants* and *properties* thereof.

[1.] Try it by the remarkable ATTENDANTS of it. I only mention two of them.

1. It is attended with remarkable *power*, Pſal. cx. 3. The *time of love* is called a *day of power*; but how can this power be remarked? Why, how do we remark the power of God in the works of creation, but by the effects thereof in the viſible heavens, ſun, moon, and ſtars? ſo, how do we remark the power of God in the work of grace, but by this effect thereof, *our being made willing?* The inviſible power of God may be known by this effect. But many ſay, they are willing, who are not truly ſo.

QUEST. *When is one made truly willing?*

ANSW. There are four properties of true willingneſs. (1.) It is a *pleaſant* willingneſs, not conſtrained by terror or dread only; but made freely willing, pleaſantly willing. And this pleaſant willingneſs hath two things in it, joy and generoſity. It has *joy* in it; the man is glad to *ſell all, that he may buy the pearl.* It has *generoſity* in it; he would give a world for Chriſt; nay, a thouſand worlds for him, had he them at his command.

(2.) It is a *preſent* willingneſs; the man goes in preſently to the call, according to that, *Now is the accepted time, now is the day of ſalvation.* Many are content of Chriſt for the future, and they delay till ſome other time; but they are not for Chriſt's being a preſent portion: it is otherwiſe with ſuch who are made willing.

(3.) It is a *peremptory* willingneſs; the ſoul ſays, O! I *muſt* have Chriſt; I cannot want him; I cannot live without him; I cannot die without him; I periſh without him: give me Chriſt, or elſe I die.

(4.) It is an *univerſal* willingneſs; the ſoul is made willing to have Chriſt for ſanctification, as well as righteouſneſs; to be ſaved from ſin, as well as from wrath; to have Chriſt and his croſs, as well as Chriſt and his crown.

2. It is attended with remarkable *light* and *knowledge*, 2 Cor. iv. 6. Try then your time of love by its being a time of light, and ſaving knowledge. And this knowledge is remarkable for theſe four properties.

(1.) It is a *down caſting* knowledge and light; *The loftineſs of man is brought low, and the Lord alone exalted*, Iſa. ii. 11. Other knowledge and learning puffeth up; the more a man has of it, he is the more proud: but this knowledge caſts him down to the duſt, down to the ground; it caſts down ſelf, and ſelf-righteouſneſs, ſelf-wiſdom, ſelf-love, and ſelf-ſeeking.

(2.) It is an *uplifting* knowledge; it exalts Chriſt in the heart, and lifts up the heart in the ways of the Lord, in reſpect of ſatisfaction; it brings in ſatisfaction to the heart and conſcience: this water being given, the man *thirſts no more*, in reſpect of abſolute want, John iv. 14. Nothing ſatisfies him but this knowledge of Chriſt, or, rather this Chriſt made known.

(3.) It is a *ſingular* knowledge; ſingular in reſpect of the object, author, and ſubject.—The *object* is a God in Chriſt; whatever men know, if they know not God, in Chriſt, they are miſerable; though they had all ſcriptural knowledge, if they want the knowledge of Chriſt, *It may be ſaid of them, they know nothing as they ought to know.* In paradiſe, there were many trees, and every one good; but only *one tree of life:* in the ſcriptures, many truths, and all good; but there is only one tree of life there; and we periſh, if we eat not that.—The *Author* of this knowledge is God; *Fleſh and blood has not revealed theſe things to thee, but my Father who is in heaven.*—The *ſubjects* are ordinarily poor *babes*, who have neither wiſdom nor prudence, in reſpect of others in the world; *I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou haſt hid theſe things from the wiſe and prudent, and haſt revealed them to babes*, Matth. xi. 25. Some are capable of this knowledge of Chriſt, that are not capable of other learning. A wooden candleſtick can hold a candle as well as a ſilver one; ſo are theſe capable of the knowledge of Chriſt, that are deſtitute of outward ornaments and literature.

(4.) It is a *warming* and *working* light and knowledge. We know ſo much of God and Chriſt, as we are affected, touched, and wrought upon. It is ſaid, Jer. ii. 8. *They that handle the law, know not God.* Some may handle the law, and yet not know God; they may handle the goſpel, and yet not know Chriſt, by this ſpecial, ſingular, and ſaving knowledge: they may have a vaſt deal of head knowledge; but a ſpark in the heart is worth a torch in the brain. The knowledge of Chriſt feeds all graces. It feeds *faith; They that know his name will put their truſt in him.* It feeds *repentance; They ſhall look on him whom they have pierced, and mourn.* It feeds *love;* they only who know him to be *altogether lovely, do truly love him.* It feeds *all* grace; ſtrengthening all grace. Examine this knowledge, and be ſure you find the difference between it and the *form of knowledge*, which never warms the heart, or works any change in you: it is but like the ſun painted upon a board for a ſign; you call it a ſun, but it has no ſun-light, no ſun-influence, no ſun-warmth; ſo you may call that the knowledge of Chriſt which hypocrites and profane graceleſs men may have; you may call it knowledge, but it is but a *form*, a ſhadow, a picture: there is nothing of the light, heat, and influence that will take place when you come to the true light.—Examine yourſelf by theſe things.

[2.] There are ſome remarkable PROPERTIES of the *time of love*, by which you may try.

1. It is a time of remarkable *joy* and *ſorrow*; ſorrowing for ſin, and yet rejoicing in the Lord; *They ſhall come with weeping, and with ſupplications I will lead them*; or with FAVOUR, Jer. xxxi. 9. He leads them with weeping, and with ſinging; weeping, for their ſins; and ſinging, for his favours. The *time of love* is called, Song ii. 11. *a time of the ſinging of birds, and the voice of the turtle;* which, applied to the believer, is his mournful notes. It is remarkable, that the book of Lamentations is all poetical: every chapter, except the third, has twenty-two verſes; and every verſe begins with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet; the firſt verſe with the firſt letter, *Alef*; the ſecond verſe, with the ſecond letter, *Beth*; and ſo on to the cloſe: and the third chapter has ſixty-ſix verſes, and every three verſes begins with a letter thereof, three times over; the firſt three verſes begin with the firſt letter, three times over; the ſecond three verſes, beginning with the ſecond letter, three times

times over, and so on. What is the meaning of all this, but to show, that a time of mourning and lamentation may be to the Lord's people a time of mirth and holy music? And ordinarly it is so: and when hath the believer more joy than when in a flood of tears before the Lord?

2. It is a time of *prayer;* and very remarkable for it.

QUEST. *What is there remarkable in the prayers of these, whose time is a time of love.*

ANSW. There are two remarkable outpourings, *viz.* the outpouring of the *Spirit*, mentioned Zech. xii. 10.; and the outpouring of the *heart*, mentioned Psal. lxii. 8. When these two concur, then it discovers a *time of love.* At other times prayer comes drop by drop, as water out of a still; but then it comes plentifully as water out of a fountain. See Isa. xxvi. 16.

3. It is a time of *praise;* the heart is filled with the *high praises of God.* And this heart-exercise takes in both admiration and invitation: *admiration;* O wonder! says the soul, that ever God manifested his love to the like of me, *What am I, or my father's house? Invitation*, to all the creatures to help them to praise; *O let sun, moon, and stars praise him.* This seems to be the temper of the heavenly harpers in their halelujahs, *Praise ye the Lord;* importing, that they cannot praise him; therefore let all the creation help us to praise; *Praise ye the Lord.*

4. It is a time of *love*, a loving time; for love manifested begets love; the love of God kindles love in us in the time of love: and it is remarkable in two things. The love that results from the manifesting of divine love, gives, *first* the HEART; and *secondly* the HAND to the Son of God.—The HEART; *My son, give me thy heart.* Many say they love Christ, and yet give their heart to the world, and to their lusts; but as Delilah said to Samson, Judges xvi. 15. *How canst thou say, that thou lovest me, when thy heart is not toward me?* So, how can you say, that you love Christ, when your heart is not toward him, but given away to other lovers? If Christ be your treasure, your heart will be set upon him.—Again, the HAND is given to him, to serve and work for him: we read of the *labour of love.* As Jacob served for love to Rachel, so the love of Christ constrains to his service; *If ye love me, keep my commandments.* It is true, the believer's heart may frequently misgive him, and then he draws away his hand too: but this is not acted like a believer; this is his burden and disease; and he is never himself till his heart and hand be both given to the Son of God.——Try yourself by these things.

We shall now shut up our present exercise, with a short *address* to you whose *time*, either formerly has been, or at present is, a *time of love.* And our *advice* to you is, O *render unto the Lord love for love.* And to induce you hereunto.

1. Consider, how *absolutely free, unmerited*, and *undeserved* his love was to you. There was nothing that could induce him to love you: every thing about you was wretchedness and misery, as we endeavoured to shew in tracing the connexion where our text lies. You was *lying in your blood, no eye to pity you;* and yet, in these deplorable circumstances, in his passing by, *Behold, your time was a time of love.* It was said of Mary, that she *loved much, because much was forgiven her.* Well, see that you love the Lord more than ever, because much iniquity hath been forgiven you, and much love conferred upon. *Thy time was a time of love.*

2. Consider, in order to persuade you to render him *love for love*, that he was *before-hand* in his love towards you; his love prevented yours: and if it had not been so, your *time* could never have been a *time of love.* Therefore, says the apostle, *We love him, because he first loved us*, 1 John iv. 19. Let the priority of his love to you, influence you to love him. *Behold, thy time was a time of love!*

3. Consider, what an *agreeable* and *comfortable time* your *time of love* was, when he brought you into *the banquetting house*, and displayed his *banner of love over you.* When you was enjoying these love-calls, love-visits, love-tokens, love-looks, and feasting upon the loving kindness of God; how was your soul ravished with his love! Were you not made to cry out, *O the height, the breadth, the depth, and the length of the love of God!* Should not this then be a powerful motive to engage you to render him *love for love?* And, is it not the best way to have his love-interviews continued with you? *O love the Lord, all ye his saints. Keep yourselves in the love of God.* ——We might adduce many other considerations to persuade you to this, but we defer them at present; we may, perhaps, have an opportunity afterwards.

SERMON LXVIII.

EZEK. xvi. 8.

Now, when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee; behold, thy time was a time of love.—

[The fifth Sermon on this text.]

THERE are two words that should take up most of our thoughts and cares, namely, TIME and ETERNITY; *time*, because it will soon be at an end; and *eternity*, because it will never come to an end. The candle of time is fast burning, and if we play the fool, and be idle about eternal work, till the candle be burnt out, we will have ourselves to thank, if we go to bed in the dark: I mean, if we go to the grave and eternity, under the dark cloud of God's wrath, we cannot expect, unless we are madly deceiving ourselves, an eternity of happiness in the other world, if we are strangers to a time of love in this world: for, whom God loved, with an everlasting love from eternity, he draws them with loving-kindness in time, that he may crown them with loving-kindness to eternity. His everlasting love, in point of manifestation, hath its beginning in time, upon all the objects thereof; and these in whom it has no beginning in time will be the objects and vassals of wrath for ever. It is therefore a matter of the highest moment to know what takes place in time now; and if your time *be a time of love.*

We have not only finished the doctrinal part of this subject; but also insisted at considerable length, on the application, in the prosecution of several uses. It now remains that we conclude the subject with an use of *exhortation.* And our exhortation shall be tendered to two sorts of persons. 1. To these whose time NEVER was a *time of love.* 2. To these whose time HAS BEEN such a *time of love* as I have spoken of.

First, We tender our exhortation, to you whose

whose time NEVER was a *time of love;* I mean, you, who notwithstanding of your living under a loving dispensation of divine grace, by the gospel, yet have never seen or believed, the love and grace of God in Christ, so far as to draw out your heart-love to Christ. I would say to you,

1st, O consider what a *miserable state* you are in, and like to be into, to all eternity. In *time* you are miserable; for, you are empty of all good, and full of all evil.—How *empty are you of all good*, while you are without Christ, and love to him, having nothing of the love of Christ? you have no good in you: you would think it a bad house to dwell in where there is neither meat, nor drink, nor clothes: but a worse house is your heart, while you have neither God, nor Christ, nor the Spirit.—How *full are you of evil*, while destitute of the love of Christ? Full of enmity against God, full of sin, full of hell, full of the devil, full of the wrath of God, it *abideth upon you;* and you are exposed to the utmost measure of it. You are miserable through, all eternity, if you live and die in that state; *If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be* ANATHEMA MARAN-ATHA; [that is, *accursed until Christ come,*] 1 Cor. xvi. 22. Let him come under the sentence of the *greater excommunication*, of being for ever banished from the presence of God.

2dly, Consider how it comes about, that your love goes not out *after Christ*, when you live in a time wherein his love and loveliness are manifested. Surely, it must be from desperate enmity. Have you not heard of his fame? Is there any thing in all the world, challenges your love so much? If you have heard and forgotten, I will just now lay before you so much of the loveliness of Christ as may for ever render you inexcusable, if you henceforth fall not in love with him above all things else. Consider what he is in *himself*, what he is to *God*, what he is to you, *sinner*.

[1.] Consider what he is in *himself*. Is he not *altogether lovely*, considered either in his natures, or person?

1. View him in his *natures*, divine and human.—In his *divine* nature, he is God's Equal; *Who thinks it no robbery to be equal with God:* he is the *true God, and eternal life;* and has in him *all the fulness of the Godhead bodily*, that is, personally; *The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.*—In his *human* nature: view his human body and soul. His human *body* now glorified in heaven, what a glorious body is it! The apostle speaks of the glory of bodies terrestrial and celestial; how much more glorious are celestial above terrestial? And, how glorious above all celestial bodies is that of the Lord Jesus Christ! When Paul, at his conversion, got a view of it in a vision, it exceeded the sky in its meridian brightness. His human *soul*, how much more lovely is that! By how much the soul is beyond the body, by so much the soul is more glorious than the body. All the excellent qualities that ever adorned a soul are in him to perfection: and besides these, a supereminent unction of the Holy Ghost, the *Spirit above measure*, whereby he is immensely full of grace and truth.——He is thus the most amiable object, viewed in both his natures, human and divine distinctly. But beside this,

2. View him in the *union* of both these natures, as different, as finite and infinite, in one person: this brings God down to man as near as he can come, and raises man up to God as high as he can ascend. What a terror might unvailed Deity be to guilty sinners, were it not allayed with the vail of humanity? But, O! how fit a Mediator is he, being IMMANUEL, *God-man?* Thus he has a divine fulness and sufficiency to save us, together with a human meetness and congruity for applying it in a manner most suitable and proper to our condition. Now, may not that question be for ever silenced with contempt, *What is the* Christian's *Beloved more than another's beloved, that he should* be so mightily extolled? Is there one in the world so lovely and glorious? Is he not *white and ruddy*, the *chiefest among ten thousand?*

[2.] Consider what he is to *God;* particularly in these two respects.

1. Is he not God's *darling?* Has not the Father testified his love to Christ above all things else? Isa. xlii. 1. *Behold my Servant, whom I uphold; mine Elect, in whom my soul delighteth.* Mark i. 11. *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* What honour consequently has he put upon him, in *raising him from the dead*, and *setting him at his own right-hand*, and *giving him a name above every name*, committing *all judgment*, yea *all things* into his hand. He is the Son of his love. We are then to love Christ for his own sake and his Father's sake: and ought we not to love him as the Father's favourite? Is it not a sufficient incentive to our love, that, beside his own personal amiable qualities, he is so much the object of the Father's love.

2. Is he not the Father's *representative?* God's greatest representative, in whom he displays all his perfections? 2 Cor. vi. 6. John xiv. 9. John i. 18. The representation of the divine glory in Christ exceeds all other representations in these particulars.

(1.) It is the *brightest:* the glory of God shines no where so brightly as in his infinitely fair face, who is therefore called the *brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image*, [or, REPRESENTATION] *of his person*, Heb. i. 3.

(2.) It is the *fullest:* the representation of God's glory, in the work of creation and providence, set forth, in a most illustrious manner, *some* of his perfections; but here *all* his glory shines with inconceivable brightness; all his attributes, even his *mercy and truth meet together, righteousness and peace kiss each other.* Here they all shine with a peculiar lustre, and harmoniously conspire and centre.

(2.) It is the most *intimate* and *propitious:* how could God reveal himself more *nearly*, than through the flesh of his Son? How more *graciously*, than by giving him to us, and for us? How more *kindly* could he represent his infinite justice and holiness, than as vindicated, satisfied, and glorified in Christ, by whom *grace reigns, through righteousness unto eternal life.*

(4.) It is the most *safe* representation of the divine glory, and secure from being perverted to an undue exaltation of the medium: for, the glory of God, represented by the heavens, has been abused to idolatry, men worshipping the means by which God manifests himself: but here there is a safe representation; the mean and end meet in one: we cannot put too much honour upon Christ; *He that honours him honours the Father.*

(5.) It the most *mysterious:* here is the *wisdom of God in a mystery;* the *manifold wisdom of God:* such

ſuch a large compaſs, both in contrivance and execution, that none can penetrate into the depth.

(6.) It is the moſt *durable* and *permanent*: ſee Iſa. li. 6. *The earth ſhall wax old as a garment; but my ſalvation*, through Chriſt, *ſhall be for ever; and my righteouſneſs ſhall not be aboliſhed.* God will never ceaſe to manifeſt his glory through Chriſt: though there may be different ways of that manifeſtation, yet it will be to eternity; Rev. xxi. 23. *The Lord God, and the Lamb, is the light of the place.* Rev. xxii. 3. *The throne of God is the throne of the Lamb; and his throne is for ever and ever.*

Now, conſider what a ſacred and precious thing the divine glory is above all other concerns; and that a proportionable love and eſteem is due to things according to the impreſſions of God upon them, and their reference to God's glory. Doth not Chriſt then challenge our higheſt love and eſteem on this account, beſides what he merits from us by his original intrinſic excellency.

[3.] Conſider, what he is to *us*, or what relation he ſtands in to *ſinners*; and what he has done, or is doing, by virtue of that relation.

1. What relation he ſtands in to us, ſinners, as a *Saviour* of Gods appointing and anointing; *We teſtify that God ſent his Son to be the Saviour of the world*, 1 John iv. 14. He is a Saviour of ſinners by *office*; and ſhould not ſinners love their Saviour, and employ him? Should we not love him with a love of deſire, to cloſe with him as our Saviour; and then with a love of delight in him? The general relation to us ariſing from his partaking of the ſame nature, is the foundation of a particular relation, and ſhould be improven to the neareſt relation of being myſtically one.

2. What he *has done*, and *is doing*. He came from heaven to earth to *ſeek* and to *ſave loſt ſinners*; he made himſelf in all things *like unto us, ſin only excepted*; excepted as to the *inheſion* of it, which was abſolutely remote from him: but not excepted as to the *imputation* of it; for, *He bore our ſins in his own body*, and ſubmitted to have the *iniquities of us all laid upon him*; that he, as our Surety, might become accountable and anſwerable for them; and as the *Lamb of God ſacrificed for us*, might take them away: finding us obliged to the *perfect obedience* the law required, but utterly unable to perform it, and ſo cut off from the remoteſt poſſibility of ever obtaining that life it was ordained to convey: he yielded, in our place, an obedience to it abſolutely perfect, and meritorious of eternal life, and gives this his righteouſneſs to us, to become our title to heaven and eternal happineſs: finding us preſſed down under an *immenſe debt* to divine juſtice, and the penalty of the law, he took it on himſelf, paid it off, and diſcharges us by ſuffering for us; thus he is the *end of the law*, and perfection of it, *for righteouſneſs*, which we could never attain ourſelves, but do now in him, the end and determination of its penal ſanction: finding us in *priſon*, bound with the fetters of our own iniquities, held in the cords of ſin and miſery, and reſerved to the day of wrath and vengeance, he comes and viſits us in our priſon, and is content to be kept there for a time, in our room, till he ſhould ſatisfy for our crimes, that we might be ſet at liberty: finding us under the *curſe*, *he is made a curſe for us*, that we might be redeemed from it: finding us *doomed* to death, he *died for us, that we might live:* finding us lying under the edge of the *flaming ſword* of vindictive juſtice, he put his own neck upon the block, and made his *ſoul an offering for ſin:* finding a cup of heavy *wrath* and *indignation* prepared for us, he took it out of our hands, into his own, and drank it off, in our ſtead, that we might not have the leaſt drop to our own ſhare, but in lieu of it a cup of ſalvation for us to drink.

Was there ever love like Chriſt's, which ſuch floods of tribulation could not quench or drown! Though he was God, yet he became man; yea, *His viſage was more marred than any man, and his form more than the ſons of men*, Iſa. lii. 14. So that he was ſo far from appearing like a God, that he ſcarce looked like a man, but rather as a *worm*, Pſal. xxii. 7. A worm trampled on by all; a *reproach of men*, and *deſpiſed of the people.* Why all this, but that his love might ſhine the brighter through the dark ſhades that eclipſed his glory? The more he leſſened his perſon, the higher he raiſed his love, which appeared in all its fulneſs, while the other diſappeared, as it were, for a ſeaſon, and ſeemed to fade away. Thus he is amiable in his *poverty*; for, *He was made poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich:* amiable in his *ſtripes*, whereby *we are healed:* amiable in all the amazing inſtances of *ſelf-abaſement*, providing for the greateſt happineſs to us, at the greateſt expence to himſelf.

Ought he not to be loved, who thus has loved us unto death? Who muſt be loved if not he? And how ſweetly may the love of a believer entertain itſelf at the very croſs of Chriſt, which is a tree of life; of life to us, though it was a tree of death to him; a tree of bleſſedneſs to us, though a tree of bitterneſs to him? We may gaze at the croſs, and Chriſt hanging upon it, and have loving, raviſhing proſpects here, without the leaſt partaking of the diſtreſs and bitter anguiſh of ſpirit Chriſt endured upon it; for the croſs of Chriſt being the greateſt proof and pledge of his love, ought to be the joy, crown, and glory of every beholder; and viewed, not with a ſad, heavy, and fearful, but with a glad, chearful, and joyful heart; at which we are to dry up every tear of heart-breaking grief, and vent none but tears of joy, mixt only with theſe of ſweet relenting ſorrow; mourning over ſin, which by no means marrs, but friendly accords with this joy. We may ſit under the ſhadow of his croſs with great delight, with a rejoicing heart, and find all the fruits of it, being fruits of love, grace, favour, and happineſs to us, inexpreſſibly ſweet to our taſte. Here the horror of his curſed, painful, ſhameful death can by no means damp the joy and ſatisfaction; *Weep not for me*, ſaid Chriſt. Why? his ſufferings were voluntarily neceſſary, deſigned for an happy iſſue; and it was not poſſible he could be ſwallowed up, or conſumed by them: and they are now long ſince paſt and gone, as to the ſmart he felt below, though abiding ſtill in their virtue, uſe, and excellent fruits, and are now ſo many trophies of honour; beauties inſtead of blemiſhes, and higheſt matter of glory and triumph: hence he appears in heaven with the marks of his bleeding wounds, *A Lamb as it had been ſlain in the midſt of the throne.* The ſhame and pain of his croſs redounds to him for an enſign of honour and eternal glory; a perpetual memorial of his love, merit, and victory.

3. What

3. What is he *ſtill doing?* Still purſuing the *ſame kind deſign*, though in a *new manner*. As his love was proved here by *poverty* and *tribulation*, it is now proved by a *fulneſs of glory* and *power*: his love was here in *labour* and *diſtreſs* for us; now it is *inthroned* and *triumphing*, yet ſtill for us alſo. He remembers us ſo as to think himſelf imperfect and incomplete, and as only half glorified till we come to be glorified together with him. As he laid down one life for us on earth, ſo he employs another for our uſe in heaven; living there to intercede in the virtue of the obligation he made, Heb. vii. 25.: living there to ſend down his Spirit, as a Spirit of wiſdom and revelation, of grace, ſupplication, ſanctification, and conſolation; and to lead, guide, direct, begin, and carry on his good work; make application of his redemption; living to execute his offices fully, which he happily began on earth; and to perform his promiſes, that are *Yea and Amen in him.*—Is there no lovelineſs here? Is this love and lovelineſs of Chriſt diſcovered to you, and yet no *time of love* with you? No love of deſire after him wrought in you? How inexcuſeable art thou, and wilt thou be, that loves vanity inſtead of him!

Secondly, We next direct our exhortation in a word to theſe whoſe time HAS BEEN a *time of love*. And theſe are of two ſorts; either ſuch as *doubt* if their time has been a *time of love*, or ſuch as are *aſſured* their time has been a *time of love*.

1ſt, Such as DOUBT of it, and yet their time has really been a time of love. Theſe doubters are of two ſorts: ſome are waking and mourning doubters; others are ſleeping and ſlumbering doubters.

[1.] Some are *waking* and *mourning* in their doubts, and apprehenſive that they NEVER HAD a *time of love*. "Alas! ſay ſuch, many a ſer-"mon and ſacrament have I attended; but, to "this day, I never met with a time of love: "wo is me that I cannot get a diſcovery of the "glory and lovelineſs of Chriſt, nor my heart "engaged to love him!" If this be thy caſe and exerciſe, mourning and crying, O for a time of love! There are two ſcriptures I would direct you to for relief.

1. If you are *mourning* and in *heavineſs* becauſe you reckon your time has not been a time of love, or of power, read Iſa. lxi. 1, 2, 3. *He is anointed to give to theſe that mourn in Zion, beauty for aſhes; the oil of joy, for mourning, and the garment of praiſe, for the ſpirit of heavineſs.*

2. If you are *crying* for a time of love, read Iſa. xxx. 18, 19. *He is a God of judgment; and bleſſed are all theſe that wait for him. He will be very gracious to thee at the voice of thy cry; when he ſhall hear it, he will anſwer thee.* He will turn at a cry, as that word *need* ſignifies, Heb. iv. 16. *Let us come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of* NEED. Preſſing need, that makes you cry: he turns, as it were, at the cry, according to the promiſe here, *He will be very gracious to thee at the voice of thy cry.* Therefore wait patiently, hopefully, and carefully for him, who has either begun, or is beginning the good work.

[2.] Some are *ſleeping* and *ſlumbering* doubters, that HAVE HAD a *time of love*, but now it is out of ſight, by reaſon of their backſliding, and leaving their firſt love. To you I would ſay.

1. O *remember whence thou haſt fallen, and repent, and do thy firſt works!* Conſider what anſwer you would have to theſe queſtions: *What* INIQUITY *have you found in him, that you have gone far from him?* Have you ſeen any thing in Chriſt to alienate your affections from him? Was he ever worſe than his word? Or is there any uncomelineſs in his way?—What *comelineſs* have you ſeen in other lovers? Have you found any other object like him? Is there any amongſt the creatures that can do for you what he has done? Can the world give you that which he has to give you? Do you find reſt and ſatisfaction to your heart and conſcience elſe-where?—What *ſweet days* had you once when your heart went out after him? Could you not then have ſaid, *My Beloved is mine, and his deſire is towards me*, and *the deſire of my ſoul is towards him*, when he brought you to the banqueting-houſe, and diſplayed his banner of love over you, making you to drink of the ſpiced wines? May not a reflection upon theſe ſweet days you had, when his candle ſhined upon you, break your heart, that now you are ſet to the back of the door, and ſay, *O that it were with me as in months paſt?*—What *ſad days* have you had ſince you departed from him, and was ſhut out of doors, and had a ſcreen drawn between him and you?—What a *ſad change* is there when you want that ſweet communion with him that once you had? O then! remember whence you have fallen.

2. Return to him, ſaying, *I will go and return to my firſt husband. Return, ye backſliding children, though you have played the harlot with many lovers, for I am married unto you, ſaith the Lord. I hate putting away. I am God, and change not; therefore you are not conſumed.* Return, for he ſtands ready to heal your backſlidings.

To both ſorts, whether you be waking or ſleeping Chriſtians, to whom a time of love is dubious, I would exhort you to hear his *loving cries* after you, and let it be followed with your cries after him.

(1.) Hear HIS loving cries after *you*.—One cry he ſends after you, is that of the angels, Luke ii. 10. *Behold! I bring you good tidings of great joy; for to you is born a Saviour, which is Chriſt the Lord. To you a child is born, to you a ſon is given.*—Another cry after you is that, Rev. iii. 20. *Behold! I ſtand at the door, and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in, and will ſup with him, and he with me.* He is ſeeking to ſup with you, to have communion with you, and you with him. I am knocking at the door of your underſtandings, at the door of your wills, at the door of your hearts and affections: do you not hear me knocking?—Another call is that, Song v. 2. *Open to me, my ſiſter, my ſpouſe, my love, my dove; for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night.* I have ſuffered the midnight ſhower and ſtorm of divine wrath for you, it fell on my head; I have ſuffered for you, and now I am here ready to apply the bleſſing of my blood; *open to me:* I own you for my love, and my dove, my undefiled, having no ſpot but what my grace ſhall cover.—Another cry is that, Song iii. 11. *Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold king Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him.* He is holding forth the ſceptre; to thee go forth by faith and take a view of him till your heart be fully ſatisfied? O come, taſte and ſee; come and ſee him; ſee what he has done for you, what he is doing for you, and what he will do for you.—Another cry is that, John i. 29. *Behold the Lamb of God,*

God, that taketh away the sin of the world! Are your sins great and many, yet, O let no sin keep you away! *The blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin:* there is infinite virtue in that blood for making you perfectly clean. — Another cry is that, Matth. xxii. 4. *All things are ready, come to the marriage.* O was you never married to the Son of God? Come, and be the *bride the Lamb's wife;* give your heart and hand to him, and take hold of him for your Head, Husband, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. Or, have you been already married to Christ? O come and get confirmation; get a new token of his love; come to the *marriage-supper of the Lamb.* — Another cry is, in case you think it is not a free wedding, Isa. lv. 1. *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye; buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk, without money, and without price.* The poorer you are the welcomer to the market: no money here is good price: here is grace and glory freely; *Whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely.* — But, are you yet sighing under the burden of sin and guilt? Then another cry is, Matth. xi. 28. *Come to me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest* to your souls: come, and get rest to your *minds* in him, who, as a Prophet, is the *wisdom of God;* come, and get rest to your *conscience* in him, who, as a Priest, is the *righteousness of God;* come, and get rest to your *hearts* in him, who, as a King, is the *power of God*, and has all the riches of divine fulness in him. — Another cry that he is sending after you is, Jer. iii. 14, 22. *Return, O backsliding children; for I am married unto you, and I will heal your backslidings.* As if he had said, "However grievously you "have revolted and rebelled from the womb "unto this moment, all bygones shall be by-"gones; only henceforth let it be a bargain "between you and me, an everlasting bargain "never to be forgotten. — Another cry after you is, Song ii. 14. *O my dove, that art in the clifts of the rocks, and in the secret places of the stairs, let me hear thy voice, let me see thy countenance; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.* "Do not hide your face from me for shame, "might he say; do not blush to look to me, "nor afraid to speak to me; come boldly to "my throne of grace, for I delight to hear thy "voice of prayer and praise, though it be but "a mourning like a dove; and I delight to see "you coming boldly and confidently, depend-"ing upon me: you need not fear to face me, "for I am your kindly suitor; come, trembling "dove, and flee in to my bosom." —— Hear HIS loving cries after you.

(2.) Let it be followed with an echo from *you*, even with a *loud cry* after *him.* I will tell you some of the cries you may send after him. — One is, Psal. xxv. 11. *O Lord, for thy name's sake, pardon mine iniquity; for it is great.* Let not your great sin hinder your crying after him, but be made an argument, inducing you to cry after him more ardently and fervently. — Another cry is, Psal. cxliv. 5. *O bow thy heavens, O Lord, and come down; touch the mountains, and they shall melt.* Mountains are in the way, but let them *skip like lambs*, and the *little hills like rams, at the presence of the Lord.* — Another cry you may send after him is, Song i. 4. *Draw me, we will run after thee.* "Put forth thy drawing power; "for I cannot come, I cannot move, I cannot "stir without thee; but I promise to run if thou "draw." — Another cry you may send after him is that of blind Bartimeus, Mark x. 51. *Lord, that I may receive my sight.* "O enlighten "my eyes, that I may know the mysteries of "the gospel, that I may see the glory, grace, "and love of Christ." — Another cry is, Psal. xc. 13, 14. *Return, O Lord, how long? O satisfy us early with thy mercy, that we may be glad and rejoice all our days.*" "Thou hast an infinite ocean of "mercy, O let the waves of the ocean reach "my soul! pardoning mercy, purifying mer-"cy." — Another cry is, Song ii. 17. *Till the day break, and the shadows flee away; turn, my Beloved, and be thou like a roe, or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether.* "I want ability to mount "up the hills of sin, guilt, and difficulty be-"tween thee and me; but it is the glory of the "roe to ascend the rocks and mountains: O "get glory this way!" — Another cry is, Song iv. 16. *Awake, O north-wind, come thou south, blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out. Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain that they may live.* "O send the pro-"mised Spirit like *water upon the thirsty, and floods* "*upon the dry ground.*" — Another cry you should give after him, that is thus crying on you, is, Jer. iii. 22. *Behold, we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God;* and with the poor man in the gospel, *Lord, I believe; help my unbelief. O send forth thy light and thy truth to lead me.*

2*dly*, We come next to address ourselves to these who are more ASSURED their time has been a *time of love.* I offer these four advices following.

[1.] Do not *deny* or *disown* the time of love; beware of questioning if ever such a time went over you. — Do not deny it to your *fellow Christians*, that you may have it to say, *Come hither all ye that fear the Lord, and I will tell you what he has done to my soul.* — Do not deny it to *God*, that you may have it to say, O *my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord.* And that you may maintain your confidence before him.

[2.] In *all time coming* remember the *time of love;* for it may be very serviceable to you. — In the time of *temptation*, remember the *time of love;* wherein God becomes forth-coming, that, *with the temptation, he would give a way of escape.* — In the time of *tribulation*, remember the *time of love;* when it was secured that he would be with you in trouble. — In time of *desertion*, remember the *time of love;* wherein it was promised, *He would never leave you, nor forsake you.* — In time of *defection* and *backsliding*, remember the *time of love;* wherein it was secured, that he would *heal your backslidings, and love you freely, and restore your soul.* — In time of *want* and *poverty*, remember the *time of love;* when you was made to believe that your God should *supply all your needs, according to his riches in glory, by Christ Jesus.* — In the time of *reproach* for his sake, remember the *time of love;* wherein it was insured, that, *If you be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of God, and of glory resteth upon you.* — In time of *man's wrath*, rage, and persecuting fury, remember the *time of love;* wherein it was secured, that *the wrath of man should praise him, and that the remainder of his wrath he would restrain.* — In the time of *divine wrath*, heavy judgments, and gloomy terrible dispensations, remember the *time of love;* wherein it was promised, that, though *in a little wrath he should hide himself for a moment, yet with everlasting mercy he would gather thee.* See Isa. liv. 7, 8. —

In a time of *ſin* and *corruption* prevailing, remember the *time of love*; wherein you was made to ſay, *Though iniquities prevail; yet, as for our tranſgreſſions thou wilt purge them away.*—In a time of *ſorrow* and *heavineſs*, remember the *time of love*; and then you may be led to ſay, *Why art thou caſt down, O my ſoul? Hope in God, for I ſhall yet praiſe him.*—In a time of *danger*, remember the *time of love*, as did the apoſtle, 2 Cor. i. 10. *We had the ſentence of death in ourſelves, that we ſhould not truſt in ourſelves, but in God which raiſeth the dead, who delivered us from ſo great a death, and doth deliver; in whom we truſt that he will yet deliver us. He delivered me from the paw of the lion, and mouth of the bear, and will he not deliver me from the hand of this uncircumciſed Philiſtine?*—In a time of *diffidence* and *diſtruſt*, remember the *time of love*, as a notable means and motive to faith, Lam. iii. 21, 22, 23. *This I recal to mind, therefore have I hope:* THIS, what is it he recals to mind? even the time of love and mercy that follows; *It is of the Lord's mercy we are not conſumed, and becauſe his compaſſions fail not: they are new every morning; great is his faithfulneſs.*—In a time of *darkneſs*, remember the *time of love*; and then you may ſay, *Though I ſit in darkneſs, the Lord will be a light to me; the Lord my God will enlighten my darkneſs.*—In a time of *deadneſs*, remember the *time of love*, and ſay, *Quicken thou me, according to thy word.*—In a time of *weakneſs*, remember the *time of love*, and the words of love; *My grace ſhall be ſufficient for you, and my ſtrength ſhall be perfected in your weakneſs.*—In a time of *death*, remember the *time of love*; and in the believing rememberance thereof, you may ſay, *Though I walk through the valley of the ſhadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me, and thy rod and ſtaff they comfort me. O death, where is thy ſting? O grave, where is thy victory?*

[3.] Has ever your *time of need* been his *time of love*, then in all future times of need come *boldly to the throne of grace, that you may find grace to help in time of need:* for, the time of love, in times of need formerly, ſecures his loving help in all time of need to come: only obſerve theſe rules about *help in time of need.*

1. "That your expectation of things *not neceſſary*, or *abſolutely needful*, may fail you." You may be in a deluſion in your expectation of certain outgates you would have, and of ſenſible comforts at all times; but you ſhall never be in a deluſion in your expectation of needful help from the throne of grace; for, the matchleſs God of Jeſhurun *rides in heaven, for the help of his people, and in his excellency on the ſky*, Deut. xxxiii. 26.

2. "That *needful help* and ſupport comes from "the *ſame throne* from which *ſenſible comforts* "come." It is remarkable, you are called to come *boldly* to that throne, for theſe things you may be always ſure to find there, namely, MERCY and GRACE *to help in time of need:* you are not aſſured always of ſenſible comforts there; be content of ſupport promiſed in time of need: and remember, it is no little mercy to get a little help; that the ſame love may be read in the meaneſt, loweſt meaſure of grace and mercy that is to be read in the greateſt; they come from the ſame fountain, the ſame throne of grace.

3. "That they that get this help may lay "their account, notwithſtanding, to be kept "*weak* and *infirm*." Look not for ſuch help in this world as ſhall make you no more poor and needy beggars at the throne of grace: help and aſſiſtance, you know, is for weak and infirm people. Look not for help that will make you better ſtored in yourſelves than you were before; you muſt be kept *poor and needy* that the *Lord may think upon you*, as the pſalmiſt ſays, Pſal. xl. 17.; and as it is, Dan. xi. 34. you muſt be content to *be holpen with a little help*, and kept from cruſhing, though you be holden in the duſt: *Troubled on every ſide, yet not diſtreſſed; perplexed, but not in deſpair; perſecuted, but not forſaken; caſt down, but not deſtroyed*, 2 Cor. iv. 8, 9. Lay your account, though you get help, that, as it finds you weak, ſo it will keep you weak in yourſelves, and yet do your turn.

4. "Help is given to them who have their "*hand at a turn.*" We do not ſpeak of helping or aſſiſting ſuch as deſire and endeavour to do nothing themſelves; ſo here, expect not help but in God's way, and about his hand, and his throne; aiming at duty, though you are not able to go thorough it: when thy heart is overwhelmed, and yet thou art crying, when thou art ſinking, it is in that poſture needful help uſes to be given, Pſal. lxi. 1, 2.

5. "That help comes not, and is not to be "expected, till a *time of need*, and *preſſing* need; "ſuch as puts you to cry under the preſſure of "the need; as I ſaid before, the word in the "original ſignifies, to *turn at a cry*, as God pro-"miſes to do, Iſa. xxx. 19." People would be content of help if they could get it beſide them, always at hand; but, ſays the apoſtle, a time of need ſhall come, and help in a time of need; *In due time you ſhall reap if you faint not.* This may be a cure to all anxiety about what ſhall happen hereafter, or what may be before us. We have no ſtrength to grapple with ſuch unforeſeen difficulties; why, but let us remember we are to be buſy at the preſent work of the day, and leave the next day to God, who gives help in time of need; as Chriſt ſays in another caſe, Matth. vi. 34. *Take no thought for to-morrow, for the morrow ſhall take thought for the things of itſelf; ſufficient for the day, is the evil thereof.* What have we to do with help till it be needed? To what purpoſe is it to have Jordan running dry, till the prieſts feet be ſet in the water? To what purpoſe is it to know wherewith we ſhall ſerve the Lord, till we come thither? And then it ſhall be given in the hour it is needed, as Chriſt ſays, of *ſpeaking to enemies*, much more in ſpeaking to our beſt friend. This may aſſure us alſo that we cannot expect help till we cry, as David, *Out of the depths have I cried to thee.* We are many times in diſtreſs murmuring and not crying; we need help, but are not ſeeking help: God is an obſerving God as well as a hearing God; he would have us cry when he requires us.

6. "Though *ſecret ſupport* may be given to "them that cry under their need, yet *ſatisfying* "*help* may be delayed for a time." And there are ſeveral cauſes of this delay; ſome relative to ourſelves, and ſome relative to the church, or the public.

(1.) Some cauſes relative to *ourſelves.* The Lord will not always help when we are preſſed under the need of help, that puts us to cry, until the trial comes to the *utmoſt extremity*; Deut. xxxii. 26. *He will judge his people, and he will repent himſelf for his ſervants, when he ſees that their power is gone, and that there is none ſhut up or left.* As long as we have any thing that looks like

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doing our own turn without him, he will ly by, Pſal. xciv. 16. It is not till the pſalmiſt ſaid, *My foot ſlippeth*, and I am juſt falling over, that needful help comes; but then, *thy mercy, O Lord, held me up.* Thus with Abraham in the matter of offering up his ſon Iſaac, Gen. xxii. 10, 11. The Lord is not ſeen in the mount, till the knife is at the throat of Iſaac. This is the Lord's way not to come juſt when we are really preſſed, and hard put to it; as long as there is a ſtep further for the difficulty to go; he may let the trial go on before he comes with help, that we may be humbled under the preſſures, under the guilt that drew them on; and that we may be put in a capacity of eſteeming it a great mercy when we are thus *helped with a little help.*

(2.) Relative to the *public.* The Lord ſuſpends many a time, at leaſt, the comfortable help of particular ſaints, till he bring up the public intereſt with it: and it is not unſuitable to ſee the children in diſtreſs while the mother is wearing a mourning weed. Deſertions are not readily the leſs frequent among ſaints, that God covers himſelf with a cloud in his anger from Zion: but there is a bleſſed time of relief coming, as you may read, Pſal. cii. 20, 21, 22. and ver. 16, 17. When the *Lord appears in his glory to build up Zion*, then he *will hear the prayer of the deſtitute*, and the *groaning of the priſoners.* As we uſe to ſay, when a thaw comes after a great froſt, or rain after a great drought, it looſes many priſoners: ſo, when a ſhower of the divine influences come from above upon the church, and an outpouring of the Spirit, then many priſoners ſhall be ſet at liberty, many bonds ſhall be looſed, many a cord broken, that is fettering the people of God: therefore we are to wait the Lord's time of giving needful help, and be thankful for needful ſupports, though we yet want ſenſible comforts: needful waterings ſhall not be withholden in the mean time, unleſs we in our petted humour will not be content with ſupport and help, nor will bleſs him for it, and ſo provoke God to let us feel our own weight, that we may be humbled, and learn to gather our comforts among the midſt of our croſſes, and our mercies among our miſeries, and pleaſures among our preſſures.

[4.] Has your time been a *time of love*, of God's love to you? Then, let *all your time* be a time of love to him. *O love the Lord all ye his ſaints*, and let his love *conſtrain* you to his ſervice: and for this end, maintain a deep ſenſe and impreſſion of his love to you.—Mind how *antient* his love to you was, even prior to your being, from eternity; on the mere foreſight of your ſin and miſery, his eyes affected his heart, and provided a cure before you got the wound.—Remember how *free* and *generous* his love is; how he loved you, not only when you was a ſtranger to him, a mean perſon, infinitely below him, a worthleſs perſon, having no good quality to recommend you, and indued with many odious qualities, but an enemy, a deſperate rebel, mere grace only could draw out this love.—Recollect how *unchangeable* and *everlaſting* it is, ſo as he will never caſt you out of his affections, however deſerving to be rejected; *He is God, and changes not, therefore the ſons of Jacob are not conſumed.* He is ſtill overcoming evil with good; as he injoins us to do it, ſo he is always doing it himſelf.—Call to mind how *diſtinguiſhing* it is, not only when he paſſed by angels that ſinned, but many of your fellow creatures.—Remember how very *ſympathizing* it is, cauſing him who ſuffered for you on earth to ſuffer with you in heaven; for, *In all your afflictions, he is afflicted.*—Mind how *manifold* it is: it is a love of *deſire* after you; he deſires fellowſhip with you, and will never reſt nor reckon himſelf a complete Chriſt, as to his myſtical body, till you be with him together with the reſt of his members myſtical.—It is a love of *delight*, he takes pleaſure in your company; *O my dove, that art in the clifts of the rock, and in the ſecret places of the ſtairs, let me hear thy voice, let me ſee thy countenance; for ſweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely. The Lord takes pleaſure in his people.*—It is a love of *beneficence* always doing good; and ſhall not love work love. O let your time be a time of love to him. You that expect an eternity of love, let it be evident to the world, that *your time is a time of love.*

SERMON LXIX.

Senſible PRESENCE, *Sudden* ABSENCE; or, the Believer's moſt comfortable Interviews, but of ſhort Duration *.

GEN. XXXV. 13. *And God went up from him, in the place where he talked with him.*

I HOPE ſome, at this occaſion (however few they may be) have had ſome acceſs to God, and fellowſhip with Chriſt Jeſus; yet ſuch are to remember, and conſider that it needs not be thought ſtrange, though they ſhould ſenſibly enjoy him, and loſe him in a moment, as Jacob here; *He went up from him, in the place where he talked with him.* What intercourſe was between God and Jacob, you have an account of, from the 9th ver. *And God appeared unto Jacob again, when he came out of Padan-aram; and bleſſed him.* God had met with him in this place, *viz.* BETHEL, and bleſſed him, and he appears again to him. Thoſe to whom God has once

* This ſermon was preached at Orwell, on Monday, Auguſt 5th, 1734. after the celebration of the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper there. — In the firſt edition of this ſermon, we are told, it was printed, not from the Author's manuſcript, but from the ſhort hand notes of one who wrote it down in the time of the delivery. On this account, probably, it is neither ſo complete in itſelf, nor yet, perhaps, appears with ſuch advantage as it would have done, had it been copied from the original.

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manifested himself, may expect a new visit of him. At this time there are two notable effects of the appearance God made unto him.

1*st*, God confirms the *name* he had formerly given unto him, calling him ISRAEL. As God gives to all his people, to whom he savingly manifests himself, a *new name*; so he loves to call them by that new name.

2*dly*, He confirms the *promise* he had made unto him of his own name EL-SHADDAI, the *Almighty God*; the God that, when he pleases, can give a being to his word, and will make his promise effectual in his own time and way. There are two things God promises unto Jacob.

1. That he should be a *father of many nations*, and great kings; and a nation and company of nations should be of him, and kings should come out of his loins.

2. That he should be the *possessor* of a good land, *viz.* the land of Caanan. These two things had a spiritual signification; and we now, who live under the gospel-dispensation, if our eyes be open, may see the meaning of them, perhaps, better than Jacob could, under this typical representation: the *promised seed*, pointed at, was CHRIST himself, the Great King of Zion, who was to come of Jacob: and the *promised land* pointed at was HEAVEN itself, the heavenly kingdom. The former was the foundation, and this the top-stone of the *building of mercy* * that we were hearing of. Here then is the promise that God makes unto him. God, when he savingly manifests himself to his people, he comes to them as a promising God in Christ Jesus.

But then, in the words of the text, you have an account how this intercourse is interrupted, and marred at present, *God went up from him, in the place where he talked with him.* Where we may observe two things. 1. *How* he left him; and, 2. *Where* he left him.

1. *How* he left him, *God went up from him.* It was by some visible appearance, that had hovered over him, while God talked with him. God may go up from his people in sovereignty, when he does not go away from them in anger. However, we are carefully to observe, that it is not *visible* appearances of God that now we are to expect, *God is a Spirit*, and invisible; and as we are to worship him spiritually, so we are to see and enjoy him spiritually.

2. Observe *where* he left him; it was *in the place where he talked with him.* The name of the place is BETHEL; and you see that Jacob here sets up a pillar, as a memorial of the communion he had with God there, and calls the name of the place BETHEL; he confirms the name formerly given to the place, when he had met with God there, he calls it BETHEL, *the house of God:* it was even here, in this very place, *the house of God*, that *he went up from him, where he talked with him.*

The doctrine, that I propose to speak a little unto, is the following.

> DOCT. *That they who have had communion and converse with God, may miss him in the very spot where they enjoyed him.* God went up from him, in the very place where he talked with him.

Thus it was with the disciples at Emmaus, Luke xxiv. 31. their eyes were opened, so as they knew him, *And he vanished out of their sight*; or, as it is in the margin of some of your Bibles, HE CEASED TO BE SEEN OF THEM; they enjoyed his presence, and yet instantly he ceased to be seen of them. Again, you may observe, the passage in the mount of transfiguration, where Peter says, unto Jesus, *Lord, it is good for us to be here*; and then it follows in the next verse, *While he yet spake, behold a bright cloud overshadowed them*, Matth. xvii. 4, 5. A cloud may quickly intervene between God and the soul that has communion and fellowship with him.

In handling this subject, I propose, as the Lord shall be pleased to assist, to observe the following method.

I. To touch a little at the *communion* his people may have with him, which is here called a *talking with him.*
II. Offer a few *remarks* concerning their *missing* and *finding* the Lord.
III. Enquire in what *respects* they may miss him where they enjoyed him.
IV. I would give some *reasons* of this dispensation.
V. Make *application* of the whole.

I. As to the *first* of these, To speak a little of this *communion* that God's people may have with him, which is here called a *talking with him*; *God went up from him, in the very place where he talked with him.*

This communion and converse with God may import these five things.

1. It imports the *presence of God*, and his perfections round about them; for, *As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about them that fear him*, and so his perfections do surround and environ them. Indeed, we are to distinguish between *sensible* presence and *real* presence: God is always *really* present with his people; for he has said, *I will never leave thee nor forsake thee*; but he is not always *sensibly* present. He may be present at their hand, when they do not see him, as in the case of Mary, when she was talking with Christ, and yet asked where she might find him. We are to distinguish also between his *quickening* presence and his *comforting* presence: the Lord may be present with his people quickening them to duty, and yet they may want sensible comfort in duty. To this purpose says the spouse, *I sought him, but I found him not. I sought him*; there is his quickening presence exciting her to duty; *But I found him not*, I wanted his sensible comforting presence.

2. It imports *vicinity* and *nearness:* the Lord is graciously near to them; he is graciously near to all that *call upon him in truth, a present help*, especially in the *time of trouble*, as here he was to Jacob in his trouble. Again,

3. This converse they have with the Lord, not only imports vicinity and nearness, but *amity* and *friendship*, as says the prophet Amos, iii. 3. *Can two walk together except they be agreed?* So I may say, *Can two* talk *together unless thy be agreed?* There is no sweet converse with God, but what imports agreement. It takes in, then, their friendship with him; their being reconciled to him in the blood of Jesus.

4. It imports *communion* with him, such as that, *Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ.* They have fellowship with God

* Alluding to the action-sermon, preached on these words, Psal. lxxxix. 2. *Mercy shall be built up for ever.*

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in Chriſt: fellowſhip with him in his LIFE; *Becauſe I live, ye ſhall live alſo:* fellowſhip with him in his LOVE, while he *ſheds abroad his love in their hearts.* Again,

5. It imports *communication;* and this communication, or God's talking with his people, it has many things in it.

(1.) There is therein, ſometimes, a mutual *intimation* of love; the Lord ſometimes intimates his love unto the ſoul, ſaying, *I have loved thee with an everlaſting love:* the ſoul ſometimes intimates its love to him again, *Thou that knoweſt all things, knoweſt that I love thee.*

(2.) It takes in ſometimes a mutual *commendation* of one another; I ſay, mutual commendation; the Lord, when he is talking with them, he ſometimes *commends* them forſooth, *Behold, thou art fair; thou are all far, my Love, there is no ſpot in thee:* and indeed they cannot but bluſh, when he commends them after this manner. Again, they commend *him*, (as it well becomes them,) *My Beloved is white and ruddy, the chief among ten thouſand: his mouth is moſt ſweet; yea, he is altogether lovely*, infinitely lovely. Again,

(3.) This communication has in it, ſometimes, mutual *counſels* imparted, their minds imparted. The Lord imparts his mind to the ſoul, *The ſecret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will ſhew them his covenant:* and the ſoul imparts its mind again to God, and pours out its heart unto him, telling him all his mind, that he cannot tell the world. Again,

(4.) This communication takes in the mutual *confidence* they expreſs in one another. It is wonderful that the Lord has a kind confidence and truſt he puts in them: there are ſome believers he will not truſt, knowing what is in their hearts; but there are others to whom he commits a truſt, he commits his *name* and *truth* to them, Rev. ii. 13. knowing that, through his grace, they will be faithful. They put their truſt in *him*: Lord, all my confidence is in thee; I have no hope but in thyſelf: and they expreſs their truſt in him, as Job does, chapter xiii. 15. *Though he ſlay me, yet will I truſt in him.* Again.

(5.) This communication, it takes in the mutual *care* they expreſs to one another: O the wonderful care that Chriſt expreſſes of his people! That is obſerved by the church, when ſhe ſays, *His left hand is under my head, and his right-hand doth embrace me*, Song ii. 6. O the tender care of the Lord Jeſus towards them! And then they ſometimes expreſs a care with reference to him and his intereſt, and his concerns; their great concern is, to have his honour and glory advanced in the world.

(6.) This communication takes in mutual *aſſurances* of love: he aſſures them of his love unto them, and relation unto them; *I am thy God, I will be thy God.* Well, they acknowledge ſometimes this relation, and therefore cry out, *My Lord, and my God:* and ſometimes, when they are under the influence of the Spirit of God, the Spirit of adoption, they acknowledge their relation, crying out, ABBA, *Father.*

In a word, this communication ſometimes takes in a mutual *dedication* of themſelves to one another: the Lord gives himſelf unto them; he gives himſelf, he gives his Chriſt, he gives his Spirit, he gives his bleſſing unto them; and they ſurrender all that they have, and are, unto him: they give up themſelves, their name, their children, their ſoul and body, and all their concerns unto him; they put all into his hand. This is a part of their communication, their mutual talk with him.—So much ſhall ſuffice for a touch at this firſt head. I go on

II. To the *ſecond* thing propoſed, *viz.* To offer a *remark* or two concerning the *finding* and *miſſing* the preſence of God. O Sirs, what know we, or do we know any thing of that preſence and fellowſhip with God, that I have been mentioning? That the Lord's people may have ſome further view of this matter, there are thoſe few remarks I would offer, concerning their meeting with him, and their miſſing of him.

The *firſt* remark I offer is this, "That theſe "who are acquainted with his coming, and "going, they are the *ſeed of Jacob*, praying Ja"cob, to whom God has ſaid, *They ſhall not* "*ſeek* him *in vain.*" And ſometimes they have it to ſay, *I ſought him, and I found him;* but many times they have it to ſay, We ſought him, but we miſt him; we *ſought him, but* we *found him not.* There is *a generation that ſeek the face of Jacob's God.*

But, *ſecondly*, I would here remark, "That "ſuch an enjoyment of God's preſence, as his "people deſire, and would be at, is *denied* them "while they are in the world." And this he is pleaſed to do for many wiſe and good reaſons: partly, to draw out their deſires more after him; partly, to quicken their endeavours in ſeeking after him; partly, to prove and humble them, and *to do them good in the latter end.*

But then, *thirdly*, another remark, I would offer is, "That the Lord's communicating "himſelf unto his people, is in a way that is "very *variable.*" He many times ſurpriſes them with his viſits.—Sometimes he comes when they are in their worſt caſe. He ſometimes talks with them when they are napping, as it were; he takes them when they are dead, and *like beaſts before him.*—Sometimes when they are in their worſt frames; *For the iniquity of his covetouſneſs was I wroth, and ſmote him; I hid me and was wroth; and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart.* Well, ſaith the Lord, *I have ſeen his ways and will heal him; I will lead him alſo, and reſtore comforts to him, and to his mourners*, Iſa. lvii. 17, 18.—Sometimes he comes to them, when they are juſt at the giving over; *I ſaid I am caſt out of thy ſight*, ſaid Jonah, *yet will I look again towards thy holy temple*, Jonah ii. 4.—Sometimes their ordinary attainments do exceed their communion-attainments; and hence they have it many times to ſay, O that it were with me at a communion-table, as in ſuch a time, and ſuch a time.——The Lord's way is *variable.*

But again, in the *fourth* place, I would here remark, "That the Lord's hiding himſelf, and "the ſoul's miſſing of his preſence, when ei"ther they are ſeeking after him, and are diſ"appointed; or, when they have found him, "and do immediately miſs him, I ſay, it is "very *heavy* unto them." Alas! it is a great burden to them! Uſually, when they thus miſs him, they are compaſſed with clouds of darkneſs. It may be they are in darkneſs about *duty*, not knowing what to do. Perhaps, they are in darkneſs about their *graces*, not knowing whether they are gold or counterfeits. It may happen, they are in the dark about the *promiſes*, not knowing whether they belong to them or not. It is poſſible, they are in darkneſs

neſs about their *experiences*, whether they be deluſions or not.—They are oft-times filled with amazement, when they miſs their Beloved. When their love is away, they think ſuch a diſpenſation is contrary to his merciful nature; they are apt to think ſometimes, that it is contrary to his gracious promiſe, and that it is contrary to the experiences of his people; and, perhaps, contrary to their own experiences; and contrary to the hopes they have had.—They are, I ſay, in great *heavineſs*, for ordinary, when they miſs him.

But again, a *fifth* remark I offer here, is, "That when the Lord has been long away "from his people, and, at laſt, returns to "them, readily the meeting is very *remarkable*." —Their meeting with him then is readily remarkable for its *fulneſs*: it is like a great ſhower after a long drought; or, they get the more full meal, that they have been long faſting; and the longer they have wanted acceſs, the acceſs is the nearer.—Readily ſuch a meeting is remarkable for the *ſweetneſs* of it. O! how ſweet is it when the Lord's people meet with him, when he hath been long abſent! It is like the *loſt piece of ſilver*, Luke xv. 8, 9. Here is a loſt privilege I have found again; I thought the Lord would never have returned to me again; but now I have got him again.—Such a meeting is remarkable for the *melting quality* of it: it is like the meeting of two dear friends, that have been long aſunder, that fall a weeping for joy in one another's arms. O the joy that a meeting between Chriſt and his people cauſes, after they have been long aſunder.—It readily alſo is remarkable for the *power* and *efficacy* of it. It has a powerful and ſtrong impreſſion on them, when they meet with him, after he has been long away. It is a Bethel that they will not eaſily forget; *I will remember thee*, ſays the Pſalmiſt, *from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, and from the hill Mizar*, Pſal. xlii. 6.

But again, in the *ſixth* place, I would here alſo remark, "That theſe meetings with the "Lord are very *rare*." They are not to be expected from the Lord often: they are feaſt-days; and every day is not a feaſt-day. They muſt come down from the mount; *We muſt live here by faith, not by ſight*. The Lord's people, many times, cannot bear a full cup, far leſs carry with it for a long time.

But again, *ſeventhly*, I would here remark, "That the Lord's coming and going, his peo- "ples meeting with him, and their miſſing of "him, are remarkable and diſcernable, accord- "ing to the *degree* of his coming and going." Sometimes his coming unto them is more *ſudden* and *ſurpriſing*; and then they readily know his coming. Sometimes it is more *gradual*, and leſs diſcernable; ſo it is alſo with his going. Sometimes he goes away more ſuddenly, and they miſs him immediately; and ſometimes he goes away gradually, and then they may not ſo eaſily know that he is gone; as it is ſaid of Samſon, *The Lord departed from him, and he wiſt it not*.

But then I would remark, in the *eight* and laſt place, "That this diſpenſation of divine "grace, his manifeſting himſelf, and allow- "ing his people acceſs to him, and ſuch com- "munication with him, as it is a rare thing, "ſo it is a *great myſtery*." It is even a myſtery to them who know it; for they know but *darkly*: *Now, we ſee through a glaſs darkly, but then face to face*. It is a hidden myſtery to the moſt part of profeſſors: it is like the *holy of holies*, that none but the prieſts entered into; ſo none but theſe that are *kings and prieſts* unto their God know any thing of it.

Having offered theſe remarks concerning this his *coming*, and *going* from his people. I go on

III. To the *third* thing propoſed, which was, To enquire in what *reſpects* they may miſs him, where they enjoyed him; *God went up from him in the place where he talked with him*. On this head, there are theſe eight particulars I would ſhortly touch at.

1. They may miſs him in the *duties* wherein they have enjoyed him.—They may miſs him in the *word* wherein they have enjoyed him to their ſweet experience; *I will remember thee*, ſays the pſalmiſt, *from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, and from the hill Mizar*, Pſal. xlii. 6. I will remember bypaſt experiences. But it ſeems, for all that, he miſſed him there; for he ſays in the next verſe, *Deep calleth unto deep, at the noiſe of thy water-ſpouts; all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me*.—They may miſs him in the duty of *reading the ſcriptures*, wherein ſometimes they have enjoyed him. It is ſometimes the food of their ſouls; at other times it may be a ſealed book to them.—They may miſs him in the duty of *meditation*, where ſometimes they have enjoyed him; *My meditation of him ſhall be ſweet*, ſays the pſalmiſt, Pſal. civ. 34. But again, they may have it to ſay, *I remembered God, and was troubled*.—They may miſs him in the duty of *prayer*, wherein they have frequently enjoyed him, and got him in their arms; they may ſo miſs him, as to be obliged to ſay, *Why art thou ſo far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? Wherefore hideſt thou thyſelf from me?* But again,

2. They may not only miſs him in the duties wherein they have found him, but they may miſs him in the *frames* wherein they have enjoyed him.—They may miſs him ſometimes even in a *mourning* frame, and may *go mourning without the ſun*. Mary ſeeks him weeping and mourning, and ſhe miſſes her Lord, though ſhe was in that frame.—Again, they may miſs him in a *melting* and a *loving* frame; ſo it was with the church, when ſhe ſays, *I ſought him, whom my ſoul loveth; but I found him not*.—They may miſs him, even when in a right *lively* frame; *I ſought him*, (I was quickened to ſeek him) *but I found him not*.—They may miſs that preſence that ſometimes they had, and that they would gladly be at. But again, in the *next* place,

3. They may miſs him in the *beſt caſes* wherein they have enjoyed him: they may miſs him in that caſe they think to be beſt, and that caſe which is really beſt. They may miſs him when they think they are beſt, *viz.* in a *joyful* caſe; yet they may miſs him, in regard of that meaſure and degree of preſence they would be at. They may miſs him in that caſe when it is really beſt with them. When is it beſt with them? It is beſt when they are believing, and their heart is opening to the Son of God; and yet in that caſe they may miſs him; the ſpouſe ſays, Song v. 6. *I opened to my Beloved; but my Beloved had withdrawn himſelf, and was gone*. When they have much and ſweet enjoyment of him, they may ſuddenly miſs him, and when they are opening

opening the door of their heart to him, he may disappear. But again, in the

4. Place, They may miss him not only in the best cases, wherein they have enjoyed him; but they may miss him in the *worst cases*, wherein they have been prevented and surprized with the communications of his favour: for instance, they may miss him in *confused times*, when the enemies of the Lord are making a tumult, and when all things are seeming to run to disorder and confusion, though the Lord uses sometimes to refresh them in such circumstances, according to his word; *There is a river*, says the psalmist, *the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God*, Psal. xlvi. 4. I remember it is said, Psal. lxxxiii. 1. *Keep not thou silence, O God; hold not thy peace, and be not still, O God; for lo, thine enemies make a tumult, and they that hate thee, have lift up the head; they have taken crafty counsel against thy people, and consulted against thy hidden ones*; and at the same time it supposes, that the Lord is silent, was not taking notice as he used to do, and as they expected he would.—Again, they may miss him in the time of *persecution*, when he uses to stand by his people, as Paul says, *The Lord stood by me*; even in such a time they may miss his presence, as the church says, Song v. 7. *The watchmen, that went about the city, found me, they smote me, they wounded me; the keepers of the walls took away my vail from me*: there was persecution, and at the same time she is crying, and yet finds him not.—Again, they may miss him in the time of *temptation*, when he uses to stand up in succouring them, making a way to escape: thus it was with Paul, he was buffeted by Satan; he prays and prays again, yet the temptation continues; and he misses him, until he goes on and finds him; and the answer the Lord gives him is, *My grace shall be sufficient for thee, and my strength shall be perfected in thy weakness*. However, I say, in the times of temptation they may miss him.—Again, in times of *tribulation* and *affliction*, he uses to come to them, according to his word; *When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee*, Isa. xliii. 2. Yet even when going through fire and water they may miss him; as it was with Job when, in great affliction, he cries unto the Lord, and he does not regard him; *Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: on the left-hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him; he hideth himself on the right-hand, that I cannot see him*, Job xxiii. 8, 9. Oh! say the Lord's people, I would think nothing of my affliction, if the Lord did not hide his face: this is not a strange case, you may miss him even then, as is evident from what I have said. Again,

5. In the next place, the Lord's people they may miss him, in the *words of grace*, wherein sometimes they have enjoyed him. The Lord manifests himself sometimes in the word, and gives them his presence by means of his word; and then they have it to say, perhaps, with the psalmist, *The Lord hath spoken in his holiness, and I will rejoice*, Psal. lx. 6. But at other times, they may so far miss him, that they may cry out, *All men are liars*. But how, Sirs, can believers make God a liar, but by making the prophets liars, and the words of the prophets lies? *Will the Lord cast off for ever? And will he be favourable no more? Is his mercy clean gone for ever? Doth his promise fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies?* Psal. lxxvii. 7, 8, 9. They may at some times meet with a promise, and rejoice therein; but at other times that promise may be tasteless to their souls; they can see nothing of God there. I say, they may miss him sometimes in the words wherein they have enjoyed him. Again,

6. In the next place, they may miss him in the *instruments* whereby they have enjoyed him; it may be such a minister, and such an instrument, is blasted to them. He comes to them sometimes with full breasts, and they sweetly suck out of these full breasts of consolation; but behold, at other times, he comes to them with *dry breasts*, as it were; they can find nothing of God in his sermon, where they have formerly met with God by him. Why, Sirs, we ministers are *the savour of life*, just as the Spirit of life is pleased to go along with the word: and therefore we have little need to idolize instruments.—We may miss him in the instruments whereby we have enjoyed him. Again, in the

7. Place, We may miss him in the *society* of the Lord's people, wherein we have enjoyed him. It is a commendable practice of some of the Lord's people, that they meet for social prayer and conference, and the Lord many times countenances them in it. It is said, Mal. iii. 16. *They that feared the Lord, spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkned and heard it: and a book of remembrance was written before him, for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name.* They sometimes meet with the Lord there: but at other times they may miss him very suddenly, and be obliged to say with the church, Lam. iii. 8. *When I cry and shout, he shutteth out my prayer.* And in the 44th ver. *Thou hast covered thyself with a cloud, that our prayers should not pass through.* But again,

8. In the next place, to add no more, they may miss him in the very *place* where they have enjoyed him; *God went up from him, in the very place where he talked with him.* I say, they may miss him in the very *times* and *places* where they have enjoyed him; and they may enjoy him, but suddenly the Lord may withdraw from them. They may miss him in the public places, the ordinances where they have enjoyed him; they may miss him in secret places, in the chamber, in the field, in the spot where they enjoyed him; *God went up from him, in the place where he talked with him.*——So much shall suffice for the third head.

IV. The *fourth* thing I proposed was, To give the *grounds* and *reasons* of this dispensation: Whence is it that the Lord's people may enjoy God, and yet may quickly miss him, even in the very spot where they have enjoyed him? I cannot stand to enlarge upon this; I shall offer some reasons in so many words.

1. By this the Lord shews his *sovereignty*, that he is the sovereign dispenser of his blessings, and confers them when, upon whom, and in what manner he pleases.

2. The Lord by this would also confirm his people unto their *Head*, Jesus Christ, who was deserted of the Father, *My God, my God*, says he, *why hast thou forsaken me?* Alas! this was a bitter cup, yet the Lord will have his people to be

be plunged in it, ſo to ſpeak, to know the bitterneſs of that cup of deſertion.

3. It is ordered alſo, to make a *difference* between heaven and earth. We are but ſtrangers and pilgrims here; and are not to expect an uninterrupted enjoyment of our Lord in this world. There is an eternity of the enjoyment of God a-coming, unto all the children of grace; and therefore he takes the liberty with his people now to hide himſelf from them. Again,

4. It is ordered alſo, for ſhewing unto us that the Lord may *approve* of his people, and *accept* of their ſervices and duties in Jeſus Chriſt, even when they miſs that in duty which they would be at, namely, his bleſſing of them with his comfortable preſence: this is what he will give unto them as he pleaſes.

5. He would have them to know they are not to *reſt* on the means; that they are not to be depended upon, but that they are to uſe the means, with a reſpect to his command, and a regard to his authority, even though the Lord ſhould deny his comfortable preſence therein. The Lord orders it alſo, it may be,

6. To *chaſtiſe* their former miſbehaviours, either in ſeeking, or in the enjoyment of him: he will learn them to value his preſence, by abſenting himſelf from them.

7. Many times he does it, to *quicken* their endeavours after him, and to lead them unto the due acknowledgment of their ſins, by which they have provoked him to depart and hide his face; as the Lord ſays by his prophet, *I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and ſeek my face: in their affliction they will ſeek me early.* Many ſuch reaſons might be given, why the Lord orders matters thus.

8. I ſhall give you one reaſon more; (and, Sirs, we may tremble when we ſpeak of it) the Lord may hide his face, in many of the duties of his appointment, to ſhew his *diſpleaſure* againſt his church and people; and to ſhew what vengeance may be a-coming upon them, becauſe of their ſins and provocations: and the Lord may withdraw from his own people, and hide his face from them, becauſe of their ſinful acceſſion to the evils of the time and place wherein they live. Ah! what ſtroaks may be a-coming upon a ſinful generation! And alſo, for this reaſon, he may hide his face from his people, that it may not be in their power to ſtand up in the gap, to hinder the ſtroak to come on; and therefore he hides his face, and hardly allows them to pray. What is the language of it? It is to this effect, *Pray not for this people*, when I am peremptorily reſolved to *bring down vengeance on them*; therefore he with-holds the Spirit of prayer. And he ſometimes withdraws with reference to this very point, that they have not ſo much as the aſſurance of the delay of a ſtroak, becauſe he is quickly to bring it on; and, perhaps, this may be one great complaint of the Lord's people, and of ſome that go many a foot to his ordinances; Oh! the little communion they meet with in them! It may be the Lord is reſerving the comforts of a communion till the time of a wilderneſs want ſhall come; *Behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderneſs*, ſaith the Lord, by the prophet, *and ſpeak comfortably to her*, Hoſ. ii. 14.

V. I come now, in the *laſt* place, to make *application* of the whole. I ſhall confine my application to theſe two uſes. 1. By way of *trial* and *examination*. And, 2. By way of *exhortation*.

1ſt, Is it ſo, that the Lord, when he allows communion and fellowſhip with him to his people, may ſuddenly withdraw, and they may miſs him in the ſpot where they have enjoyed him? Then, O Sirs, you ſhould try what you know of his *preſence*, and of *communion and fellowſhip with him*. It were the leſs hazard that you knew, to your experience, that of *miſſing* him, if ye really knew what it were to *find* him, and what it is to *enjoy* him, and to have communion with him. Why, Sirs, I would have you to put it to the trial, if God has been talking with you at this occaſion, or at any other time. Do you know what it is to have God talking with you; I mean, to have communion and fellowſhip with him? You cannot expect to have the enjoyment of glory hereafter, if it be not begun in grace here. Why, how ſhall we know, ſay you, if we have met with the Lord? Or attained any thing of the enjoyment of him? Why, in the

1. Place, you may try it by this, There are ſome things you will be hardly able to *endure*, if you have met with him.—The Lord's people they cannot endure that God go *away* from them again; or that God ſhould hide his face. Oh! it is heavy to think of the Lord's withdrawing from them: they cannot endure to think that God ſhould be angry with them: they cannot endure that any thing ſhould have Chriſt's room in their hearts: they cannot endure that any thing ſhould hinder or marr that meeting with, and enjoyment of, God they have: they ſay with the pſalmiſt, *Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity; for I will keep the commandments of my God.* What will all the world be to me, ſays the ſoul, if I have not communion and fellowſhip with my God? — Again, the ſoul cannot endure any thing that tends to *marr* the enjoyment of God; when he has it, when he is *brought into the banquetting-houſe*, and has the light of God's countenance, he is ready to charge all about him, with the ſpouſe, that they do not provoke the Lord to depart; *I charge you*, ſays ſhe, *O ye daughters of Jeruſalem, by the roes and by the hinds of the field, that ye ſtir not up, nor awake my love till he pleaſe*, Song ii. 7. What know ye of this? Again,

2. If ye know his gracious preſence, you will be one that *rejoices* in his *preſence*, and *laments* at his *abſence*.—His *preſence* will be your *chief joy*; his abſence will be your chief ſorrow: his preſence will give you more joy than all the world can; his abſence will make you more ſorrowful, than any thing in time can make you joyful. This is the import of that word, *Thou haſt put*, ſays the pſalmiſt, *gladneſs in my heart, more than in the time, that their corn and their wine increaſed*, Pſal. iv. 7.—Again, if you be one that has had a meeting with the Lord, then, to be ſure, his *abſence* will be a *diſtreſſing* thing to you. As you deſire his preſence above all things, *and count all things but loſs and dung, for the excellency of the knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt*, and communion with God in him; ſo, when you cannot win at the enjoyment of him, when you cannot get your heart brought up to love him, when you cannot get your eyes open to ſee him, you look upon yourſelf as a diſtreſſed perſon, as a broken perſon, as a miſerable perſon, by reaſon of the abſence of God, and the preſence of ſin.

A child

A child of God looks upon himself to be, and is really, an afflicted and a broken body, by reason of the presence of sin, and the absence of the Lord; and therefore he cries out, *O that I knew where I might find him!* But again,

3. If you are one that have experience of this presence of God, and fellowship with him; then you will have some fellowship with the *saints*, the *excellent ones of the earth*. What know you of this? I think this is a good sign, when the heart warms towards one that is a child of grace, though he be a beggar, or in poor circumstances, or one of little wit otherwise; when your heart warms toward the picture of Christ, when your heart warms towards one, because he has the image of Christ; *By this we know*, says the apostle John, *that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren*, 1 John iii. 1, 4. The heart warming towards these that have the image of God; it has in it something of heart-warming towards Christ himself. Again,

4. We may know it by the *humbling effect* of it. When a person has the image of God on him he will be humbled; thus Job, when he had got a clear sight of himself, says to the Lord, *I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee; wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes*, Job xlii. 5, 6. O the presence of God makes the person hate sin; it humbles him to nothing, as the Lord says by the prophet, Isa. ii. 11. *The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of man shall be bowed down*, when *the Lord alone is exalted* in the soul, when he is present on the throne of the heart. Again,

5. We may judge of it by this, they that have met with God and have his presence, whether they have it sensibly or not, they have still an *high esteem* of Christ, even though he should be absent. They have also an high esteem of his ordinances, even when but dry breasts; they dare not undervalue them: nay, they have a great regard for every thing that appertains to him, and bears an impression of his image.

6. They have something also of a *tenderness of heart*, that they dare not allow themselves in sin; they dare not live in the omission of known duty, or in the commission of known sin: and they have something also of a tenderness of walk; though *iniquities prevail against them*, yet they never dare run *into an excess* of riot with the wicked world. They are such as *fear the Lord*; or have the character given them that we find recorded in the first chapter of Nehemiah, ver. 11. they *desire to fear his name*.——You may enquire by what I have been saying, whether you know the presence of God, and fellowship with him.

I thought to have spoke by way of *address*, 1. To these who have *known* fellowship with him, but now they have missed him. 2. To these who at *present* may be under the joyful impressions of their having fellowship with God, so that he is *talking with them*. And, 3. To these that know *nothing* of this intercourse with God, and as little care for it. I would say but a few words to each of these.

1st, As to these who *found* the Lord *talking with* them, and who have had some intercourse with him allowed them; but now they have *missed* him, and it may be have provoked him to hide his face. All I would say to you, is, to offer these two or three advices.

1. I would have you to study *divine providences* towards yourself, and the providence of the Lord towards others of his people, in his coming and going towards them. Eye the sovereignty of his dispensations. Why, it may be, in this study, you may meet with him; *Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord*, Psal. cvii. 43.

2. I would advise you, in these circumstances that you are in, if you would have your captivity returned, be concerned on your knees before the Lord, about your *friends*, and others you should be concerned for. It is remarkable, Job xlii. 10. *The Lord turned the captivity of Job, when he was praying for his friends*: when you are applying for your friends or others, you may find the Lord turning your captivity.

3. I would advise you to be concerned for the *church* of Christ. It may, perhaps, be one cause of the Lord's withdrawing from you, in your private case, on account of your having little concern about the church of Christ. You will find, that when Daniel was applying to God for his church and people, then he met with that intercourse with God, wherein he spake unto him, saying, *O man greatly beloved*: and, says the Lord to Baruch, *Seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not: for behold I will bring evil upon all flesh, saith the Lord: but thy life will I give unto thee for a prey, in all places whither thou goest*, Jer. xlv. 5. Well, be concerned for the public; and in this way you may come to meet with the Lord again. But, then again,

4. Another thing I would advise you to, is, endeavour, through grace, to be concerned for, and weighted with, the *sins* of the day and generation you live in: by this you may get *a mark set upon* you; for, he sets *a mark upon the foreheads of them that sigh and cry, for all the abominations that be done in the midst of the city*. But then, again,

5. Believer, see that he have you *alone*, if you be complaining that you miss him in ordinances. I remember what was said by Mark, concerning Christ and his disciples, chap. iv. 34. *When they were* ALONE *he expounded all things to his disciples*. See that he have you alone, and see that you be much in secret with him; and thus the Lord may communicate himself to you. He will not readily tell you his mind until he get a convenient time; you may get that in secret, that you have not got at a communion-table. Again,

6. I would have you beware of *conformity* to the generality of professors in our day. O beware of being conformed to them in their neutrality and indifferency about the work of God; and bringing their neutrality this way under the good names of *moderation*, *good-breeding*, and the like: beware of conformity to these; for it is your reproach to be conformed to them in their selfishness, while most part *seek their own things*, and *few the things of Jesus Christ*; and in this way you cannot expect to meet with Christ. — In a word, Do you yet miss him? Wait on him; *The Lord is a God of judgment, and blessed are all they that wait for him*.

2dly, But I would now speak a word to these who have *found* the Lord at this occasion, so that he is *talking with* them. It is possible there are some that have the joyful impressions of communion

munion with God, and, with Jacob, are *talking* with God, and God is *talking* with them. Are you brought to the mount of communion and converſation with him? Then I would give you two or three advices.

1. O believer, if that be thy caſe, O be *thankful*; let God have the praiſe of this mercy: remember to adore, and ſtir up others to adore and magnify him. You are dignified before many others that are in many reſpects better than you: What are you that you ſhould be ſo dealt with? Again,

2. O beware of *idolizing* your entertainment; when you are enjoying theſe fruits of the Maſter's kindneſs, beware of reſting upon the fruits; for they will not bear you; but you muſt reſt upon the Tree of life: beware of making a Chriſt of them: beware of being ſtrong in the grace received; but *be ſtrong the grace that is in Chriſt Jeſus*. Again,

3. I would adviſe you to *entertain* Chriſt well, when he is with you; and beware of provoking him to depart from you. There are ſeveral things we ſhould beware of, that provoke him to depart. He may go away in ſovereignty, and it is beſt when he does ſo, and you have not a ſinful hand in it.—Beware of *unbelief*; this is readily the firſt door by which your comforts will go out from you.—Beware of *doubting* of his love, and diſputing of the mercy of God. Do you enjoy his love? Are you ſure concerning it, as having an infallible mark of it in his word? Then take inſtruments, that it is no deluſion; that ſo when the Lord hides his face, you may not raze the foundation, calling all in queſtion.—Again, beware of *ſecurity* and *ſleeping* after you have got a good meal. If a friend ſhould come and pay you a viſit, and you ſhould fall aſleep beſide him, he will think, that you make very little of his viſit, and he will ſoon make away from you.—And then I would have you beware of *covetouſneſs* and *worldly-mindedneſs*; *For the iniquity of his covetouſneſs I was wroth, and ſmote him; I hid me and was wroth*, ſays the Lord, by the prophet, Iſa. lvii. 17. There you ſee is both anger and abſence, by reaſon of a covetous heart, a worldly heart, and worldly-mindedneſs; I ſay, beware of this.—Again, I would adviſe you to beware of *defiling the Lord's houſe*: keep the houſe, where he is, clean, ſo as he may not be provoked to depart. Keep the houſe clean for him: endeavour, through his grace, to keep the heart clean, to keep it clean from ſecret ſin; *Who can underſtand his errors? Cleanſe thou me from ſecret faults*, ſays the pſalmiſt, Pſal. xix. 12. Endeavour to be clean, not only from ſecret faults, but public faults and ſins in the day and generation wherein you live. The neglect of this may greatly provoke him to withdraw his preſence from you. Endeavour to be faithful to his truths that are controverted *. Some will be ready to ſay, Why ſhould we be concerned for *controverted truths?* If, indeed, we do not ſtand up for any but theſe which are uncontroverted, the devil and his inſtruments will not trouble us; but if we do not ſo, we cannot be faithful to God. And we are to be faithful to the leaſt truth of Chriſt. Some may be ready to ſay, If, for the cauſe of truth, we are to ſuffer, why not? But many are contending about theſe things that are trifles. O Sirs, if they be the matters of Chriſt, beware of calling them trifles. I remember to have read of a lady in France, at the time of the maſſacre there, that was led away to be drowned for the ſake of her religion; her perſecutors promiſed her life, if ſhe would but ſay, *Ave Maria*, or *Pater Noſter*. She anſwered, "I might eaſily repeat theſe words; "but if my doing ſo be interpreted by you a "renouncing of my religion, and a yielding "up of the cauſe of Chriſt, in that ſenſe I will "not do it:" and ſo ſhe was drowned. If we come to yield in ſmaller things, we may do it in greater. We are to reckon nothing ſmall in the matters of Chriſt. Then,

4. See that you *improve* his preſence, if you have got it at this occaſion. How ſhall we improve it? Improve it in the behalf of *Chriſt*, to commend him more to you than ever: and ſure, if you have his preſence, you cannot ſay too much of it; O improve it for the commending him more and more to you.—Improve it in behalf of his *ordinances*, making them more precious in your view.—And improve this preſence of the Lord in behalf of your *children*: Have you children, man, woman? Improve it in behalf of them, and cry to God, wreſtle with him for a bleſſing to you and your ſeed, ſeeing he has brought your near.—Improve it in behalf the *church* of Scotland: plead that he may not take a farewel of Scotland; that he may return to his ordinances; that he may return to the judicatories.—O improve your enjoyment of the preſence of Chriſt, in behalf of the churches *abroad*, that are brought very low.—O improve his preſence in behalf of your *friends in Chriſt*, theſe that are in Chriſt, that have not win your length, that have not win half your length. Are you brought into the King's court? O ſpeak a good word for the Joſeph's that are in priſon, that are under the hatches, that the Lord may advance them as well as you.—Then improve his preſence in behalf of *ſtrangers* who never ſaw any thing of his glory, as we find the church in the Song does, Song viii. 8. *We have a little ſiſter*, ſays ſhe, *and ſhe hath no breaſts: what ſhall we do for our ſiſter, in the day when ſhe ſhall be ſpoken for? If ſhe be a wall, we will build upon her a palace of ſilver; and if ſhe be a door, we will incloſe her with boards of cedar*. We ſhould pray for a bleſſing upon the deſign of preaching the goſpel unto a Pagan and a Heathen world: we wiſh that you would mind them that are called to preach the goſpel to the heathens. O pray that the Lord may be with them.—Then remember the advice that Joſeph gave to Pharaoh, *Lay up for the years of famine*; lay up comforting promiſes and experiences: you may need all that you have got; yea, you may need much more.

3*dly*, I ſhall only ſpeak a word to you that *know nothing* of this preſence of God, of his coming and going; that know nothing of finding or miſſing him; and, perhaps, as little care. You never had any concern about his preſence; for you are ſtrangers to fellowſhip and communion with the Son of God. O man, woman, I would ſay a word to you; O hear what God ſays to you, before he go away from the place where he is ſpeaking to you: he is ſpeaking to you in this everlaſting goſpel. We are not to ſtay here, but we are to part: and we will probably never meet all again, until we come

* Several of theſe controverted and oppoſed truths of God are condeſcended on above, p. 70, 149, 322, 454, 631, 648, 670, 661, 701.

before

before the tribunal of God, when *the Lord Jeſus Chriſt ſhall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the goſpel of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* Before God go away, who is talking to you in this goſpel, come to Chriſt, who is dealing with you, and ſpeaking to you. Conſider, that if theſe meſſages of grace, that you have got already, at this occaſion, be all ſlighted by you, there are more *terrible ones* abiding you than ever came to Job, and they were right fearful ones: there came one to him and told him, *The oxen were plowing, and the aſſes feeding beſides them, and the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away; yea, they have ſlain thy ſervants with the edge of the ſword, and I only am eſcaped alone to tell thee.* That man is hardly done ſpeaking, when another comes and tells him, *The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burnt up the ſheep and ſervants, and conſumed them; and I am eſcaped alone to tell thee.* While that man is ſpeaking, another meſſenger comes and tells him, *The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon* your *camels, and have carried them away; yea, and ſlain the ſervants with the edge of the ſword; and I only am eſcaped alone to tell thee.* While that man is ſpeaking, another comes in and tells him, Your *ſons and your daughter were eating, and drinking wine in their eldeſt brother's houſe, and behold, there came a great wind from the wilderneſs, and ſmote the four corners of the houſe, and it fell upon the young men, and they are all dead* and gone; *and I only am eſcaped alone to tell thee,* Job i. 14, — 19. Theſe are heavy meſſages; but they are nothing in compariſon of the heavy meſſage that, a few days hence, it may be a few moments, for ought you know, at death, is abiding you. One meſſage will be, That you muſt part with all your dear and near relations you have had upon the earth, and you muſt part with them for ever. Upon the back of this meſſage another comes, Man, you muſt part with all your enjoyments of time; you muſt part with all your profits, pleaſures, or honours. Ere that meſſage is given, another comes, Man, you muſt part with your ſoul; however near the relation was between your ſoul and your body, yet your body muſt go down to the duſt, and your *ſoul to God who gave it:* yea, a ſadder meſſage comes yet, Man, you muſt part with the preſence of God, and you muſt be ſent to hell, and there *puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction,* and be baniſhed for ever, from the *preſence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power,* 2 Theſ. i. 9. Why, poor Chriſtleſs man, you muſt lay your account with this meſſage; unleſs you could make yourſelf immortal: this will infallibly come upon you. This will be the meſſage of death.

And there is a four-fold wo that will come upon you, if you continue in this your natural ſtate.

1. Wo unto you, for you are *certainly* miſerable; *The wicked ſhall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God,* Pſal. ix. 17.

2. Wo unto you, for you ſhall be *ſuddenly* miſerable; when you are ſaying, *Peace, peace,* to yourſelves, *then ſudden deſtruction ſhall come upon you, as travail upon a women with child, and you ſhall not eſcape,* 1 Theſ. v. 3.

3. Wo unto you, for you ſhall be *doubly* miſerable; you are not only deſpiſers of God's law, but deſpiſers of the goſpel; therefore your damnation ſhall be double. Then,

4. Wo will be unto you, for you ſhall be *eternally* miſerable: as long as God lives, you ſhall live in Tophet; and when you have lived in it as many thouſands of years, as there are piles of graſs on the earth; and when theſe are expired, and you have lived as many thouſands of years in it, as there are pickles of ſand on the ſea-ſhores; and when theſe are alſo expired, and you have lived in it as many thouſands of years as there are ſtars in the firmament; and when theſe are alſo done, and you have lived in it as many thouſands of years, as there ſhall be moments from the beginning to the end of the world; and when your have counted numbers until they come to be innumerable, one of your great miſeries will be, that it is *eternal;* for time is gone, and there is nothing but eternity remains.

O conſider thy dreadful caſe that haſt no concern about the meſſages of the goſpel, that haſt not been affected with it to this day: I would have you to conſider this, that Chriſt is yet in your offer, before we go from the place we are in; he is yet in the place. I would give you another offer, and if you do not accept thereof, it will make you the more inexcuſable. What ſhould hinder your acceptance, but your unbelief? Has he not condeſcended to be a Saviour to you? Yea; for he is exhibited as the *Saviour of the world.* He is as much your Saviour, as a phyſician of an army is ſo to the whole army, whether they employ him or not. You have a right to cloſe with him; ye diſpiſe your own mercy if you reject him. O Sirs! has he come in your nature, and will you not come to him? Has he *become ſin for you,* and will you not come to him? Has he *become a curſe* for you, and will you not come to him? Has he come at this occaſion to you, and will you not come to him? Has he not ſaid, *To you is the word of this ſalvation ſent.* man, woman, every individual of you? Has he come and declared upon his veracity, that *him that cometh unto me, I will in nowiſe caſt out?* O Sirs! why then will you not come to him? If thou wilt not let him in at the door of thy heart, thou muſt anſwer for it at the great day; *Behold, ye deſpiſers, and wonder; wonder and periſh: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye ſhall in nowiſe believe, though a man declare it unto you,* Acts xiii. 41.

It may be you have been wondering at all theſe offers of Chriſt, and at all theſe ſermons and ſacraments; if you will not wonder and be ſaved, you muſt wonder and be damned; *Behold, ye deſpiſers, wonder and periſh.* What is it, man, that is the matter with you? What is thy caſe? Art thou not fully warranted to come to this Jeſus? What ſort of ſinner art thou? Art thou *deſtitute* of knowledge? Why, he comes to be *wiſdom* unto thee. Art thou *guilty?* He comes to be *righteouſneſs* unto thee. Art thou a *polluted* ſinner? He comes and offers himſelf to be *ſanctification* unto thee. Art thou a *miſerable* ſinner? He comes to be *redemption* unto thee. Art thou lying among the *unclean pots* of hell? He comes to thee, to make thee as the *wings of a dove, covered with ſilver, and her feathers with yellow gold.* Art thou a *backſlider?* He ſays unto thee, *Come unto me, and I will heal thy backſlidings, I will love thee freely; for mine anger is turned away from thee.* — What ſort of a ſinner art thou? If you be upon the face of the earth, you have a right to accept of the offer of Chriſt made to you in the goſpel; *Look unto me,* ſaith the Lord,

and

and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else, Isa. xlv. 22. O that the power of divine grace may draw you! Are you destitute of all grace? Christ comes to you with the offer of his grace in his hand; who is full of all that grace and truth you stand in need of. Are you unable, and saying you cannot come to him? Why, that need be no hinderance: you cannot come to God but by Jesus Christ; and not only as he is the *Way* to God, but as the *Leader*, the *Mighty God*, on whom God *has laid* thy *help*; and he says, Will you be helped out of that horrible pit and miry clay you have fallen into? O! will you take the Mediator's help? Sirs, go alone when ever you have time, and plead that the Spirit of the Lord may back the word to you, for without this, it will all fall to the ground.

I shall only speak a word (and close with it) to the *Lord's people*. Perhaps your hearts have been touched, and you have seen something of the Lord's glory in his sanctuary. O improve what you have got for strengthening you; remember what is said of Jacob, after he got a view of God at Bethel, it is said, *He went on his way*; it is in the original, HE LIFTED UP HIS FEET. He was, as it were, dragging his feet before, but then he went on his way, and walked without wearying. O improve any thing you have got at this occasion for exciting you to run your Christian race, and for fighting your Christian battles. Go forth in the name and strength of the Lord, depending and leaning upon your Beloved. *Walk in the fear of the Lord*, and so you shall also walk *in the comforts of the Holy Ghost*, as it is said, Acts ix. 31. If you walk under the influence of the Spirit as a Sanctifier, you shall walk under his influence as a comforter.

May the Lord back his own word with his own blessing; and to his name be the praise.

SERMON LXX.

The *Mounting* CHRISTIAN; or, the *Eagle-winged* BELIEVER.*

ISAIAH xl. 31. —*They shall mount up with wings as eagles.*—

WE have a remarkable question of the disciples, and answer of our Lord, Luke xvii. 37. The question is, *Where, Lord?* The answer is, *Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together.* Christ had been speaking of days of great tribulation a-coming; and the meaning of the question seems to be, Lord, where shall these that fear thy name fly in these days of trouble and distress? Where shall we find peace in the midst of war? Where is he who gives peace to the world? Where is Christ to be found, to whom the believer shall fly like an eagle to his prey? Faith needs not be at a loss in this inquiry, *Where, Lord?* In the womb, in the rags, in the manger? thither may we go to see the Son of God in a low humbled state.—*Where, Lord?* Go to the garden, and see him suffering for your sins the wrath of his Father.—*Where, Lord?* Fly to *Mount Calvary*, and see him on the cross; there may the eagles gather together, and behold him bleeding, suffering, crying, dying for them.—Again, *Where, Lord?* From Calvary to heaven, there he is now, and there must the soul fly, and see him crowned with glory and honour.—*Where, Lord?* Even at a communion table, where he is spiritually present, to be fed upon like a carcase, by the poor, believing, greedy, hungry eagle.—*Where, Lord?* Wherever he be, the believing souls must be at him; if on earth, no corner must be unsearched; if in heaven, distance must not keep them from him; nay, though he be mounted up to glory, yet they must mount up after him, according to his promise, *They shall mount up with wings as eagles.*

In the four preceeding verses we have the prophet,

1. Reproving the children of Israel for their *unbelief* and *distrust* of God, their dejection and despondency of spirit; *Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel; My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God*, ver. 27. Why do you think and speak, as if God did not heed and observe you, and as if God could not help and save you, whatever be your afflicted miserable case?

2. He reminds them of what is able to *silence* all their fear and distrust, *Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth fainteth not, neither is weary? There is no searching of his understanding*, ver. 28. *q. d.* He is an *eternal* God; so that there is no defect, no decay in him; he is an *omnipotent* God, who created the ends of the earth, and doubtless is as able to save as he was at first to make the world. He is of infinite wisdom to contrive your salvation; *There is no searching of his understanding*: none can say so far God's wisdom can go, and no further; for when we know not what to do, he knows: and he is a God of infinite power, he *faints not, nor is wearied*; he upholds the pillars of heaven and earth, and is neither wearied nor toiled with it.

3. The prophet relates to them God's *communicative* goodness, *He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might, he encreaseth strength*, ver. 29. He is not only powerful himself, but he communicates power and strength to these that need the same: *He gives power to the faint.* Many, out of weakness, even of body, are made strong, and recovered by his providence; and many that are feeble in Spirit, unable for service and suffering, yet are strengthened by his grace, with *all might in the inward man*; and e-

* This sermon was preached at Kinclaven, on the Sabbath evening, immediately after the administration of the sacrament of the Lord's supper there, June 1. 1735. It hath been three times printed.

especially

ſpecially to them that are ſenſible of their weakneſs, he *increaſes ſtrength:* for when they are weak in themſelves, they are *ſtrong in the Lord.*

4. The prophet ſtates the *difference* betwixt them that truſt in themſelves, and them that truſt in God: as for them that truſt in themſelves, and truſt to their own ſufficiency, they ſhall find their ſtrnegth to be but weakneſs; *even the youths ſhall faint and be weary, and the young men ſhall utterly fall,* ver. 30.; the young men who are ſtrong, and apt to look upon themſelves as ſtronger than they are, and ſo look not unto God for his grace to be ſufficient for them, they ſhall faint and fall, and be made to ſee the folly of truſting to themſelves. But as for them that truſt in the Lord, and wait on him for ſupplies of grace, *They ſhall renew their ſtrength: they ſhall mount up with wings as eagles; they ſhall run and not weary; they ſhall walk and not faint,* ver. 31.

Thus you ſee the connexion of the words with the preceeding; and in them you have three things, 1. The *exerciſe* of God's people. 2. Their *privilege, They ſhall renew their ſtrength.* 3. The *effect* of this privilege, *They ſhall mount up with wings as eagles; they ſhall run, and not be weary; they ſhall walk, and not faint.*

1. The *exerciſe* of God's people; they are ſuch as *wait upon the Lord.* Now, who are theſe that wait upon God? I anſwer, in the words of the pſalmiſt David, Pſal. xxiv. 6. *This is the generation of them that ſeek him, that ſeek thy face, O Jacob;* that is, O God of Jacob. And hence, ſeeking and waiting are joined together; *The Lord is good to them that wait for him, and to the ſoul that ſeeks him,* Lam. iii. 25. The true waiter is a ſeeker, and the true ſeeker is a waiter upon God. It is a duty comprehenſive of the whole character of the religious perſon. If you be truly ſeeking God, man, woman, at this ordinance, then you are waiting upon him.

2. But what *advantage* have they that thus ſeek and wait upon God? This is ſhewed us in the ſecond part of the words, their *privilege; They ſhall renew their ſtrength.* Their ſtrength ſhall not only be increaſed, but renewed; as there is new occaſion, they ſhall have new ſupplies, and ſo *they ſhall renew their ſtrength;* or, as it is in the Hebrew, *They ſhall* CHANGE *their ſtrength,* as a man changes his raiment: as their work is changed, their ſtrength ſhall be changed, whether it be doing or ſuffering work; they ſhall have ſtrength to labour, ſtrength to wreſtle, ſtrength to reſiſt temptation, and ſtrength to bear burdens; *They ſhall renew their ſtrength;* get new ſtrength for new duty. The beſt of God's children, if continuing long in duty, their ſpirits are waſted: well, God will renew their ſtrength, eſpecially their ſpiritual ſtrength, which is from God himſelf, from whom is their new temper and diſpoſition, their new nature. But what of all this, ſay you; indeed they ſhall have much benefit, if you conſider,

3. The *effect* of this privilege, or how it is made evident; that is evinced in three particulars.

(1.) *They ſhall mount up with wings as eagles.* O it is a great privilege for a believer to be brought, through grace, to fly; yea, not only to fly like a weak bird, but to mount up like an eagle, the ſtrongeſt of flying birds: the weak believer, by waiting on God, becomes *ſtrong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.* Grace ſtrengthens the ſoul to mount heavenward, and carries it above the world and the things of it.

(2.) *They ſhall run and not be weary;* that is, they ſhall run in the way of God's commandments chearfully, and with alacrity, conſtancy, and with perſeverance.

(3.) *They ſhall walk and not faint;* weak ſickly perſons are in danger to faint and fail when they walk, but *they ſhall walk and not faint.* You have a word, Gal. vi. 9. *Let us not weary in well-doing; for in due ſeaſon we ſhall reap, if we faint not.* O ſays a child of God, that is endeavouring, through grace, to wait upon the Lord, I fear I never reap, becauſe I will ſoon be faint and weary: but here is the promiſe you are to take hold of, *You ſhall run without wearying, and walk and not faint;* and in this way there is no fear but you ſhall reap: grace is promiſed, as well as the reward of grace.

We have already diſcuſſed one doctrinal obſervation from theſe words, *viz. That as it is the duty and practice of God's people to wait on God; ſo it ſhall be their privilege to have their ſtrength renewed.* But having finiſhed what we intended upon this doctrine, we come now to conſider the ſecond obſervation, namely,

> DOCT. *That believers, who, in waiting on the Lord, get their ſtrength renewed, they ſhall mount up on wings as eagles.*

The ſcripture is full of parables, where ſpiritual things are repreſented by natural; ſo here, the believer is compared to the eagle: the goſpel of Chriſt is full of them; and it may be for theſe two reaſons.

1. Becauſe parables make a *lively impreſſion* on the minds of auditors, and convey the truth to the perſon before he be aware: ſome, who are ready to forget the truth, will mind the ſimile; and ſo it leads them back again to the truth which they had forgot.

2. To teach us a *ſpiritual* and *ſacred uſe* of the creature, like Jacob's ladder, the foot on earth, and the top in heaven; that by theſe we may aſcend to heaven, and by the creature look above the creature.

The method we would propoſe, for illuſtrating this ſubject, through divine aſſiſtance, ſhall be the following.

I. We ſhall ſpeak a little of the *wings* wherewith they mount up.
II. The *things* wherein they mount up.
III. The *ſeaſons* when it is eſpecially they mount up.
IV. The *manner* how they mount up.
V. The *reaſons* why they mount up. And,
VI. Make ſome *application* of the ſubject. And in the whole of theſe particulars ſtudy as much brevity as poſſible.

I. We are to ſpeak of the *wings* wherewith they mount up. And here I might tell you the wings wherewith they *are* mounted up, and the wings wherewith they *do* mount.—The wings wherewith they *are* mounted up are nothing elſe but the *influences of the Spirit of Chriſt;* the enlightening and enlivening influences thereof: they are, indeed, more paſſive than active at firſt; *When I am lifted up, I will draw all men after me.* Chriſt being mounted up, he makes all his remnant to mount up after him: and herein they are acted, before they act; for, *he works in them both to will and to do.*

do. They are carried up, as it were, on the *wings of the wind*; for these influences of the Spirit, wherewith they are mounted up, are compared to the *wind*, Song iv. 16. *Awake, O north wind; come thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out.* Believers know well enough what it is to be mounted up on the wings of the Spirit.—But more particularly, as to the wings wherewith they *do* mount up, they are especially these two, *viz.* the wing of *faith*, and the wing of *love*.

1. The wing of *faith* they have, and must have, who would mount up heaven-ward. Now, there is not a feather in this wing, but is made in heaven; *By grace ye are saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God*, Eph. ii. 8. Yea, after the believer hath got faith, he cannot spread out his wing without God; *To you it is given, not only to believe but to suffer for his sake*, Phil. i. 29. To you, believers, it is given to believe; not only the habit of faith, is the gift of God, but the exercise of faith is his gift also. Now, this is one wing, and none can mount up to heaven without it; for it is a grace that looks not at things that are seen in this world, but at things that are not seen; it is *the evidence of things not seen*: it mounts the soul to heaven and heavenly things, and makes them evident.

2. There is the wing of *love*, by which the believer mounts up to heaven: and this is a wing made also by God; *The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost*, Rom. v. 5. This is a wing then framed in heaven, a grace that comes from the God of love; and therefore it flies up to heaven again: the holy spark of this fire flies upward. This grace is of such a mounting quality, that it unites the soul of the believer to Christ, as well as faith. As Jonathan's soul was knit or joined to the soul of David by love; so is the soul of the believer knit and glued to Christ by love: and, O this wing of love is a strong wing! Song viii. 6. *Love is strong as death*; yea, stronger than death and life, and principalities, and powers: *I am persuaded*, says the apostle, *that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord*, Rom. viii. 38, 39. This is such a strong wing that the fire cannot burn it: martyrs have found that it would abide the fire, when they glorified God in the fires; the fire did not burn their love, no; it mounted up to heaven with the flame.

II. The *second* thing was, To shew the *things* wherein they mount up. Here we shall give you both a negative and a positive account of them.

1st, We propose to give you a *negative* account of these things.

1. They do not mount up in *airy speculations*: some mount up only in airy motions; they have a great deal of head-knowledge, but no heart-love to the truth: *They receive not the love of the truth, that they might be saved; for which cause, God sends them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie*, 2 Thess. ii. 10, 11. The devil himself knows God and Christ; but hath no love to God or Christ in his heart: there may be much speculative knowledge, where there is no saving grace.

2. They do not mount up in *sinful curiosity*, to pry into the secrets of God; *For secret things belong to God, to us the things that are revealed*, Deut. xxix. 29. Many mount up too far into the decrees of election and reprobation. Oh! I fear I am a reprobate, say some. Alas! Sirs, beware of such blasphemy; as if, forsooth, you were omniscient, like God; and as if you had been upon the privy council of God from eternity, when he marked down the names of elect and reprobate: this is a thing cannot be known. In this side of time you cannot be sure you are a reprobate, as long as you are out of hell; but I can give you assurance, better than the stability of heaven and earth, that if you truly repent of your sin, and flee to Christ, the only Saviour, you are no reprobate; *Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon*, Isa. lv. 7. But if you will not part with sin, nor flee to Christ, you subscribe your own reprobation. Now, I say, the believer doth not mount up in sinful curiosity, concerning the decree of election and reprobation; but in so far as it is revealed to him, to *give all diligence to make his calling and election sure*: neither doth he pry curiously into the secrets of God's providence; *It is not for you to know the times and the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power*. Some have been very rash in telling when the day of judgment would be: we should not meddle with such secrets; *For of that day and that hour knoweth no man*, Matth. xxv. 13.

3. They do not mount up in *self-conceit* and *self-estimation*, as some do, who mount up in the pride of their hearts; God abhors the proud, and he will cast them down, let them mount up never so far: *He resists the proud, and gives grace to the humble*, James iv. 6. Pride was the sin of fallen angels; they would be as high as God, *viz.* self-dependent: and therefore God casts them down. This was the ill lesson that the devil taught our first parents, *You shall be as Gods*; and they were taken with this bait to their overthrow and ruin; and ever since, pride and self-conceit hath been natural to their posterity; and hence it is, so much self is mixed with all our preaching, praying, communicating. But when the believer mounts, he mounts in some measure above self, and gets it trode under his feet in self-abasing, self-abhorring thoughts.

4. They do not mount up in *fits* and *starts of devotion*, in modes and pangs of affection in a transient way. Many professors, when they hear the word, they seem to be mounted up in joy; but what comes of it? It is but a flash, and like a land-flood. The stony-ground hearers may receive the *word with joy*; but *having no root*, they wither and dwindle to nothing, Luke viii. 6, 13. Some, when they hear of Christ's sufferings, and see him sacramentally crucified, it draws tears from their eyes, and they never mount further.

2dly, We come now to give a *positive* account of these things wherein the believer mounts up. Believers *mount up with wings as eagles*, in these following things, or the like.

1. They mount up in *spiritual-mindedness*, *contemplation*, and *holy meditation*: Hence says David, *My meditation of him shall be sweet*, Psal. civ. 34. Having got the Spirit, they mind the things of the Spirit; *They that are after the flesh, do mind the things*

things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit, mind the things of the Spirit: that which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit, Rom. viii. 5. Their heart is set and bent to mind the *great mystery of godliness, God made manifest in the flesh*, 1 Tim. iii. 16. *And to know the height, and depth, and length, and breadth of the love of Christ.* They do not suffer their thoughts to wander on the mountains of vanity.

2. They mount up in *high designs* and *intentions*: their ultimate design is the *glory of God*, and the *enjoyment of him*, which, you know, is *man's chief end*. This is the winged Christian's end: he mounts up in this high and holy end, and that in all his actions; in his *civil* actions, as in his buying and selling, travelling, labouring; and in his *sacred* actions; as his praying, reading, hearing, communicating; or in his *relative* actions, what he doth as a father, master, servant, or child; and in his *natural* actions, *Whether he eat or drink, or whatever he doth, he doth all to the glory of God*, 1 Cor. x. 31. At least his short-coming herein is matter of sorrow and shame to him.

3. They mount up in *holy desires*, saying with Job, *O that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat!* And their desires are not like the *faint, languishing wish* of the wicked, such as Balaam had; no, no: their desires are *spiritual* and *sincere*, such as these spoke of, Isa. xxvi. 9. *With my soul have I desired thee in the night; and with my spirit within me will I seek thee early.* — Their desires are *strong* and *fervent*, none but Christ will satisfy them; *What wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless?* said Abraham, Gen. xv. 2. So says the soul, mounting up towards God, O what wilt thou give me, seeing I go Christless? It *pants after God, the living God.* — Their desires are *restricted* to God and Christ alone; *One thing have I desired of the Lord, and that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee*, Psal. lxxiii. 25. — Their desires are *dilated* on a whole God, and a whole Christ; *O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord, my God, my King*, Psal. xvi. 2. They will have a whole God in all his essential perfections, and in all the relations he stands in to his people. They will have *this God for their God for ever and ever*, and for *their guide even unto death*. And they will have a whole Christ; Christ for sanctification, as well as for salvation; yea, Christ for their all in all.

4. They mount up in *pious inclinations*; they have an aversion at sin, at the sinful pleasures of this life; yea, they abhor them, with Ephraim, *What have I to do any more with idols?* That is the language of the eagle-like believer; he hath a great inclination, a strong bent of spirit after a God in Christ, as the top of his perfection, as the very spring of all his pleasure, and as the magazine of all his treasure, as the rest of his soul: if the devil and his evil heart hath set him at any distance from God, his mind is restless till he return to him again; *Return to thy rest, O my soul; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee*, Psal. cxvi. 7. The top-swarm, as it were, of his inclination mounts up this way.

5. He mounts up in *heavenly affections*: hence is that injunction, *Set your affections on things above, and not on things on the earth*, Col. iii. 2. He endeavours, through grace, to have his affection some way corresponding with God's affection, so as to love *what* God loves, and hate *what* God hates; yea, to love *as* God loves, and to hate *as* God hates. God loves holiness with a strong and great love; so doth the believer. God hates sin *with a perfect hatred*; and so doth the believer, *I hate every false way*. See also, Psal. cxxxix. 21, 22.

6. They mount up in a *gospel-conversation*; so saith the apostle, *Our conversation is in heaven, from whence we look for our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ*, Phil. iii. 20.

7. The winged saint mounts up in a *heavenly walk*: as Enoch and Noah *walked with God*; so doth the winged soul, *whose strength is renewed; he runs without wearying, and walks without fainting in the Lord's way*. His heavenly walk discovers itself, 1. In his heavenly *words*, *they are seasoned with salt, and edifying*. And, 2. In his *actions*, wherein he studies sobriety, righteousness, and godliness in all the duties of religion, prayer, and praise. And, 3. In his *company*, for he can say with David, *I am a companion of all them that fear thee*, Psal. cxix. 63.

III. The next thing was, The *seasons* when it is that the believer, whose strength is renewed, doth mount up.

1. Whenever he gets the *new nature*, and the *disposition*; whenever he is converted, he *mounts up on wings as an eagle*. It is said of Paul, Acts ix. 11. whenever he was converted, *Behold, he prayeth*: think you Paul never prayed any before that time? Yea, many a prayer had he uttered, no doubt; for he profited in the Jewish religion, above many of his equals in his own nation: he had learned to say his prayers as well as the best of them; but he never prayed spiritually and acceptably before; he had never mounted up to heaven in his prayer before: but now, *behold he prays*; behold he mounts up, whenever he is converted.

2. He mounts up to heaven, *all the days of his life*, after his conversion; he is still making some progress heaven-ward: whatever backsets he may get by sin and Satan, now and then, yet he gets up again, and still ascends nearer and nearer heaven; *Nevertheless, I am continually with thee*, Psal. lxxiii. 23. Whatever I do, I endeavour still to be up on the mount with God. David would have both day and night spent with God; *The Lord will command his loving-kindness in the day-time, and in the night his song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life*, Psal. xlii. 8. He went to bed, as it were, with God in his arms; *For he remembered him upon his bed, and meditated on him in the night-watches*; and *his soul was satisfied as with marrow and fatness*: and when wakened out of his sleep he found him in his arms; *When I awake, I am still with thee.*

3. He mounts up, when he gets a *fresh gale* and *new influences* of the Spirit. The believer, at his lowest, is like a ship wind-bound, lying at anchor, but ready to set sail whenever the wind is fair; he can but make small progress with the oars of diligence, when the wind and tide is against him. O Sirs, if there be any gale of the Spirit blowing among you this day, then mount, mount, mount; you may make more progress then in an hour, than you will do without it in many a year, yea, in a whole life-time.

4. The believer uses to mount up with wings about a *communion-time*; nothing less will serve him than to come to BETHEL, the *house of God*; he

he will go in to the chambers of presence, and never rest till he be at the end of his flight. Where is that, say you? Doth he mount to a *communion-table*; nay, he must be farther: doth he mount to the top of *duties* and *ordinances*; nay, he must be farther: doth he mount to *heaven*; nay, he must be farther yet. Strange! Where would he flee next? Indeed, he would flee into the *heart* of Christ; *Set me as a seal upon thine heart*: yea, and which is more yet, he would not only have himself in Christ's heart, but he would have Christ in his heart; *Christ in him the hope of glory*. And what would he do with him when he hath got him there? O then, saith he, *He shall ly all night between my breasts*; if I can, I will keep him all the night-time of this life, which is but a night, *Till the day* of eternity *break, and the shadows fly away*.

5. The believer mounts up on wings as an eagle at the *day of death*; then he soars aloft; *This night thou shalt be with me in paradise*. It is said of the adder, that when she is old, she goes through some strait passage, and leaves her old skin in the passage, and thereby renews her vigour and life. This passage of death is strait, and uneasy to the body, which, like the adder's skin is left in the way; and not without much pain and difficulty to it: but the soul passeth through without any harm; and the next moment mounts up to her state of immortality and happiness: then the believer mounts up indeed to the *general assembly and church of the first-born, to the innumerable company of angels, to God the judge of all, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant*; yea, then he is mounted up a *pillar in the temple of his God*.

6. The believer will mount up at the *day of judgment* as with eagle's wings; then will he flee up to meet Christ in the air; *Then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord*, 1 Thes. iv. 17.— You see then when the believer mounts up.

IV. The *fourth* thing is, To speak to the *manner* how the believer mounts up, *He mounts up with wings as an eagle*. In whatever respects the eagle mounts up, the same way doth the believer.

1. The eagle mounts up *freely* and *naturally*; God gives it a mounting nature: *Doth the eagle mount up at thy command?* says the Lord to Job, chap. xxxix. 27.; nay, it is by the instinct which the Lord hath given it; so that it is natural to it. Thus the believer mounts up naturally after God hath given him the new heart; it is natural to him to be mounting towards God: when the hypocrite mounts, he is forced up contrary to his natural tendency, as it were, like a stone, cast up into the air; it is not natural to it to fly up, but rather to fall down: but the believer mounts up naturally and freely.

2. The eagle mounts up *highly*; she flies higher than other birds: she makes her nest on high, on some inaccessible rock; not like the ostrich, that leaves her eggs in the sand, as some leave their souls here on earth: but these spiritual eagle believers, these heavenly birds, they fly high, even to the Rock of ages; and hence their daily desire is, *Lead me to the Rock that is higher than I*.

3. The eagle mounts up *strongly*, *vehemently*, and *violently*; it is a strong bird, and when it hath got the prey, it flies with violence. Thus doth the believer mount up; *For the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force*. With such earnestness and intentness doth he mount up towards heaven, that no difficulty in the way shall hinder him.

4. The eagle mounts up *swiftly* and *suddenly*: this follows upon the other; for its strength and violence in flying, infers celerity: so doth the believer, under the lively influences of the Spirit. O how quick is his motion! *Or ever he is aware, his soul makes him like the chariots of Amminadab*. It is a speedy flight, that the believer makes towards Christ; he mounts swiftly.

5. The eagle mounts up *gradually*: though its flight be strong and swift, yet it is gradual; it comes not to the utmost extent of its motion, but by degrees: so the believer mounts gradually; he goes *from strength to strength, till he appear before God in Zion*, Psal. lxxxiv. 7. He flies still higher and higher; and so the object of his aim draws nearer and nearer to him, while he comes to more and more knowledge of God, and more and more communion with him, till faith and hope land in vision and fruition.

6. The eagle mounts up *frequently* and *daily*; and, in respect of its mounting disposition, *constantly*: so it is with the believer, he is always mounting; he hath still a mounting disposition, and he is constantly endeavouring to be actually mounting. The carnal professor never mounts up, but about the time of a communion, or the time of some sore affliction or conviction; and whenever these seasons are over, he goes as fast down as he went up: but it is the believer's trade of life to be mounting on week-days, as well as on Sabbath-days; and on ordinary Sabbaths, as well as communion Sabbaths.

V. The next thing is, To shew the *reasons* why the believer, who hath his strength renewed, mounts up on wings like an eagle.

1. Because he hath an eagle's *nature*. I said before, that the believer mounts up naturally; why, because he hath an eagle's nature. It is the natural disposition of the eagle to fly upward: so the believer hath a disposition to mount up to God, he being a new creature; *If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature*, 2 Cor. v. 17. This new nature ascends to heaven from whence it descended; the old nature goes always downward, but the new nature mounts upwards. If you want the new nature, you want the mounting disposition.

2. He mounts up on wings like an eagle; because he hath an eagle's *eye*: so the believer, he can see that invisible Sun, which no natural eye can attain to: *The poor in spirit, and pure in heart, shall see God*, Matth. v. 3, 8. *The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him*, 1 Cor. ii. 14.: but the believer knowing the mind of Christ, sees farer than the world; he sees *the King in his beauty, and the land afar off*. When he sees these things, he cannot but mount up to them; *He endures, as seeing him who is invisible*, Heb. ii. 27. He is far sighted; *Abraham rejoiced to see Christ's day afar off, and he saw it, and was glad*. This is that blessed object, which every believing soul doth see, even when he is in this world.

3. He mounts up on wings like an eagle; because he hath his *nest* on high, like an eagle: no wonder then he flies up, for his nest; I mean, his seat, his food, his treasure, his heart, his

his head, his all is above.—His *ſeat* is above; the believing eagle cannot find himſelf ſafe while here below; therefore he flies to *the Rock of ages*, and there he ſits.—His *food* is above: Chriſt is his food; *My fleſh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.* Now, his food being above; *Where the carcaſe is, thither will the eagles be gathered together.*—His *treaſure* is above: he hath *an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, that is reſerved in heaven for him*; and up he muſt to viſit his inheritance.—His *heart* is above, where his treaſure is; yea, Chriſt hath gotten his heart a-keeping; and he muſt be where his heart is.—And, in a word, his *head* is above: and muſt not the members be where the head is? And muſt not the ſtones of the building be where the foundation is? Chriſt is the head corner-ſtone.—His *all* is above: Chriſt is *all in all to him*; and therefore, mount he muſt; for this eagle hath a rich neſt above.

4. He mounts up with wings as an eagle, becauſe his *ſtrength* is renewed like the eagle's; *Who ſatisfies thy ſoul with good things; ſo that thy ſtrength is renewed like the eagle*, Pſal. ciii. 5. Therefore, having renewed his ſtrength, he mounts up on wings like the eagle. Some ſay the eagle is renewed, when it caſts its old feathers, and gets new ones; ſo the believer gets the old feathers of corruption removed, and *puts on the new man*, Eph. iv. 24. Others ſay the eagle's youth is renewed, when, its ſtomach being thirſty, it drinks the blood of the prey; and ſo the believer gets his ſtrength renewed, by drinking the blood of Chriſt by faith. Eph. iv. 13. *It is in the unity of the faith, that he comes to the perfect man, to the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of Chriſt.* If you have got a drink of the blood of Chriſt this day, to be ſure your ſtrength will be renewed; and if your ſtrength be renewed, you cannot but be mounting up on wings as an eagle. Here we might ſhew the influence between the renewing of the believer's ſtrength, and his mounting up; but this is eaſily perceived, eſpecially by theſe that know it experimentally.

VI. The *ſixth* thing in the general method, is the *application*. Is it ſo, *That believers, who, in waiting on the Lord, have their ſtrength renewed, do mount up on wings as eagels?* Waving ſeveral uſes that might be made, hence,

1ſt, May we not ſee ground to *lament*, that ſo few are mounting up as on eagle's wings at this day. Many peoples mind are noways with God; *God is not in all their thoughts.* Some mount up only in vain thoughts; and, oh! *How long ſhall vain thoughts lodge within you?* Jer. iv. 14. Some ſpends their thoughts on worldly affairs, the profits, pleaſures, riches, and honours of it; they *mind earthly things.* Some ſeem to mount, and they mount a little, but they come down again; like Herod, who heard John gladly, but ſoon did he fall. Some, when they are young, they are very religious, but their religion is eaſily rubbed off again; *They begin in the Spirit and end in the fleſh.* Some mount no farther than reſtraining grace, while the Lord withholds them, as he did Abimelech from ſinning againſt him: but they want reſtraining grace; they know not what it is to have *the love of God conſtraining them.* Many, inſtead of mounting in time of ordinances, the devil and the world run away with their hearts; or if they get any kindly frame about a ſacrament, whenever they go home, they forget all, and give looſe reins again to their thoughts and words, to their affections and actions.

2dly, We may apply it for *examination* and *trial*. Try whether you be mounting Chriſtians or not: to be ſure, you are either mounting or ſinking. You need to try after as well as before you go to the Lord's table. *How ſhall I know*, ſay you, *whether or not I be mounting up as on eagle's wings?* I ſhall keep by the ſimile, and give you the following marks.

1. If you be mounting up on wings like an eagle, then God hath opened the *iron cage*, and ſet you at liberty. While a man is in a ſtate of nature, or in legal bondage, he is like a bird in an iron cage; he cannot mount, till God come and knock off his fetters, and looſe his bonds, and *proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the priſon to them that are bound*, and ſo lets them out to the free air, that they may fly. If you be a mounting ſoul, you will know ſomething more or leſs of this; you have found yourſelf in the iron cage, in the devil's claws; and you have found the Lord *turning you from darkneſs to light, and from the power of Satan unto God*; at leaſt, you can ſay, in ſome meaſure, *Once I was blind, now I ſee*; once I was bound, and now I am ſet at liberty.

2. If you be mounting up on eagle's wings, then you will have ſomething of an eagle's *appetite*; *Where the carcaſe is, thither will the eagles be gathered together.* The eagle, it is ſaid, doth very greedily devour her prey; and if you be a true eagle, you will eat greedily of the fleſh and blood of the Son of God. It is not a little of this heavenly carcaſe that ſatisfies the believing eagle; he muſt feed upon it greedily, and daily; yea, and live upon it conſtantly: *The life that he lives, is by faith on the Son of God.*

3. If you be mounting up on eagles wings, then you have got ſomething of an eagle's *heart*: the eagle is a noble kind of creature, diſdaining to prey upon mean birds. We have a common Latin proverb, *Aquila non captat muſcas*; [that is, The eagle doth not catch flies.] It preys only upon creatures worthy of it: ſo, the noble generous ſoul of the mounting believer will not ſtoop to theſe things that are inferior to him, or unworthy of him; no kingdom will pleaſe him, but the *kingdom of heaven*; no heritage, but the *heritage of Jacob*; no rock, but the *Rock of ages*; no portion, but a *portion in the Son of Jeſſe*.

4. If you be mounting up on eagles wings, then you will be daily *caſting off your old feathers*; ſuch as, the old feather of *ſelf-righteouſneſs*: you will never allow yourſelf to mount up with the wing of your own righteouſneſs. You will know that the devil clipt old Adam's wings; yea, that by the fall he brake his wings, and that never one ſince the fall could mount up to heaven on the wing of this old covenant-righteouſneſs, unleſs it was the double eagle, if I may ſo expreſs it, the God-man in two natures, and one perſon, who came to bring in everlaſting righteouſneſs: under this great wing, do all the little eagles flock, as the hen's chickens do under her wings, deſiring to be found in Chriſt, *Not having their own righteouſneſs, which is after the law, but that which is through the faith of Chriſt, the righteouſneſs which is of God by faith*, Phil. iii. 9.—And as they will be caſting the old

old feather of their own ſelf-righteouſneſs, ſo the old feather of *ſelf-conceit*. O the mounting believer thinks little of himſelf; ſo little, that he thinks nothing of himſelf. If *nothing* could be *divided*, he is LESS *than nothing* in his own ſight; and if nothing could be *diſparaged*, he is WORSE *than nothing*; he is the *leaſt of ſaints*, and the *chief of ſinners*, as Paul was in his own eyes: he caſts down all his attainments, all his enjoyments, all his qualifications, all duties at Chriſt's feet as nothing; that ſo he may have nothing to be a weight to keep him from mounting up.—In a word, he caſts off the old feathers of *ſin* and *corruption* daily; alſo enmity, unbelief, hypocriſy, carnality; he ſeeks to have theſe works of the devil deſtroyed wholly. It is ſaid, that there is an antipathy between eagles and ſerpents; ſo there is a continual antipathy between the believing eagle and the old ſerpent; and all the ſerpent's brood are abominable to him.

5. If you be mounting up on eagles wings, then you will be *clothed with the ſun*; the ſun will be big in your eye. The mounting eagle gets a view of the ſun; and the higher it mounts, the bigger doth the ſun appear. If you be a mounting Chriſtian, you have got above the clouds of darkneſs and unbelief now and then, and got a view of the Sun of righteouſneſs; and he hath been ſo big in your eye, as to darken the glory of all created objects; yea, ſo big in your eye, that you have ſeen him to be *all in all*; to be the all of the covenant, the all of the ſacraments, the all of the goſpel: you have ſeen him to be all things, and above all things, and better than all things: you have ſeen him to be heaven itſelf, yea, more than heaven, yea, more than ten thouſand heavens: you have ſeen all things to be in him; election, redemption, juſtification, ſanctification, grace, glory, and all. O Sirs, to *you that believe, he is precious*, and a *pearl of great price*.

6. If you be mounting up on wings as eagles, you will be *clothed with the ſun*, and you will have *the moon* of this world *under your feet*, Rev. xii. 1. The mounting eagle being above the clouds, ſees the ſun big above, and the earth little below; and the higher it mounts, the leſs will the earth appear. O the mounting believer thinks little of the world; if we were as high as the ſtars, we would not ſee the earth; the higher we fly to heaven, the more doth the nothingneſs of the earth appear to us. The believer ſometimes mounts up ſo high, that he flies out of ſight; the world is out of ſight of him, and out of his ſight and mind alſo; when he is on the mount of communion with God, glad would he be that he might never come down to the world again, as Peter on the mount of tranſfiguration, *It is good for us to be here*.

3*dly*, This doctrine may be applied for *exhortation*, which I ſhall form in a ſhort addreſs. 1. In a word of *terror* to the ſoul that *never* mounted. 2. A word of *comfort* to the *mounting* ſoul. 3. A word of *counſel* to the *hovering* ſoul.

[1.] A word of *terror* to you that *never* mounted up to heaven towards Chriſt. Alas! what ſhall we ſay to you? You are not like eagles, but like filthy black ravens, that do not mount heaven-ward, nor look upon the ſun, but wander to and fro upon the earth, as Noah's raven did, and feed upon dung hills and forbid things; you cannot fly to heaven, but flutter upon the earth: but if you do not mount up to heaven, the curſe of God will come upon you; all the curſes mentioned, Deut. xxvi. 15,—20. You will be *curſed in your baſket, and in your ſtore; curſed in your outgoings and incomings*. The curſe of God will be in your houſe, Prov. iii. 33. *The curſe of the Lord is in the houſe of the wicked*; that is, the man that doth not mount up to Chriſt by faith, nor mount up in the ways of God. The curſe of God will be in your prayers and duties; *The ſacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to God*: your ſacrifice will be curſed to you: the word you hear will be a curſe to you, it will be a ſavour and ſeal of death, and not of life to you, 2 Cor. ii. 16. The ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper will be curſed to you; for there *you eat and drink damnation to yourſelf*. If you never mounted by faith, and yet went to a communion-table, you have been eating and drinking God's curſe, which you will never vomit up again, unleſs you mount up to Chriſt with the wing of faith. What ſhall I ſay? If you do not mount, Chriſt himſelf will be curſed to you; *We preach Chriſt crucified, to the Jews a ſtumbling-block, and to the Greeks fooliſhneſs*. If you do not mount, you will ſtumble into hell; and Chriſt himſelf will be a ſtumbling-block over which you will fall and break your neck, and periſh for ever. O then, do not tempt Chriſt by lying ſtill in your ſin and unbelief, when you ſhould be mounting. See a remarkable word, 1 Cor. x. 9. *Neither let us tempt Chriſt, as ſome of them alſo tempted, and were deſtroyed of ſerpents*. If you do not mount, with the eye of faith, towards Chriſt, the myſtical brazen ſerpent, you will be deſtroyed with worſe ſerpents than the Iſraelites were: he will let looſe the old ſerpent the devil; he will let looſe the young ſerpent, your conſcience, upon you, and both theſe will tear you to pieces to all eternity; beſides, the fiery ſerpent of God's everlaſting vengeance: if you do not mount, God will caſt you down into the dungeon of hell, to live among all theſe ſerpents, as long as God lives. Think not theſe to be words of courſe, man, woman; I am not jeſting with you; nay, I declare to you in the name of the everlaſting God, that if you do not mount up to Chriſt, you ſhall go down to hell with the devil; Matth. xxv. 30 *The unprofitable ſervant ſhall be caſt into utter darkneſs, there ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of teeth*. Rev. xiv. 10. *They ſhall have no reſt. Conſider this, all ye that forget God*, and forget to mount up to him.

[2.] A word of *comfort* to the *mounting* ſoul.—Are you a mounting eagle? Then you ſhall be *bleſſed* in your outgoing and incoming: God's bleſſing will be in your houſe; *For he bleſſeth the habitation of the juſt*: you will be bleſſed in your prayers and duties; *For the prayer of the upright is his delight*: the word will be bleſſed to you; it will be a river of life to comfort you, poor believing eagle, when you droop your wings: the ſacraments are bleſſed to you; the communion-table is a foretaſte of the fruit of the *vine, which you ſhall drink for ever new in your Father's kingdom*, where *you ſhall be for ever with the Lord*: you are happier than the tongues of men and angels can tell.—And as the mounting ſoul is bleſſed, ſo he is *ſafe*: as long as he is mounting, he is out of the reach of this world's miſery; ſafe againſt death itſelf; yea, ſafe againſt the wrath of God; you are above all this, for you are mounted up to the love of God,

God, and that is above his wrath. O believer, if you be mounting, keep up your head, and be always mounting, till you come to the throne of God, and of the Lamb. O mount, mount, mount, till you come to heaven, to the top of the tree of life, where the birds of paradise shall sing, *Hallelujah, to him that sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever.* The eagle is never in danger, but when she is on earth: we are never in danger when we are in Christ, but till we fly down to the earth; therefore, seeing God hath renewed your strength to mount up as on eagles wings, O soar aloft; look down with a generous disdain upon the world, and the vanities thereof, and keep your heart up in heaven.

[3.] A word of *counsel* to the *hovering* soul. Perhaps there are some hovering sinners, and some hovering saints here.

(1.) As for hovering *sinners* that never yet mounted, they have some thoughts of mounting; but some objections come in their way, and they are in a hover.

OBJECT. *Oh!* say you, *you are desiring us to go about a duty we are not able to do; alas! I am a poor thing, not able to fly up to heaven; how is that possible to me that want the wing of faith and love?*

ANSW. 1. Up, you must go, or else go down to the bottomless pit: God commands you to mount, and if you be not able, consider whence your inability flows; the fall brake your wings; *For God made man upright, but he found out many inventions*: thou hast disabled thyself in Adam, therefore God may condemn thee.

2. The reason why you do not mount up, is, because you are wilful; *You will not come to me that you might have life*, John v. 40. Your weakness flows from your wilfulness: if the weakness of your will were taken away, then you would mount up with ease.

3. Do what you can to fly up; if you cannot fly, endeavour to *run without wearying*: if you cannot run, endeavour to *walk without fainting*: if you cannot walk because of your broken leg, then will you creep to the physician with it, and hold out the broken leg, the withered arm to him; if you cannot creep, will you cry to him; *He hath not said to the seed of Jacob, seek ye me in vain*: if you cannot cry, will you look to him; *Look to me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth*: if you cannot look to him, will you long for him; for, *He satisfies the longing soul*: sigh, and sob, and groan after him. And, if after all, you think you can do nothing, because of your absolute weakness; then, O will you *wait on the Lord, and you shall renew your strength*; wait on him in the use of means; ly at the pool, and you cannot tell how soon you shall get strength to mount: *Wait, I say, on the Lord.*

OBJECT. *Alas!* say some, *my mounting time is gone; my day of grace is past; I have been a long hearer of the gospel, and many a call have I slighted; I fear Christ will never take pains on me, to make me mount up to heaven.*

ANSW. To you I would say, 1. O how dare you meddle with God's decree? I said something to this already; mind this is a stratagem of Satan, to keep you from coming to Christ. I have read that the devil said once to a man, "You need not serve God any more, for you "will not win to heaven." The man was troubled at this: But what was his answer? "If I cannot win to God in heaven, I shall have "as much of God as I can on earth." O man, you will cheat the devil effectually, if you tell him in earnest, I will take all of God that I can now, though I should never get any more of him.

2. Are you not waiting on God in ordinances; and sorrowing at your heart, that you have sinned so much, and slighted Christ so long? Then your day of grace is not past, it is yet time to mount. *Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation*; and it is, perhaps, now or never. O young sinner, old sinner, your mounting time may be gone before you get another call. Death will dismount you from these high privileges in a little, and then you shall never mount again; but sink, sink, sink for ever in fire and brimstone.

(2.) There may be some hovering *saints* here, who know what it is to have mounted some time a day, but now they are fallen down again; gladly would they mount, but many things hinder them from mounting.

OBJECT. 1. *Alas!* say some, *the woful* WORLD *keeps me from mounting; the losses, and crosses, and temptations of the world are a clog; whenever I go home, I will meet with something that will draw me down by the heels again, as it were.*

ANSW. O believer, be not discouraged, but set a stout heart to a steep mountain: oppose the love of the world as much as you can; and see vanity written on its forehead: you know that communion with God is better than all the enjoyments of this life; cast off these things that trouble and afford vexation to you. O let not the world get in to your heart; if the world mount up in your heart, it will indeed draw you down, that you shall not mount up to heaven. Beware of your graceless friends, their carnal walk and conversation may rob you of all your spirituality in half an hour, and spoil a good communion in two minutes. O Sirs, be as little in their company as you can; and when you are obliged to be with them, yet let your heart be always mounting, and giving a stolen look to Christ.—But, perhaps, there are other things in the world also that keep you from mounting, and keep you down with discouragement: you see things going all wrong in the church, grievances lying heavy upon us; zeal decaying, and iniquity abounding; and the like. O how can I get mounted up under such discouragements. As to all which, I shall only say, you have the more need to mount up to heaven, that you see things so far wrong here below.

OBJECT. 2. *But, Oh!* say you, *there is another thing that hinders me from mounting; I have a* STONE *in my heart that bears me down; the dead weight of corruption that draws me downward; how can I mount with such a rock on my back, such a heavy stony heart in my breast?*

ANSW. O believer, that art groaning under the sense of your heart-evils, will you go to God with your stony heart; none can cure the spiritual gravel but God himself; he can cut the stone out of the hard-hearted sinner, and he hath promised to do it, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. *I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh.* O Sirs, go and tell him, that it bears you down when you would mount up to heaven, and seek to have the stony heart softened in the blood of Christ; for Christ's blood is a heart-softening blood; *Look to him whom you have pierced and mourn*: if you but mount up with your eye to him, it will melt your stony heart; and then the melted heart will be a mounting heart. Alas! say you, I have a *worm* at my heart, *Iniquity*

quity prevails againſt me, and this is a heavy thing that bears me down, ſorely, down; and, I think, it will wear me down to hell: mine iniquities are a burden; they ſink me down, terribly, down into the mire. But what ſhall I do, I will never win up, I think, from under this burden? Poor ſoul, caſt your burden upon Chriſt; *God laid on him the iniquity of us all. Caſt thy burden on the Lord, and he will ſuſtain thee.* Doth the *guilt* of ſin burden you? Look to him who is made of God to you *righteouſneſs*. Doth the *power* of ſin burden you? Look to him who is made of God to you *ſanctification*. *Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you reſt.*

OBJECT. 3. *Oh!* ſay ſome, *there is another thing that hinders me from mounting up; the* DEVIL *ſteps in between me and heaven, between Chriſt and me, and ſo I cannot get mounted; he aſſaults me ſore with many ſad temptations, he ſcars me from duty, and tempts me to ſin.*

ANSW. Poor believer, be comforted; it ſeems you are not on Satan's ſide; it ſeems you are come out of his camp; and therefore he aſſaults you ſo ſore: mean time, O endeavour to mount up notwithſtanding of all temptations; for, within a little, *God ſhall bruiſe Satan under your feet*, Rom. xvi. 20. The believing eagle ſhall get day about with the devil, and tread upon this old ſerpent. Again, tell me, haſt thou not wings to fight againſt the devil, as they ſay the eagle doth? when any come to take her young, then ſhe fights with her wings. So do you fight with the wing of faith, that is the ſhield that *quenches the fiery darts of the devil*. The devil's darts cannot pierce the believer's wing of faith. Fight with the wing of love; love is a ſtrong wing, like coals of fire, it hath a moſt vehement flame; this fire of love will burn the devil's darts that he throws at you; the love of Chriſt will conſtrain you to reſiſt him boldly. *But, alas!* ſay you, *for all that, I cannot fight; my faith is feeble, and my love is faint.* Then, I only ſay to you, O poor ſoul, go to Chriſt; Chriſt is like the old eagle that helps the young ones; yea, Chriſt takes the young eagles on his wings, Deut. xxxii. 11, 12. *As an eagle ſtirreth up her neſt, fluttereth over her young, ſpreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: ſo the Lord alone did lead him; and there was no ſtrange god with him.* Exod. xix. 4. *I bare you on eagles wings, and brought you to myſelf.* Chriſt will carry you on his wings; and for your encouragement, know that he hath fought with the devil already, and overcome him, he hath overcome *principalities and powers*; yea, by death he *hath deſtroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.*

OBJECT. 4. And *laſtly, Alas!* ſay you, *there is another thing yet that hinders me from mounting; I would not think much of the common enemies of my ſalvation, ſin, Satan, and the world; I know they will do their utmoſt to keep me out of heaven: but, oh!* GOD *himſelf is preſſing me down, and that is ſaddeſt of all, he doth not give the wonted communication of his grace, nor ſtrength to mount: though I had habitual grace that will not do, I muſt have auxiliary grace.*

ANSW. It may be, when you got additional grace at the laſt communion, you have ſinned it away; and no wonder, when you *turn the grace of God into wantonneſs*, that the Lord make you go empty-handed.—But again, he may do this to let you ſee, that habitual grace is not ſufficient, in order to your mounting up to heaven, without actual grace; *It is not in him that willeth, nor in him that runneth, but in God that ſheweth mercy.*—However, know that God is a ſovereign God, and he will let you know that he is ſo, by giving you new ſupplies of grace, and withdrawing them again as he pleaſes; but wait on him, and you *ſhall renew your ſtrength.*

OBJECT. "But, oh! how can I mount, when "he not only denies his grace, but HIDES his "face from me? The eagle mounts towards "the body of the ſun, but my ſun is covered "with a cloud, and I go mourning without "the Sun. A day-bird cannot fly in the night; "and, alas! how ſhould I mount in the dark "night of deſertion?"

ANSW. It may be you have hid your face from God, and that makes him hide his face from you: you have ſinned away his preſence, by turning away from his preſence; or, perhaps, God doth this for the trial of your faith, love, and patience. However it be, you muſt exerciſe your wings of faith and love, and mount up notwithſtanding that you be in the dark; *Who is among you that feareth the Lord, and obeyeth the voice of his ſervant, that walketh in darkneſs, and hath no light? Let him truſt in the name of the Lord, and ſtay* himſelf *upon his God*, Iſa. l. 10. The ſpouſe was buſy even when Chriſt was gone, *Saw ye him whom my ſoul loveth?*

OBJECT. "Oh! but how can I mount, when "he is not only an abſent, but an *angry* God; "I ſee nothing but ſurly looks in his counte"nance; and he is ſhooting arrows againſt me; "yea, *His arrows ſtick faſt in me, and his hand preſſes "me ſore;* when I mount up he ſhoots me down "with his arrows; *For the arrows of the Almigh"ty are within me:* and when my wings are "wounded, down I fall."

ANSW. God may do ſo to humble you; you muſt be humbled; and the more humble and low you are, the higher you ſhall be advanced, and mount up the higher after your humiliation: never was the believer higheſt than after he was loweſt, James iv. 10. *Humble yourſelves in the ſight of the Lord, and he ſhall lift you up;* and remember how you may meet with barbed arrows, poiſoned arrows of God's anger, and yet all in love: *In a little wrath have I hid myſelf from thee for a moment; but with everlaſting kindneſs will I have mercy upon thee.* Iſa. liv. 10. *For the mountains ſhall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindneſs ſhall not depart from thee.* You ſhall at laſt find all theſe things well ordered. What think you, when you ſhall come to heaven, and Chriſt ſay to you, Welcome, believer, when I hid my face, did I not deal kindly with you? When I ſhot the arrows into your heart, did I not deal kindly with you? And the believer will then ſay, Indeed, Lord, thou haſt *done all things well:* all is well that ends well.

OBJECT. "Alas! but I think the Lord will "*kill* me with his arrows; and will I fly to "heaven, if he kill me?"

ANSW. There is no fear that your kind Lord will kill you; but though he ſhould, yet make uſe of your wings, and fly to him, as Job, *Though he ſlay me, yet will I truſt in him.* I read of a ſparrow, that when purſued by a hawk, flew into Xenocrates's boſom; his words were, *Non oportet ſupplicem prodere;* "It were barbarous to "betray a poor ſupplicant." If you fly to God's boſom, no fear that he kill you; when his wrath purſues you, he is but chaſing you into his boſom: therefore let nothing hinder you from mounting.

The Lord himſelf engage you to wait on him, that you may *renew* your *ſtrength*, and *mount up on wings as eagles.*

SERMON

SERMON LXXI.

The River of Life, proceeding out of the *Throne of God*, and of the *Lamb.* *

Rev. xxii. 1.

And he ſhewed me a pure river of water clear as cryſtal, proceeding out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb.

At the laſt ſacramental action, that fell to my ſhare here, I took occaſion to ſpeak of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt as *the Lamb in the midſt of throne*, Rev. vii. 17 †. And now I would ſpeak a little, as the Lord may aſſiſt, of the *great bleſſings* that proceed from that throne, to the everlaſting ſalvation and conſolation of all the redeemed.

Some underſtand all that is ſaid in the two laſt chapters of this book, of the *ſtate of the church* even here on *earth*, in the glory of the latter days. Others view it as a repreſentation of the perfect and *triumphant ſtate* of the church in *heaven*. I reckon it ſafeſt to exclude neither of theſe; and apprehend it takes in the heavenly ſtate of the church, and the happineſs thereof, commenced in time here, and conſummate through eternity hereafter. That glorious ſtate begins here, ſince grace is the beginning of glory, and glory the perfection of grace. Now, this happy ſtate is deſcribed here, in alluſion to the earthly paradiſe, that was loſt by the ſin of the firſt Adam, as another, a better paradiſe, reſtored by the righteouſneſs of the ſecond Adam.

In this verſe you ſee a revelation made to John of the *river* of paradiſe; and by this river I underſtand the *Spirit*, and all *ſpiritual bleſſings*: for ſo I find the Spirit frequently in ſcripture repreſented, as a river, or a flood of water; Iſa. xliv. 3. *I will pour water on him that is thirſty, and floods upon the dry ground.* What is that? Even *my Spirit*, and *my bleſſing*; as it is explained in the words immediately following.—But then, you have the *quality* of this river; it is *a* PURE *river of water of life*, CLEAR *as cryſtal.* All the ſtreams of earthly comforts are muddy and polluted, and polluting; but theſe are pure, clear, healing, and refreſhing; giving life, and preſerving life for ever to them that drink thereof.—You have the *riſe* of this river, or whence it flows and proceeds, namely, *Out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb.* The Spirit, and all the bleſſings and comforts of grace and glory, proceed from a God in Chriſt. As the Spirit, with reference to his perſonal property, proceeds from the Father and the Son; ſo, with reference to his office in the œconomy of redemption, he, as a Spirit of all grace and comfort, proceeds like *a pure cryſtal river out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb*; the Spirit, and all ſpiritual bleſſings, being from God, through the mediation of the Lamb. But I ſhall further explain the words upon the proſecution of the following doctrine.

OBSERV. *That the living Spirit of God, communicating all the bleſſings of everlaſting life, graciouſly here, and glorioufly hereafter, proceeds, like a pure cryſtal river, out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb.*

And here I ſhall, as the Lord may pleaſe to aſſiſt, eſſay to do the following things.

I. Offer ſome *remarks* for clearing and confirming the doctrine.
II. Obſerve the *property* and *quality* of the water of this river.
III. Shew what may be *imported* in its being ſaid to *proceed out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb.*
IV. Enquire whence it is, or aſſign the *reaſons* why this river of life is ſaid to *proceed* out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb.
V. Deduce ſome inference for the *application.*

I. We are to offer ſome *remarks* for clearing, confirming, and illuſtrating the doctrine.

Remark 1. "That *communion* with God in Chriſt, "in his bleſſings and comforts at his table, "whether above or below, is by his Spirit." For, as *through* Chriſt *we have acceſs to the Father by one Spirit*, Eph. ii. 18.; ſo all the bleſſings and comforts of the new covenant are communicated from the Father, through the Son, by the Holy Ghoſt: and hence we enjoy the *grace of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, and the *love of God*, through him, in the *communion of the Holy Ghoſt*, 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

Remark 2. "That all ſpiritual bleſſings, thus "communicated, are *everlaſting*." They are the bleſſings of everlaſting life, begun in grace here, and conſummate in glory hereafter. God himſelf, the prime and principal bleſſing, is the everlaſting God; and the everlaſting light, the everlaſting life, the everlaſting heaven and happineſs of his people. And all the ſtreams of bleſſings that flow from this fountain of living waters are everlaſting. For example, Is *peace* a ſtream of this river? Rom. v. 1. *Being juſtified by faith, we have peace with God.* This peace is everlaſting: and hence departed ſaints are ſaid to *enter into peace* whenever they die, Iſa. lvii. 2. Peace here enters into them, and there they enter into peace.—Is *pardon of ſin* a ſtream of this river? Yea, *We have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveneſs of ſin*, Eph. i. 7.; and this pardon is everlaſting: and hence it is ſaid of the inhabitants of heaven, *The people that dwell there, ſhall be forgiven their iniquity*, Iſa. xxxiii. 24. Here they are pardoned, and

* This ſermon was preached immediately before the celebration of the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper, at Dunfermline, July 6th, 1735. It hath undergone four impreſſions.

† See this Sermon, printed above, p. 651.

there the pardon is lengthened out to eternity. —Is *sanctification* and *holiness* a stream? Yea, *Beholding his glory, we are changed into the same image.* Well, it is an everlasting blessing, for in heaven it is perfected; *We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is*, 1 John iii. 2.—Again, Is the *life of comfort* here a stream? Yea, we joy in God through Christ. This blessing is everlasting, and therefore called *everlasting consolation*, 2 Thess ii. 16. And hence the Comforter is said to *abide in us for ever*, John xiv. 16. Even when the sensible comfort is withdrawn, yet the Comforter abideth for ever.—Again, Is the begun life of *communion with God* a stream of this river of the water of life? What is this fellowship with the Father and the Son, but the beginning of everlasting communion?—In a word, Is *grace* a stream of this river of the water of life? What is the life of grace here, but the beginning of the life of glory, which is everlasting, and commenced whenever the soul believes in Christ? *He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life. This is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.*——Thus you may see what I mean by the blessings of everlasting life, to be enjoyed graciously here, and gloriously hereafter, called *the water of life* in the text. And so far I have here designedly prevented myself the necessity of explaining much further this *water of life*, or the *streams* of this river.

Remark 3. "That the Spirit of God, as the "great blessing of the covenant, and all the "other spiritual blessings of everlasting life, "are compared frequently to *water* in scrip-"ture, John iv. 14. and 10. ver. compared." There Christ is said to give us *living water*: and again, *The water that I shall give him that drinketh it, shall be in him a well of water springing up to everlasting life.* And John vii. 37. *If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly*, out of his very heart and soul, *shall flow rivers of living water.* This he speaks of the Spirit. But I insist not on all the instances I might offer; only the Spirit and his influences, graces, comforts, and blessings, may be on many accounts compared to water. I insist not upon the parallel; only, as water is for quenching of thirst, washing off stains, cooling of heats, healing of wounds, softening of hard earth, and fructifying of barren earth; so the Spirit, in his various influences and operations, is of manifold such like use to the souls of all his people.

Remark 4. "That this river of water of life, "that waters the church, militant and triumphant, with all spiritual and everlasting bles-"sings, *proceeds* out of the throne of God, and of "the Lamb: I mean, the Spirit proceeds from "the Father and the Son." Not only doth he so, as he is the third Person of the glorious Trinity, and that by an eternal and ineffable procession; but also, as he is clothed with the peculiar and glorious office of applying the purchased redemption. He comes forth from the Father and the Son by a voluntary subordination. This is plain from several scriptures, particularly, John xiv. 16. *I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth.* John xv. 26. *When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me.* John xiv. 26. *But the Comforter, which the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things.* And again, John xvi. 7,—14. *If I go not away, the Comforter will not come; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will convince the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. He will guide you into all truth. He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.* Whence then shall we have a good communion this day? Whence shall we have the Spirit, or any spiritual blessing and comfort? It is from the throne of God and of the Lamb: it is from the Father and the Son. This water is from God, through the mediation of the Lamb.

II. The *second* thing proposed was, To point out some of the *qualities* of this great blessing, comprehending all other blessings of everlasting life. The text calls it a *pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal:* where the water is described four ways, namely, from the *plenty*, the *purity*, the *virtue*, and the *splendor* of it.

1. It is described from the *plenty*, or great store of it, and therefore called a RIVER. This is that *river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God*, Psal. xlvi. 4. No pleasures are like these that flow from the Spirit of God. *The fruit of the Spirit is peace and joy:* but here it is only the streams of this river that we enjoy; but in heaven the river itself will be enjoyed. The holy Spirit is a river, not a cistern, to shew his infinite plenitude and fulness, and the great abundance of heavenly blessings that flow from him. Our Lord Jesus hath received of this river above measure, and yet the river is as full as ever. All believers, in all ages, from the beginning of the world, thousands and ten thousands, have drawn out of it; yet it is still an overflowing river. O let us bring all our empty pitchers here! For there is enough here for every son of Adam, if he would come; enough for time, and enough for eternity: the river is flowing by our door; O may we *draw water out of this well of salvation!*

2. It is described from its *purity*, it is a PURE *river.* The Spirit of God is a pure and holy Spirit; and all his blessings and comforts are pure and holy, purifying and sanctifying blessings. A pool or a standing water may be impure; but a river, though it should run through a loathsome ditch, will carry away the pollution of it: no man's heart, be it never so polluted, like a stinking ditch, but if a stream of this river be let into it, and have a free passage, it will carry away all the filth and pollution thereof. And why is it said of heaven, Rev. xxii. 27. that *there shall in nowise enter into it any thing that defileth?* Because there is the river ever running. Here we have only the streams running some times, but there is the river itself; the pure river, continually running. O let impure polluted souls come now to the streams of this pure and purifying river, as they are running from Christ in a gospel-dispensation; and never rest till they win to the river of perfect purity.

3. It is described from the *quickening virtue* of it: it is a *pure river of water of* LIFE. This river of water is the living Spirit of God; the Spirit of life, that quickens whom he will: he hath life in himself, and by him dead souls are quickened, and made to live for ever. All earthly elementary waters have a beginning; but this river, the Spirit of God, is from everlasting to everlasting, without beginning, and without

without end. Other rivers are fed by ſprings and fountains; but this river of the Spirit is himſelf the *fountain of living waters*, as well as a river. This river proceeds from God, and yet the river is God himſelf; *For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, and theſe three are One.* Though God hath provided a channel of ordinances to convey ſome of the water of this river to us, for quickening and refreſhing us; yet the river cannot be circumſcribed or limited as it is in itſelf. O let dead ſouls conceive hope of life! here is the living and life-giving Spirit of God, to give the life of grace, the life of peace and pardon, the life of holineſs and ſanctification, the life of joy and conſolation, the life of communion and fellowſhip with God, which are all the beginning and commencement of everlaſting life, as I have already ſhewed.

4. This river of water is deſcribed from the *brightneſs, ſplendor*, and *glory* of it: it is CLEAR *as cryſtal.* This, I think, may point out both the pleaſure and perſpicuity of the river. What a pleaſant river is the Spirit, in the everlaſting emanation and flow of his influences and comforts! How ſweetly do the redeemed drink of this *river of pleaſure!* Pſal. xxxvi. 8. *In the preſence of God there is fulneſs of joy, and pleaſures for evermore*, Pſal. xvi. 11. And what a perſpicuous river is that of the Spirit, *clear as cryſtal?* The Spirit, as a *Spirit of wiſdom and revelation, in the knowledge of Chriſt*, makes clear diſcoveries as a cryſtal glaſs, or a cryſtaline tranſparent river. It is by the Spirit we *behold, as in a glaſs, the glory of the Lord*, 2 Cor. iii. 18. It is the Spirit that glorifieth Chriſt, by ſhewing the things of Chriſt: he giveth clear diſcoveries of the glory of Chriſt, and the glory of God's perfections in him. The Spirit of life is the Spirit of light, that giveth the fiducial viſion here, and the beatifical viſion hereafter.

III. The next thing propoſed was, To ſhew what may be *imported* in this river being ſaid to *proceed out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.*

1. It imports, that God and the Lamb have but *one* and the *ſame throne*, from whence the river of the Spirit, and all ſpiritual bleſſings do proceed. Here are good news to us this day, when we are to commemorate the ſufferings of the Lamb of God; that, as the Lamb that was ſlain upon the croſs is now ſitting upon the throne, ſo that God and the Lamb have not two thrones, but one and the ſame throne. The throne of God is the throne of the Lamb, and the throne of the Lamb is the throne of God, Rev. iii. 21. *I am ſet down with my Father in his throne.* He *is the Lamb in the midſt of the throne* of God: but of this I have formerly treated.

2. It imports, that God and the Lamb have but *one* and the *ſame Spirit.* The river *proceeds from the throne of God and of the Lamb.* The Spirit of God is the Spirit of the Lamb; and the Spirit of the Lamb is the Spirit of God. Happy they that have the Spirit of Chriſt in them, for the Spirit of Chriſt is the Spirit of God. He is the Spirit both of the Father and of the Son: *All things that the Father hath are mine*, ſays Chriſt, John xvi. 15. And particularly, the Father's Spirit is the Son's; hence it is ſaid, Gal. iv. 6. *Becauſe ye are ſons, God hath ſent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying*, ABBA, *Father.* This river proceeds not out of the throne of God, or the Father's throne only; but out of the throne of the Lamb alſo, the Son's throne. The Spirit of life, for quickening dead ſouls into everlaſting life, proceeds not out of the throne of God as an abſolute God, but as a God in Chriſt; and therefore is ſaid to *proceed out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.*

3. It imports, that the fulneſs of the Godhead, that is in Chriſt, is a *communicative* fulneſs; and hence the river is ſaid to iſſue *from the throne of God and of the Lamb.* The everlaſting ſpring of the river is within the throne of God, where the Lamb ſits: and the Lamb is anointed with the Spirit above meaſure; for *the Father giveth not the Spirit by meaſure unto him*, John iii. 34. And this ocean of divine fulneſs that is in him is not ſhut up within the throne, but proceeds like a river out of it, that *we, out of his fulneſs, may receive, and grace for grace*, John i. 16. This communication is free, as free as the run of a ſtream out of a ſpring. And as the river proceeds freely out of the throne, ſo we may as freely come and drink of the water of life that runs out toward us. But again it imports,

4. That the giving out of the Spirit, and of all ſpiritual bleſſings, is a part of the *royalty* of Chriſt, and the fruit of his mounting the throne of heaven after he had finiſhed his work upon earth: and hence, *When he aſcended up on high, leading captivity captive, he received gifts for men, even for the rebellious*, Pſal. lxviii. 18. The giving out of the Spirit in the moſt plentiful manner was deferred till the Lamb that was ſlain ſhould be in the midſt of the throne. It is ſaid, John vii. 39. *The Holy Ghoſt was not yet given, becauſe that Jeſus was not yet glorified:* but, whenever he is glorified, then the river, in a plentiful manner, was to proceed out of the throne of God and of the Lamb: *If I go not away, the Comforter will not come; but if I depart, I will ſend him unto you.* Whenever I am glorified upon the throne, then I will ſhew the river of the water of life proceeding out of the throne. The giving then of the Spirit of life is a part of the Mediator's royalty. Chriſt, as a King, hath the giving of the Spirit; this belongs to his adminiſtration, as the Lamb now upon the throne: hence ſays Chriſt, John xiv. 26. *The Father will ſend him in my name*, even in my name and authority, as the crowned King of Zion; and, John xvi. 7. *I will ſend him.* Thus God and the Lamb agree from the imperial throne, to ſend from thence the river, the Spirit of life, as an evidence of the Mediator's exaltation, and of his glorious kingdom and royalty. Our Lord Jeſus Chriſt ſways his ſceptre of grace, and erects and maintains his kingdom, by ſending his Spirit. The Lamb was ſacrificed to purchaſe eternal redemption, and is enthroned to give the Spirit; and, O but the Spirit is a royal bleſſing! As Chriſt is a Prieſt upon the throne, ſo theſe that ſhare of his Spirit are a *royal prieſthood*; and, having the Spirit, they are *kings and prieſts to their God.* Let us wait this day about the throne for this glorious fruit and effect of his royal bounty.

IV. The *fourth* thing propoſed was, To enquire into the *reaſons*, or *whence* it is that this river of life, for quickening dead ſouls to everlaſting life, *Proceeds out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.*

1. It is to ſhew, that as the grace of God towards ſinners is *reigning* grace, *enthroned* grace; ſo

ſo it *reigns through the righteouſneſs of Chriſt to eternal life*, Rom. v. 21. And that no life, no ſpiritual life, by the word and Spirit of God, is to be expected, but as it runs in this channel. No life by the law or covenant of works is now to be expected. God and Adam are now ſeparate; and the channel of the communication of life, or of living waters, by his covenant with the firſt Adam, is quite cut off: but, behold, God and the Lamb are joined together in an everlaſting covenant, and ſit together on an everlaſting throne. The fulneſs of the Godhead is gone in to the ſecond Adam, the fulneſs of the Spirit of life is given to the Lamb *above meaſure*, John iii. 34. And now the Lamb, being *the Lord our righteouſneſs*, is exalted to the Father's throne; a throne enriched with the river of life. Grace reigns on that throne, through the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, to the communication of all the bleſſings of everlaſting life. Mercy vents through the blood of Chriſt, through the blood of the Lamb, once hanging upon the croſs, and now reigning upon the throne.

2. This river of life is diſcovered as proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, to ſhew the *diſtinct œconomy* of the glorious Trinity in this buſineſs of our redemption, and of the eternal ſalvation of loſt ſinners. God the Father, the firſt perſon in the order of ſubſiſtence, ſits upon the throne of his ſovereign grace; God the Son, the Lamb that was the purchaſer of life on the croſs, is made the adminiſtrator thereof upon the throne; God the Holy Ghoſt, proceeding from the Father and the Son, is the great Applier, bringing home the bleſſings purchaſed to all the redeemed in a perpetual egreſs and flow of divine communications: and hence all the ſtore of divine things and bleſſings, that the Spirit communicates, are ſaid to be the things of God the Father, and Chriſt the Son, diſcovered and diſpenſed by the Holy Ghoſt; *He ſhall glorify me, for he ſhall receive of mine and ſhew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine; therefore ſaid I, He ſhall take of mine and ſhew it unto you*, John xvi. 14, 15. And hence alſo believers are ſaid to *receive the Spirit which is of God, that they may know the things that are freely given them of God*, 1 Cor. ii. 21.—Thus we ſee the diſtinct œconomy of each perſon of the glorious Trinity in this matter, Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, one God in three perſons; and how we are equally indebted to each of them for the benefit of redemption.

3. This river of life is diſcovered as proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, to ſhew the *eſſential unity* and *glorious harmony* of the ever-bleſſed Trinity, notwithſtanding of their perſonal diſtinction; according to 1 John v. 7. *There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghoſt; and theſe three are one.* And this eſſential unity or natural oneneſs is, I think, pointed out in our text, where the throne being called *the throne of God and of the Lamb*, declares what Chriſt himſelf declared, John x. 30. *I and my Father are one.* And if the Spirit were not the fountain of living water, equally and eſſentially one with the Father and the Son, how could he proceed like a river out of the throne of God and of the Lamb? So that, as in this clear glaſs of the goſpel we ſee the diſtinct œconomy of the glorious Trinity, in the work of redemption, and their perſonal diſtinction, ſo we may ſee their eſſential unity or natural oneneſs: *Theſe three are one God, the ſame in ſubſtance, equal in power and glory.* And in the ſame light we ſee their glorious harmony in our redemption-work. As it is ſaid of the *three that bear witneſs on earth, the Spirit, the water, and the blood*, that, as *theſe three are one*, one in nature; ſo they agree in one, in one great and glorious work and deſign towards the ſalvation of poor ſinners. There is a perfect harmony and agreement between God and the Lamb upon the ſame throne: and how doth the Spirit agree with the Father and the Son proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb like a pure cryſtalline river? And thus ſhewing, that everlaſting life is from God in Chriſt, by the Spirit. Again, another reaſon is,

4. To ſhew the *excellent firmneſs* and *ſtability* of the new-covenant bleſſings, and on what a ſure ground and bottom the eternal life and happineſs of the church militant and triumphant is built. Theſe bleſſings are equally ſecured with the throne of God and of the Lamb, and the perpetual flow of the river or the water of life that proceeds therefrom. The everlaſting life of the redeemed is ſomeway interwoven with the perſonal properties of the glorious Trinity: for, as the Spirit, perſonally conſidered, proceeds from the Father and the Son; ſo he proceeds communicatively out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, to water all the redeemed, as an everflowing and overflowing river of everlaſting life. A glorious Trinity may be ſeen in every ſpiritual bleſſing: hence may a believer ſay, This pardon, for example, is a divine bleſſing, it is from the throne of God; it is a purchaſed bleſſing, it is from the throne of the Lamb; it is a ſealed bleſſing, by the Spirit, as a river running from the throne of God and of the Lamb, ſo as the happineſs of the redeemed cannot fail, nor the river ceaſe to run out to their everlaſting life, no more than God can ceaſe to be God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, one everlaſting God, in three perſons. The ſtream of grace here, and glory hereafter, proceeds from a fountain that can never be drained; here they will drink, and bathe, and ſwim for ever, if we may be allowed the expreſſion. The throne of God will ſtill be the throne of the Lamb; he will ſtill be a God in Chriſt: and the throne of the Lamb will ſtill be the throne of God; for to him the Father ſays, *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.* And the throne of God and of the Lamb will ſtill be a throne whence the everlaſting Spirit will proceed like a pure cryſtal river; for he will never ceaſe to be a free Spirit, a free fountain of living waters. O glorious and bleſſed ſecurity!

V. The *fifth* thing propoſed was, To deduce ſome *inferences* for the *application*. Is it ſo, *That the living Spirit of God, communicating all the bleſſings of everlaſting life graciouſly here, and glorioufly hereafter, proceeds like a pure cryſtal river out of the throne of God and of the Lamb?* Then,

1. Hence ſee the *harmony* between the church militant and triumphant; they drink of the ſame river: only here we have but drops, but there they have the ocean, and drink at the fountain-head: the utmoſt here is a *ſtaying us with flaggons*, but there the redeemed ſwim in the river of life. The ſaints in glory, as well

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as believers on earth, hold their title unto everlasting life of Christ: their everlasting happiness is grounded upon the blood of the Lamb, and flows from the throne of God and of the Lamb. Christ will be the glass, even in heaven, wherein the glory of God will be seen through the pure river of the water of life clear as crystal.

2. Hence see the *happiness* of every believer who have got but one saving drop of this river poured out upon his heart; for this Spirit of God and of the Lamb will be *in him a well of water springing up to everlasting life*, John iv. 14.; and that because this water proceeds from the throne of God and of the Lamb. It is a royal blessing from the divine throne; and the blessings of the throne are the best blessings. Many are content with the blessings of the footstool, and hunt only after these, saying, *Who will shew us any* earthly *good?* But, blessed are these that cannot be satisfied with any thing less than throne-blessings; *Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon me: then shall I have more gladness than* the wicked world, *in the time that their corn and wine increase*, Psal. iv. 6. O see what a royal gift it is to get the Spirit; Christ *ascended up on high, and led captivity captive, and received gifts for men*, Psal. lxviii. 18.

3. Hence see the *glory* of God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, shining in the work of redemption through Jesus, and in the way of our salvation through his blood and righteousness. Here, as in a glass, we may see the glory of God the Father sitting on the same throne with Christ, that is, appearing as a God in Christ; the glory of Christ the Son, our Redeemer, exalted to the Father's throne, after he had finished his work; and the glory of the Holy Ghost in his breathings and blessings, graces and comforts, proceeding like a pure crystal river out of the throne of God and of the Lamb: and also the glory of all the divine attributes; their honour is secured in this throne of grace, from whence grace and mercy vents, to the credit and honour of justice and truth, through the justice-satisfying blood of the Lamb; therefore it is said, *Justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne.*

4. Hence see how glorious the *gospel* is, and how powerful, while it is the channel wherein the Spirit of life, the river of the water of life runs from the throne of God and of the Lamb; *Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?* Gal. iii. 2. It is by the *hearing of faith*; and hence the Spirit and the word are put together in a promise to Christ, and in him to all his seed; *This is my covenant with them, saith the Lord, My Spirit which is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever*, Isa. lix. 21. This river of life, for quickening dead souls, runs always in the channel of the word of grace and promise; and the gospel is the *ministration of the Spirit* in the hands of his sent servants: and this ought to be highly prized by all that are followers of the Lamb, and would enjoy the witness of his Spirit from the throne. There are, indeed, in our day, many that are but ministers of the letter; these ought to be discouraged and discountenanced: but there are some evidently ministers of the New Testament, not of the letter, but of the Spirit; these ought to be highly encouraged and countenanced; for, though *the letter kills, the Spirit gives life*, 2 Cor. iii. 6. It is dangerous to desert a ministry wherein the Spirit of life runs; this were to run away from the river that proceeds out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

This, by the bye, may shew us a rule for our conduct in this day of division, when many of the Lord's own children are ready to run to some dangerous extremes with reference to their countenancing this or the other minister. Why, if they are ministers of the letter, that have nothing of a gospel-spirit, or of the Spirit of faith or faithfulness in preaching or managing; and, if this be evident, why not? Let us testify duly against them: but, if we have to do with ministers of the Spirit, let us remember, that some of these are appointed of God for such a work; and some for another work; and some them have a greater measure of the Spirit of faith and zeal than others; and some of them have a lesser measure given them of God, according to the work he hath for them: but, if they have any measure of a gospel-spirit, and of the Spirit of faith and faithfulness in their station, though they come not up to the same measure and degree with others, nor be set upon the very same ground, beware of slighting and despising them; for the great river of the city of God runs out in many streams, some greater and some lesser, and to despise the least stream is to despise the river; *He that despiseth you despiseth me.*

5. Hence see what it is that would make *good* and *happy days* in the church militant; namely, the running out of this river more plentifully: *Until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest. Then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field. And the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever*, Isa. xxxii. 15,—17. O when may we expect such a day! Indeed, such is the universal corruption of church and state, and such hath been our perjury, covenant-breaking and blood-shed, unrepented of; and such is the profanity, error, and blasphemy of the day we live in, that in all appearance, before the happy day of the outpouring of the Spirit, we may expect a terrible day of the outpouring of blood. Our national bloody sins are crying for bloody vengeance; and many see it hastening on. But, Sirs, what is it that will wash away Scotland's bloody guilt and bloody gore at once? What but a flood from heaven; even a flow of the pure river, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb! Whatever sad days may come before it, yet this is the happy day you ought to seek, for Zion's sake, and for the sake the of rising generations in Scotland, and of future ages.

6. Hence see what would make a *heartsome communion-solemnity* among us this day, amidst all the sad signs of the times, namely, the running down of this river. And see, at the same time, what ground we have to expect this river of life to run out; the ground of hope is, because the Lamb is enthroned. The time was that the Spirit, the Holy Ghost, was not given plentifully, *Because Jesus was not yet glorified*, John vii. 39. But now Jesus was glorified, the Lamb is sitting on his Father's throne; there-

fore we may ſeek and expect that the Spirit may be poured out. Let faith act, for ſupplies of this water, upon Chriſt's exaltation to the Father's right-hand to give repentance and remiſſion of ſins; exalted to give the Spirit of faith and repentance, to give the Spirit of holineſs and comfort; exalted to the well-watered throne, to let out the river plentifully. Again,

7. To raiſe our hope and experience, let us from this doctrine ſee, that the throne of God and of the Lamb is no *penurious* throne, that hath little to ſpare: as in our *Father's houſe there is bread enough and to ſpare*, ſo about our Father's throne, the throne of God and of the Lamb, there is water enough and to ſpare, the pure river of the water of life fully and freely proceeding out of it. The *ſeven Spirits* are ſaid to be *before the throne*, Rev. i. 4.; that is, the one eternal Spirit of God, as a river flowing out in all his various ſtreams of gifts, influences, operations, breathings, bleſſings, and comforts: this river is before the throne. Which ſays, by the bye, that it is good to go boldly and frequently to the throne of grace; for this quickening river of the water of life being before it, whenever we begin to go to the throne, the quickening river will meet us by the way; and whenever our feet touch the river, then, like a flood, it will carry us off our own feet, and bear us up towards the throne, as the water did the ark to the top of Ararat.

8. Hence ſee how we may attain *communion* with God at a communion-table, and how we are to go there: you ought to go with as great awe and reverence as if you were going to the throne of God, for his throne is at the head of the table. But then, how ſhall we go to the throne of God, who is an infinitely holy and juſt God, whereas we are guilty, guilty ſinners? Why, we cannot go to the throne of God but through Jeſus Chriſt; and through him we ought to go boldly, becauſe it is not only the throne of God, but of the Lamb, by whoſe blood we have boldneſs to enter into the holieſt. But again, if you think, how ſhall we go thus to the throne of God and of the Lamb, having no life or power to do any thing? Why, indeed, we cannot win to it but, as it were, ſwimming in the river that is before the throne, the river of the Spirit's influences and graces, that proceeds out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. That which brings us to the throne muſt proceed out of the throne; therefore we are to go believingly and dependently, being ſtrong only in the grace that is in Chriſt Jeſus, the grace that is in the throne of grace to be freely communicate from it.

9. Hence we may ſee the *marks* and *characters* of right and *worthy communicants*. They are ſuch as have got a diſcovery of what is here ſhewed unto John: *He ſhewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as cryſtal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.* I do not mean, that every true believer gets ſuch an extraordinary diſcovery as John here got the revelation of; but there is ſomething of the myſtery thereof in ſome degree that, I think, every believer gets ſome view of, particularly in theſe three things, by which you may examine yourſelf.

(1.) Have you got a view of the *throne of God*; I mean, of God himſelf, in his infinite holineſs and juſtice? For God ſits upon the throne of his holineſs, juſtice, and other glorious attributes; and to ſee the throne of God, is to ſee and know him to be Majeſty itſelf; for a throne points out majeſty. Have you ever apprehended the majeſty of his holineſs and juſtice, and that the throne of iniquity cannot have fellowſhip with him; that *he is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity*; that he is a God *that will by no means clear the guilty?* And hath ever the view of this made you tremble and quake, and fear, leſt you ſhould never have fellowſhip with him, becauſe you are nothing but a maſs of ſin and guilt?

(2.) Have you ever, upon the back of this, got a view of the throne of God as the *throne of the Lamb*, ſo as the terrible majeſty of the throne hath been allayed by the apprehenſion of divine mercy, venting through the blood of the Lamb that was ſlain; ſlain *virtually* from the foundation of the world; ſlain *actually* on the croſs at Jeruſalem, and now ſitting glorioufly upon his Father's throne? In this light have you ſeen infinite holineſs honoured and vindicated by the obedience of the Lamb, and infinite juſtice pleaſed and ſatisfied by the death and blood of the Lamb? And hath the view of this turned the throne of God from a terrible to an amiable throne in your eye? The throne of God and of the Lamb is nothing elſe but a God in Chriſt reconciling the world to himſelf; a God declaring himſelf well-pleaſed in Jeſus Chriſt. Hath the view of this turned your fear to hope, and your terror to triumph?

3. Have you ever hereupon ſeen and felt, to your experience, *living waters* proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb? Have you ſeen the fulneſs of the Spirit to be in Chriſt, as anointed therewith above meaſure? And have you ever found this living water guſhing from the throne, as it were, in a ſweet flood of influences? When you was pouring out your heart before the Lord, he was pouring out this flood upon you, and making you, as it were, ſwim in this river. Believer, know you not ſomething leſs or more about this? Well, what was the quality of the water which you was then baptized with? Perhaps you came to the throne *empty* and *deſtitute*, and like dry ground; but, before you went away, you was filled as with the fulneſs of a river guſhing out upon you.—Poſſibly you came to the throne very *dead* and *lifeleſs*, ſaying, Oh! is it poſſible that theſe dry bones can live? But your ſoul was quickened, and brought to life and livelineſs, ſo as you found the river to be indeed a river of the water of life; of life to your dead ſoul.—May be you came *polluted* and *unclean*, crying out, *Behold, I am vile!* Will ever ſuch a vile beaſt have acceſs to God, or be waſhed from ſuch ſtains? Yet, behold, you found your ſoul ſurrounded with purifying waters, with the pure river of the water of life, inſomuch that, perhaps, at that time, though it was a miſtake, yet you joyfully imagined, that all pollution, corruption, and impurity, was waſhed away with the happy flood that ſweetly overwhelmed you, and drowned all your luſts? Was not the river then in your view as a pure and purifying river?—Again, perhaps, you came to the throne under many *doubts* and *fears*, and *dark clouds*; but, ſay you, before I went away, I got a clear view of the mercy of God in Chriſt, a clear view of his everlaſting love, a clear view of the door of hope open to me; or, at leaſt, that there was hope in Iſrael even for me. You thus

thus found the *pure river of the water of life* to be *clear as cryſtal*, when a guſh of that water was able to clear your eye, when it was dim; to clear your mind, when it was dark and confuſed; to clear your conſcience, when it was black with guilt: the ſtreams of the river, clear as cryſtal, running through your heart, made all clear before it.

Have you ever got any view and experience of theſe things in ſome meaſure, however ſmall the degree be? Then you have the mark and character of ſuch as have a right to the communion-table: but, if you never got a view of the *throne of God*, or of the majeſty of God, ſo as to fear his wrath becauſe of your ſinfulneſs; and if you never got a view of the *throne of the Lamb*, or of the mercy of God in Chriſt, ſo as to hope in his mercy, as venting through the blood of the Lamb; and if you never felt any drop of this pure river of the water of life, clear as cryſtal, proceeding out of that throne; if you never found one guſh of that river of the Spirit's influences, either filling your empty ſoul, quickening your dead ſoul, purifying your polluted ſoul, or clearing your dark mind; then ſurely you have no right to the communion-table, as being a ſtranger to communion and fellowſhip with a God in Chriſt, by the Spirit.

It may be ſome poor weak believer will tell me, "Sir, I think, indeed, I am no utter ſtranger to what you have been ſaying: there was ſuch a time, and ſuch a time, wherein I thought I got a view of theſe things; but, alas! all is now gone! the throne of God and of the Lamb is out of view, and the guſh of influences from the throne, that I was watered with, is all dried up, and I am nothing but like a piece of parched ground." Well, it may be ſo; but here is good news; the throne of God and of the Lamb ſtill remains; the pure river of the water of life is ſtill ſubſiſting; and the throne of God and of the Lamb, is ſtill the fountain of living waters, that can never be dried up or drained, but is as full as ever. Therefore, wait about the throne for the pouring out of the Spirit, as *waters upon the thirſty, and floods upon the dry ground.*

10. Hence ſee the *duty* of all that hear this goſpel, namely, to *come* and *take of the water of life freely*; to come to Chriſt, and drink of the river that proceeds out of the throne. This inference is drawn from this doctrine, in the 17th verſe of the ſame chapter; *The Spirit and the bride ſay, Come; and let him that is athirſt come; and whoſoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.* Iſa. lv. 1. *Ho, every one that thirſteth, come to the waters.* John vii. 37, 38, 39. *On the great day of the feaſt, Jeſus ſtood and cried, If any man thirſt, let him come unto me and drink: for he that believeth on me, out of his belly*, out of his heart and bowels, *ſhall flow rivers of living water. This he ſpeaks of the Spirit, which they that believe on him ſhould receive.*

He who then ſtood and cried in this manner before he aſcended to the throne, he appointed us to be criers in his name, with this encouragement, *Lo, I am with you always, to the end of the world.* Indeed, if it were not for this encouragement, in vain would we cry to you, but, O regard the cry of the Son of God, ſaying, *If any man thirſt, let him come to me and drink of this pure river of living water.* I cannot offer you the ſacrament ſafely, till I offer Chriſt to you, the ſubſtance of it; and you cannot take the ſacrament honeſtly, till you accept of the offer, otherwiſe you will eat and drink unworthily. Let me therefore preſs this *exhortation* on you, before I cloſe, with a few conſiderations; and, O look up for power to accompany them. I ſhall go no further than my text and context.

(1.) Conſider the *authority* by which you are called to come to Chriſt, and drink of theſe living waters. It is a divine authority; the orders are iſſued from the throne of God; *This is his commandment, that ye ſhould believe on the name of his Son Jeſus Chriſt*, 1 John iii. 23. Are orders from an earthly throne to be regarded, coming in the name and authority of the prince? O what infinitely more regard is to be had to the throne of God! to the divine authority! If a poor man only were calling you to come to Chriſt, you might ſafely ſit the call, and ſay, *By what authority do you theſe things?* But all the authority of the throne of God and of the Lamb is here interpoſed; and you cannot ſit the call, without trampling on the authority of God.

(2.) Conſider the *glory* of that Jeſus, who invites you to come to him and ſhare of this living water, and drink of this pure cryſtal river. O that, in this clear ſtream of the Spirit's illumination, you could ſee the glory of Chriſt, who ſays, *He ſhall glorify me!* There is a twofold glory of Chriſt here: he preſents, 1. His imperial throne; 2. His glorious mediatorial fulneſs.—His *glorious throne*: how glorious ſoever the throne of God is, ſo glorious is the throne of the Lamb; for here you ſee the throne of the Lamb is the throne of God: and though he be the Lamb that was ſlain, yet he is God equal with the Father, *and thinks it no robbery to be equal with God*; and the Father thinks it no diſparagement to him to ſet the Lamb in the midſt of his throne. O glorious Jeſus! His blood was the blood of God; his righteouſneſs the righteouſneſs of God; his wiſdom is the wiſdom of God; his power is the power of God; and his throne is the throne of God. Angels and archangels worſhip with reverence before his throne.—His *glorious fulneſs* is here alſo preſented, *all the fulneſs of the Godhead is in him*; all the Father's fulneſs is in him, and all the Spirit's fulneſs is in him. The fulneſs of the Spirit, that ever any mere creature had, is but like the fulneſs of a veſſel; but the fulneſs of the Spirit that is in Chriſt, the Lamb of God, is the fulneſs of a fountain: and hence it is that the Spirit, and all ſpiritual bleſſings, proceed like *a pure river of water of life out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb.*

(3.) Conſider the *qualities* of theſe waters which Jeſus calls you to come to him for. They are ſuch as, whatever be your ſad natural ſtate, or your miſerable preſent caſe, there is ſuitable relief preſented therein.

[1.] Are you *deſtitute* and *empty* of all good, empty of all grace? O let that be no hinderance, but a reaſon to move you to come to Chriſt, and look to the Lamb that is on the Father's throne; for here is a full fountain, a flowing river: he calls you not to come and *give*, but to come and take what you need. O bring all your empty veſſels here; this river comprehends no leſs than God himſelf, and all his perfections; Chriſt himſelf, and all his fulneſs; the Spirit himſelf, and all his graces, bleſſings, and comforts.

[2.] Are you *dead in law*, and *dead in ſin*, dead in ſtate, and heart, and frame? Let that be no hinderance,

hinderance, but a reaſon to move you to come to Jeſus for a drink of this river; becauſe it is the river of the water of life. Chriſt's great complaint is, *You will not come to me, that you might have life*; the life of abſolution from the ſentence of the law condemning you to eternal death; together with the life of grace here, and glory hereafter: life to your dead ſouls; preſent life, future life, everlaſting life.

[3.] Are you *polluted* with the naſtineſs of hell about you, and altogether filthy and unclean? This is another reaſon why you muſt come to Jeſus, and ſhare of this pure river, and purifying water. This is the quality of the river to which you are invited to come: the ſtreams of this pure river will waſh and cleanſe your impure heart, and waſh you *from all filthineſs of the fleſh and of the ſpirit*.

[4.] In a word, Are you *dark* and *ignorant*, and *unclear* in your mind about the knowledge of God, and the things of God; and in your conſcience about peace with God? Why, here is no bar, but a motive to come to Chriſt and take of the *water of life freely*; for another quality of the waters is, that they are *clear as cryſtal*. And how ſhall you get either the mind cleared from darkneſs, or the conſcience cleared of guilt, but by looking, as it were, through this cryſtal flood that proceeds out of the throne; I mean, the clear glaſs of the Spirit's illumination, to ſee by this means that the throne of God is the throne of the Lamb; that is, that God is a God in Chriſt, whom, to ſee and know, is life eternal; there is clearing to the mind. And to ſee alſo, that the Lamb upon the throne of God now, is the Lamb that was ſlain to be a ſacrifice to ſatisfy juſtice and expiate guilt; there is clearing for the conſcience, when diſcerned, that, being juſtified by faith, you may have peace with God. Conſider then the quality of theſe waters which the Lord Jeſus calls you to come and take, to come and drink; they can anſwer every caſe.

(4.) Conſider what is the *quality* of thoſe that are invited to come to theſe waters, and upon what *terms* you may have a drink here, and live for ever: why, the exhortation here ſays, *Let him that is athirſt come; and whoſoever will, let him take of the water of life freely*, ver. 17. Here is the quality, *Let him that is* athirſt *come*. Who is the *thirſty* perſon? I anſwer, It is the man that ſtands in need of a drink. If you need a drink of this water; if you need Chriſt; then you are invited to come and drink. Why, ſay you, we all need Chriſt; then ſay I, you are all welcome to come to Chriſt; and I dare ſeek no other qualification of you.

"But pray, Sir, ſay you, tell us plainly what you mean by this *thirſt*; for I thought I would have been excluded by this qualification, becauſe perhaps I have not a right thirſt?" Why, man, I dare not, upon my peril, add any thing to this word, only, *Let him that is athirſt come*; becauſe of the word that follows that text, ver. 18. *If any man ſhall add unto theſe things, God ſhall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book*. Now, if I ſhould add any thing to this word, *Let him that is athirſt come*, by ſaying, The call is only to you that thirſt rightly, to you that thirſt greatly, to you that thirſt vehemently, to you that thirſt ſpiritually, to you that thirſt after nothing elſe but this water of life, then I would run the terrible hazard of adding to God's word, and alſo the hazard of ſcarring you from coming to Chriſt, ſaying, I fear I want this and that qualification. God hath ſet down the word *univerſally*, without qualifying what kind of a thirſt it is, that ſo the call may be widely extended to all that thirſt under heaven: therefore ſays Chriſt again, John vii. 37. *If any man thirſt, let him come to me and drink. If any man*, that is, any man or woman under heaven; for God created man male and female: if any man, any perſon of Adam's race, needs a drink of theſe waters of life, let him come. But ſome are thirſting after the world, and after their vile luſts; are not theſe excluded? No, no; the Spirit of God comments upon this thirſt, and invites even theſe by name, as perſons that ſtand much in need of Chriſt, Iſa. lv. 1, 2. *Ho, every one that thirſteth, come to the waters*, &c. *Wherefore do ye ſpend your money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which ſatisfieth not?* That is, All ye that are ſeeking and thirſting after ſatisfaction in the muddy waters of the world, and in the filthy water of your luſts, come to me, and you will get better water for nothing, even the pure river of the water of life; and ſo it is all thirſters under heaven that hear this goſpel, even all that need a drink of this water. And why doth Chriſt, think you, offer himſelf to you all, and every one of you? Not only becauſe you all need him, but becauſe his Father gives him to you, as he ſays, John vi. 32. *My Father gives you the true bread from heaven*: Even ſo, which is the ſame thing, his Father gives you the true water of life, everlaſting life is given in the word; *This is his record, that God hath given you eternal life, and this life is in his Son*. You have a right to it, and a right to take what God gives. Say not, If he be given to *me*, there needs no more, I am happy: Why, man, you might die of thirſt, though one gave you a cup of water, if you would not take and drink what is given you; ſo you may die and periſh for ever, though Chriſt, and the water of everlaſting life be given you, in this word, if you do not take and welcome the gift of God to your heart; and you periſh fearfully if you reject and neglect what was thus given you. If you aſk, What is the *leaſt* qualification required, in order to come to the throne of God and of the Lamb for this river of the water of life? Indeed, I cannot tell you what is the leaſt: for, let us ſeek from you never ſo little a qualification, Chriſt will ſeek leſs; let us go never ſo low, Chriſt will go lower. He that came down as low as hell to make the purchaſe, will come down as low as hell to make the application. Therefore, ſinner, though you be in a deep hell of ſin and miſery, out of the belly of hell look to him and be ſaved. If you need Chriſt, and think he can do you any good, it is qualification enough. For God's ſake, ſhut not the door of hope againſt yourſelf, when God is opening it to you. Though your thirſt be no other than like that of the dry ground, that needs a ſhower, O come to him that ſays, Iſa. xliv. 3. *I will pour water on the thirſty, and floods upon the dry ground*. God is at pains to find out words to fit your condition, and to ſhut all back-doors, that your unbelief may have no excuſe, and that none here may have it to ſay, The offer was not made to me.

If theſe conſiderations and arguments were duly pondered, they might have weight; but, alas! no argument will do but an argument of power: no motive will do, if God be not the mover.

mover. You remain dead carcaſſes, dead ſouls, notwithſtanding all the words that can be ſaid concerning theſe living waters that iſſue from the throne of God and of the Lamb. But, O! ſince it is life eternal to know God and the Lamb, I muſt tell you, that this moment, that ſpiritual life, which is and will be eternal, will begin to ſtir in your heart and ſoul, be it never ſo dead; if this moment you begin to know, that this God that ſits upon the throne with the Lamb, is the living God; and that this Lamb that ſits upon the throne of God, is the Lamb that was dead and is alive, and lives for evermore; and that this river, that proceeds out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, is the river of the water of life, the living Spirit of God and of the Lamb: *They that know his name, will put their truſt in him.* If you know the name of this living God, though you were never ſo dead, the life of faith, and hope, and truſt in him, will begin. And there are two parts of his name, that, I think, I am commiſſioned to declare among a company of dead ſouls here, which you ſhall no ſooner ſavingly know, but you ſhall inſtantly live.

One part of his name is, Exod. iii. 14. I AM THAT I AM. And, I think, he, whoſe name is, *I am*, hath ſent me to tell you, that this is his name; the God of beings, who hath life and being in himſelf: He is being itſelf, and none can ſay, *I am*, but himſelf. All the creatures in heaven and earth are nothing before him. He brought them out of nothing, and they are reducible to nothing if he pleaſes.

Another part of his name is, Rom. iv. 17. *The God that quickens the dead, and calls things that are not, as though they were.* Now, O dead and lifeleſs ſoul! if you have but ears to hear this goſpel, do you know that this is the name of God? I aſk not, if you *think* and *fancy* ſo; but, do you *know* and *believe* that he is *the God that quickens the dead*, and quickens whom he will, and is able to quicken you? Do you know and believe that he is the God that *calls things that are not, as though they were*; who with his bare word can give a being to that which is nothing, and create light and life where there was nothing but darkneſs and death, ſaying, *Let there be light; let there be life?* Now, if you know your own name to be darkneſs and death; and if you know this name of the Lord to be, *The Lord of light and life; the God that quickens the dead*, then I know there will be ſome ſtirring among the dead and dry bones and hearts here: *Ye ſhall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, and ſhall put my Spirit in you, and ye ſhall live*, Ezek. xxxvii. 13, 14.

There is no room then for any to object, Why is the miniſter calling us all to come to Chriſt, and take of this water of life? How can one come to Chriſt for life, that hath no life enabling him to come? Indeed, I could not well anſwer that, if it were only the word of the miniſter that was calling: but he calls you who hath the words of eternal life, and whoſe word creates life, whoſe word recovers life, whoſe word maintains life, whoſe word perfects life, quickening whom he will to everlaſting life, and whoſe words are Spirit and life; inſomuch, that one drop of this river of the water of life, mixed with this word, will make it a life-giving word: Therefore, in his great name, who ſays, *I am the reſurrection and the life, he that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet ſhall he live;* in his name and authority, we ſay, O dead and dry bones, riſe and live; for, *the God that quickens the dead calls you.* O lame and diſeaſed ſouls that cannot ſtir, riſe and come, for the Lord of life calls you. O dead ſinner, dead Lazarus, that hath been ſo long rotting in the grave of ſin and ſloth, come forth, come forth; for he that is the reſurrection and the life calls you. However long or ſhort time you have been dead in ſins and treſpaſſes, and ſtinking in that filthy ſepulchre, yet if there be any ſtream of the water of life running from the throne this moment, any motion of the living Spirit about your heart, then a quickening voice from the throne of God and of the Lamb is calling you. Words without power will not do with you; the words of men and angels cannot give you the leaſt degree of life, nor quicken that dead heart of yours; but, *where the word of a king is, there is power.* Riſe then, dying, drooping ſoul, the Maſter calls you. The King of glory that ſits upon the Father's throne is ſpeaking to you, and ſaying, "*Riſe up, my love, my fair one, and come away;* however foul and filthy, black and ugly in thyſelf. Lo! *The winter is paſt, and the rain is over and gone;* the ſtorm of divine wrath, that ſhould have fallen on thee for ever, is over thy head, and hath fallen on my head, when I ſwate in the garden, and hang upon the croſs; and now I have mounted my Father's throne, to draw thee up to me, and to ſend down my Spirit as the river of life, to run in to thy heart, and quicken thee to hear my voice, and anſwer my call. Come then, though you ſee yourſelf black like hell, and like a devil; *Riſe my love, my fair one, and come away. Come with me from Lebanon; from the lions dens, and mountains of leopards.* Come away from this vain world, this vile world, this venomous and viperous world; come and ſhare of my grace in time, and my glory for ever after time." Bleſſed are they that hear his voice, and open to him. If the river of life that proceeds out of the throne of God and of the Lamb be running through any heart here, the work is done, life is begun, and open doors are made for the King of glory: if it be otherwiſe, I have no more to ſay, but, glory to God and the Lamb, that *as many as were ordained to eternal life ſhall believe*, and live for ever.

SERMON LXXII.

The COMER'S CONFLICT; or, the *Beginner's Battle with the Devil*, when eſſaying to come to CHRIST by Faith. *

LUKE ix. 42.

And as he was yet a coming, the Devil threw him down and tare him.—

HERE is the hiſtory of Chriſt's healing a lunatic child, whoſe father came to the diſciples, and they could not cure him; and now he cometh to Chriſt. As we ought to come to Chriſt ourſelves for healing, ſo we ought to bring our children to him; and when ſervants and other means can do us no good, we ought to go to the maſter, and look over the head of all miniſters and ſervants. After Chriſt had reproached the diſciples for their unbelief, he gives the poor man an encouraging word concerning his ſon; *Bring thy ſon hither*, ver. 41. Bring him to me. We ought to bring our ſons and our daughters to Chriſt; to bring our diſeaſes and all our various caſes to Chriſt. But after this encouragement, follows a trial in the text: *As he was yet coming, the devil threw him down and tare him.*

In which words we have three things obſervable, namely,

1. An excellent *duty*; that is, *coming* to Chriſt.

2. An eminent *trial* and heavy *diſpenſation* that befel the comer; *The devil threw him down and tare him.*

3. The *time* and *juncture* when this heavy trial and great affliction befel him, namely, *As he was yet a coming.*

Hence we may obſerve the three following particulars.

(1.) The *beſt courſe* that any can take for relief from whatever afflicts them, is to come to Jeſus the Saviour.

(2.) They who come to Chriſt for help will be an *eye-ſore* to hell and the devil; he will be ſure to fly upon them.

(3.) They who come to Chriſt for help and healing, though they may be ſure he will help and heal them, yet they may find their caſe *worſe* before the relief come; they may be thrown down, and torn, as it were, to pieces by the way. Or thus, Chriſt may undertake to deliver people, and yet their diſtreſs may grow upon their hand before their deliverance come. Here is Chriſt's undertaking, *Bring him hither to me.* Here is the perſon coming with hope of deliverance, *he is on his way coming to Jeſus*; and yet, behold, here is a dreadful daſh, a mighty trial to faith and hope, both in the father and ſon: yea, after he was come to the phyſician, and the healing word ſpoken, as you ſee, Mark ix. 25, 26. where this ſame hiſtory is recorded, with other circumſtances, *The ſpirit cried, and rent him ſore before he came out of him, and ſo he was as one dead, inſomuch, that many ſaid, He is dead.*

Well then, the doctrinal obſervation, we would incline briefly to proſecute from theſe words, may be framed as follows.

DOCT. *That people, who come to Chriſt, and whom he undertakes to heal and help, may have their diſtreſs growing on their hand, before the deliverance come, which yet will certainly come.*

It is in this caſe, as it was with Iſrael in Egypt, *God ſaw their affliction*, and undertook to come and ſave them; and yet, behold, before their deliverance comes, their bondage becomes heavier than before. The darkeſt time of the night may be before day break. Thus it was with Iſrael, in returning from Babylon, to rebuild the temple in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah. The king gives commandment to go and build; God ſtirs up the civil authority to give encouragement to them: but quickly the haters of Zion, miſrepreſenting the work, procure an order to cauſe them deſiſt from it. This doctrine then is verified both with relation to God's public work towards a church, and his particular work on the ſouls of his people, as you ſee it was with the ruler of the ſynagogue, Mark v. 23. that applied to Chriſt in behalf of his daughter at the point of death, that he might come and heal her. Chriſt went with him; but ſee what ſad news he gets from his houſe, *Trouble not the Maſter, for your daughter is dead*, ver. 35.: And now they looked upon the matter as hopeleſs, though yet Chriſt was on his way to ſave her.

The method we would lay down, for the farther proſecuting this ſubject, through ſupernatural aid, ſhall be the following.

I. We will ſpeak a little of *coming* to Chriſt.

II. Enquire in what *reſpects* matters may grow *worſe* with people, even when they are thus coming to Chriſt.

III. Enquire into the *reaſons* whence it is that people who come to Chriſt for help, and whom he undertakes to help, may find their *diſtreſs grow* before their *deliverance come.*

IV. Make ſome *application* of the whole.

I. We are to ſpeak a little of *coming* to Chriſt. There are only two things I would obſerve here.

1. Coming to Chriſt imports a view that *vain is the help of man*; vain is the help of the creatures; vain is the help of miniſters, means, and ordinances of themſelves. Thus it was here with the father of the child; *I beſought thy diſciples to caſt him out, but they could not*, ver. 40. So they who come to Chriſt find *all other refuges*

* This Subject was handled in two Diſcourſes. The firſt was delivered at an evening exerciſe, on Saturday, July 19. 1735. before the celebration of the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper, at Kinglaſſie on the 20th. The ſecond was preached on the Monday, after the adminiſtration of that ordinance. It hath undergone three impreſſions.

fail

fail them, Pſal. cxlii. 4.; other phyſicians were of no value. None come to Chriſt till they can do no better; yet he is content with ſuch comers that ſee there is no other ſhift for them.

2. This coming to Chriſt imports a putting the *work in his hand*; *Maſter, I beſeech thee look upon my ſon*: he prays, and he brings him to Chriſt at the Lord's call. They that truly come to Chriſt for help, they put the work in his hand, and give him employment in his ſaving offices; looking on him as able, and willing, and ready to ſave: the diſeaſe is half cured when it is laid at Chriſt's feet. Happy they that come thus to him, and intruſt him with their ſouls, and truſt with their caſes; *Commit thy way unto the Lord; truſt alſo in him, and he will bring it to paſs*, Pſalm xxxvii. 5.

II. The ſecond head propoſed was, to enquire, in what *reſpects* may matters *grow worſe* with people, even when they are thus coming to Chriſt. Here two things are recorded; 1. Satan's aſſault, *The devil threw him down*. 2. How he uſed him, *And he tare him*.

1. They who come to Chriſt, before they get the deliverance which is inſured to them, they may meet with *down-caſting* providences; *The devil threw him down*. They may be caſt down with diſcouragement and deſpondency for a while; caſt down with fears and doubts; caſt down with jealous apprehenſions and unbelieving thoughts. Believing ſouls, after their coming to Chriſt, much more as they are coming at firſt, may be greatly caſt down; *O my God, my ſoul is caſt down within me*, Pſalm xlii. 6. They may be caſt down with a multitude of perplexing thoughts, deſpairing thoughts, and manifold objections and ſcruples, their mind raiſes, or rather unbelief frames within them.

2. They may not only be thrown down, but *torn* by the way; *The devil threw him down and* TARE *him*. Whenever a man begins to come to Chriſt, and the devil fears he ſhall loſe his poſſeſſion, then he rages againſt that man, and would tear him to pieces. Therefore, think not ſtrange that beginners in religion, and ſuch as are coming, or but lately come to Chriſt, or even theſe who have come formerly, and are coming again to him, may be mightily aſſaulted and attacked by all the powers of hell. So long as people remain at a diſtance from Chriſt, the devil does not meddle with him; *He keeps the houſe, and the goods are at peace*: but in coming to Chriſt they may lay their account to be torn by torments, torn by terrors, and blaſphemous ſuggeſtions: they may lay their account with fiery darts. When we expect the Lord is about to remove one burden, he may lay on another, that he may have the more mercy on us.

III. The next thing propoſed was, to enquire into the *reaſons* whence it is that people, who come to Chriſt for help, and whom he undertakes to help, may find their *diſtreſs grow* before their *deliverance come*. Whatever malicious hand the devil hath in this matter, God hath a holy hand in permitting it.

1. God's deſign in it is to ſhew his *wiſdom* and *power*.

(1.) It is to manifeſt his *wiſdom*: how he can advance his work, by the ſtops in the way of it; and enrich his people, by impoveriſhing them; enlarge them, by impriſoning them; and *give them meat out of the eater, and ſweet out of the ſtrong*.

(2.) It is to evince his *power*; how he can ſupport them under, and deliver them from their diſtreſſes, which would not appear ſo much, if their diſtreſs came not to a height.—He ſuffers them to be dejected and torn, that his wiſdom and power may appear the more evidently in lifting them up and healing them.

2. It is to *check the unbelief* that attends our faith in coming to Chriſt. Sometimes when we commit our caſe to him by faith, we do not exerciſe this faith to a *patient waiting for the Lord*. Chriſt's *firſt* word to his people is, *Come to me*, Mat. xi. 28.; and his *laſt* word is, *Abide in me*, John xv. 4. It is well done to come, but, alas! we do not abide; and therefore, to check our unbelief in coming, as it were, but one ſtep, and going back the next ſtep, he ſhews the need of going forward, by letting looſe the enemy, and ſuffering matters to grow worſe with us.

3. It is to raiſe the *worth* and *eſteem* of his mercies in the hearts of theſe who come to him. We uſually do not know the worth of a mercy, till we be deprived of it; nor the worth of deliverance, till the diſtreſs be extremely great: help is then highly eſteemed, when we can ſay, *I was brought low, and he helped me*.

4. It is to try our *faith*, whether or not it be ſuch as will not only come to Chriſt, but alſo abide with him till he work the deliverance; and if we can keep our eye upon the deliverer, when the deliverance is delayed; our eye upon the promiſe, when croſs providences appear; and can hope againſt hope. He deſigns the trial of faith for the preſent, and a more glorious iſſue thereafter.

IV. The laſt general head propoſed was, to make ſome *application*. Is it ſo, *That people who come to Chriſt, and whom he undertakes to heal and help, may have their diſtreſs growing on their hand, before the deliverance come, which yet will certainly come?* Hence we may ſee,

1. What a *cruel enemy* the devil is to immortal ſouls, and their eternal ſalvation: for, whenever a ſoul begins to mind religion in earneſt, and to come to Chriſt for help and deliverance, then that ſoul becomes the object of the devil's ſpite and malice. As long as people remain graceleſs, and Chriſtleſs, and formal, the devil will let them enjoy themſelves, and hugs them aſleep in their ſecurity; but as ſoon as they begin to come to Chriſt, then he will attempt to caſt them down and tear them, and ſtirs up all his wicked inſtruments, either to diſcourage and ridicule them, or to tear their name and reputation to pieces, and to perſecute them with tongue or hand, or to raiſe a hue and cry againſt them, as if they were turned diſtracted, and out of their wits. As they are *coming*, *the devil throws them down and tears them*.

2. Hence ſee the *reaſon* of all the *melancholy moods*, *heavy damps*, and *great diſcouragements* of many beginners, that are ſetting on in the Lord's way; though *wiſdom's ways be ways of pleaſantneſs*, yet Satan, who is a *liar from the beginning*, would make the world believe, that it is a bitter and unpleaſant way; and that the beginning of religion is but the *beginning of ſorrows*.

3. Hence ſee the difference between the *conviction of the Spirit* and the *temptation of Satan*; and

and the difference between the distress of soul, that arises from a law-work before conversion, and that which arises from the assault of the enemy of our salvation; whenever conviction begins, and the soul comes to be troubled for sin, and under fear of hell and wrath, Satan indeed fishes in the muddy water, and mixes his temptations with the Spirit's convictions; and if he can bring all conviction to nothing, either by force or fraud, he will do it, that the convinced soul may never come to Christ for a cure: *Satan will stand at his right-hand to resist him.* But the difference between them is;

(1.) The *conviction of the Spirit* are BEFORE a man come to Christ, and tend as a severe *schoolmaster to lead him to Christ*, Gal. iii. 24. But the *temptations of the devil* are especially when a man is COMING to Christ, in order to keep him from coming. If the Spirit of God, by a law-work, seem, as it were, to cast down the man, and tear him to pieces, the design is to *oblige* him to go to Christ for help and healing; and to provoke him to come to the Saviour, and fly to the city of refuge. But the design of the devil's temptations, when he throws down and tears the soul, is when he is coming, or as he is coming to Christ, in order to *detain* him from coming, or discourage him in coming.

(2.) The *convictions of the Spirit* are *humbling*, tending to make the soul despair of help in himself, or in God out of Christ. The *temptations of the enemy* are *terrifying*, tending to make the soul despair of help in Christ, or in God through him: the former shuts the door of hope by the law; but the devil would shut the door of hope by the gospel.

4. Hence see there is no ground to *blame religion* and *religious duties*, notwithstanding discouragements and downcasting trials in the way of duty: though matters grow worse with you in the way of duty, and in the way of coming to Christ, blame not yourself for coming to Christ, because the devil attacks you by the way. You have enough to charge yourself with, though you charge not yourself foolishly. It would be far worse with you if the devil and your own wicked heart prevail to take you off from the use of promising means. When, like Peter, you cast yourself upon the water to come to Christ, be not terrified, though the devil raise a storm; the Lord Jesus *sits upon the floods, and is mightier than the noise of many waters*, Psal. xciii. 4. Never think the worse of Christ, though matters seem to grow worse with you, when you come to him for rest, and yet find trouble; for it is the devil and the ill heart that breeds all the trouble: keep up honourable thoughts of the Lord Jesus; believe he can do for you, and wait till you find that he will do. Bring wind from all cross providences to hasten you nearer to your resting place; for all that comes to him shall find rest in spite of the devil: some begun rest here in time, however disturbed by the devil from time to time, and by unbelief, until rest be perfected in heaven.

5. Hence see an *evidence* of a *true believer* and *comer* to Christ: if the devil be no enemy to your faith, you may know it is a false faith. Many have a faith that the devil is well enough pleased with; and therefore he never troubles them nor it: but if you have saving faith, it will be the eye-sore of hell; or if you be truly coming to Christ, you may expect the devil to be upon your top. No sooner doth true faith begin, but the fight of faith begins. Some may bless themselves they were never assaulted by the devil, and yet they are but sleeping, as it were, in the devil's cradle; he is rocking them. Try your faith; if it be from heaven it will meet with opposition from hell: *We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places*, Eph. vi. 12. Therefore we are called, as part of the Christian armour, to take *the shield of Faith, whereby we shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked*, ver. 16. The devil may let you peaceably go about duty; read, and pray, and communicate, because you may do these things carnally and formally, and go to hell when all is done: but if once you begin to come to Christ, or to go about any duty believingly, then you are on the way to heaven, and if the devil can, he will draw you back, and throw you down with discouragements, and tear you with temptations, either as you are coming, or after you are come. But it is always the *best* faith that is most opposed by the devil.

This doctrine may be applied by way of *address*, 1. To these who never yet came to Christ for help and salvation. 2. To these who are coming in obedience to his call.

1. To you who *never yet came to Christ* for help and salvation. Oh! stay not away from him for fear of the devil, lest he throw you down and tear you. Better be thrown down by the way in coming to Christ, than thrown down to hell, with the devil at last, by the hand of God, who will throw you and the devil down to hell if you do not come to Christ. Better that the devil tear you to pieces, when there is a Deliverer, even Jesus, at hand to deliver you from him, than that God himself tear you to pieces when there shall be none to deliver: *Consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver*, Psal. l. 22. Come, otherwise you remain slaves to the devil and your lusts. O be sensible of your slavery and malady! Know none can save you but our Lord Jesus Christ; he is a mighty Saviour, and a merciful one: *No name is given under heaven, whereby a sinner can be saved, but the name of Jesus.* Put the work in his hand; put your soul in his hand. *Bring him here to me*, says Christ, to the man here. O come and bring your children with you; hear him saying, Bring your son to me, bring your daughter to me, bring your soul and your case to me; O bring your disease to me, bring your hard heart to me, and I will soften it; bring your filthy heart to me, and I will cleanse it; bring your heart possessed of the devil to me, and I will cast out the devil; bring your seven devils to me, and I will cast them out.

2. We address ourselves to you who are *coming* in answer to his call. O be not dismayed, though the devil throw you down and tear you as you are coming. Here is a Saviour ready to lift up, whom the devil throws down; ready to heal, whom the devil tears; ready to help all that are hurt by the old serpent. It is his trade to *destroy the works of the devil.* You may be always sure that it is an evil spirit that is dealing with you, that would mar and hinder you in your coming to Christ; for the voice of the Spirit of God is, *Come; the Spirit and the bride say, Come.* The Spirit of God, as a Spirit of bondage,

bondage, may caſt down the ſoul before it come to Chriſt, and in order to its coming; but it is not the Spirit of God that caſts down the coming believer; no, *We have not received the ſpirit of bondage again unto fear*, Rom. viii. 15. After coming to Chriſt, and believing in him, it is only the devil that caſts down and tears you. Fear not the lion of hell; here is the Lion of the tribe of Judah to defend you: it is unbelief, and departing from Chriſt, that may bring you to the greateſt danger; therefore, *Fear not, only believe.**

SERMON LXXIII.

LUKE ix. 42.

And as he was yet a coming, the devil threw him down and tare him.

[The ſecond Sermon on this text.]

THIS doctrine may be applied, at the time, in an *exhortation* or *advice*, particularly to theſe that are *tempted* and *torn* of the devil, when they eſſay to come to the Lord Jeſus. In order to your being fortified, through grace, againſt his aſſaults and fiery darts, there are only ſix ſorts of temptations, I would, at preſent, endeavour to fortify you againſt. 1. With reference to *heart-blaſphemy*. 2. With reference to *heart-wandering*. 3. With reference to the *commiſſion* of ſin. 4. With reference to the *omiſſion* of duty. 5. With reference to *unworthy apprehenſions* of God. 6. With reference to *ſelf-murder*. There are temptations with reference to all theſe that you need to be fortified againſt; while you are coming to Chriſt, Satan may attempt to throw you down, and tear you in all theſe, and many other reſpects: but I ſhall touch a little at each of theſe.

1ſt, There are temptations of Satan with reference to *blaſphemy*, whereby he would throw down and tear in pieces, as it were, the ſouls of theſe that would come to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. They may be tempted to dreadful blaſphemous thoughts, which are not to be named, they are ſo deteſtable and abominable; they are fearful injections upon the mind, and very terrifying to a weak believer that is coming to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. In order to your being fortified againſt theſe, I would offer you the following advices.

1. Be not *terrified* with them, ſince they harm you more by their *horror*, than by their *guilt*. It is true, the guilt of them is ſo great, that it is unpardonable to him to whom it belongs. Theſe are Satan's ſins, and not thine; and he ſhall anſwer for them, and not thou. Though he lay theſe blaſphemous thoughts at your door, he is the father of them. Such thoughts are like lightenings caſt into a room, they have a great deal of horror; but as the lightening ſprings not from any cauſe in the room, ſo theſe thoughts proceed not from any thing in thee; not properly from thy corruptions, for unregenerate men themſelves abhor them: and though the ſeed of all ſin be in our nature, yet ſcare, if ever, doth this ſin ſpring up even in reprobates: nay, the devil himſelf doth not think of God that which theſe thoughts ſignify. Since thou doſt not actually, nor did originally in Adam, give conſent to theſe thoughts, they are not thy ſins. Suppoſe ſome villain ſhould meet a chaſte virgin in a field and raviſh her, if ſhe ſtruggles and cries, ſhe is innocent by the law of God: this is her affliction, not her ſin. She may mourn for her ſuffering, not her guilt; eſpecially ſhe doing nothing to provoke him. It may be the villain finds her at prayer, as the devil doth find thee, when he injects theſe thoughts. Therefore, be of good comfort, thou art more afraid than hurt: for a careleſs wandering thought in prayer, hath more guilt in it than theſe have. If one attempt ſuddenly to ſtrike our eye, though we know he doth not intend to ſtrike it, yet it cannot but wink: ſo we can ſcare chooſe but be terrified with theſe thoughts; but we muſt reſiſt and conquer ſuch fears. I ſay not, we ſhould not abhor ſuch thoughts, for then we ſhould be worſe than heathens; but we ſhould not be terrified out of our faith, or duties, or comforts thereby.

2. Do not *give over your duties* for theſe blaſphemous thoughts and injections; for, though theſe thoughts are not thy ſin, yet they may be the cauſe of thy ſinning, if they cauſe thee to abſtain from prayer, reading the word, attending upon the ordinances, and the like duties. You may, perhaps, think it better not to pray than to have theſe thoughts: but thy prayers may do thee more good than theſe can do thee harm; and how wilt thou conquer if thou caſt away thy weapons? Neither haſten from your duty; for thus you do the devil too much homage: his temptations ſhould make you pray the more, not ſeldomer, or ſhorter.

3. *Think not over theſe thoughts again*, even when thou goeſt to God to complain of Satan and his dreadful aſſaults; for, if thou yield not to the tempter, theſe blaſphemies are not the matter of confeſſion, but rather of complaint; as a woman that is raviſhed doth not confeſs, but lament her affliction. Neither ſpeak them over, when you go to a miniſter or Chriſtian friend for advice or comfort; but only mention in general, that horrid thoughts and blaſphemies trouble you: they will underſtand what you mean; but, perhaps they had as good Satan ſhould inject ſuch thoughts, as to hear you name them.

4. *Pray much againſt theſe blaſphemies*, and thus ſtudy to be gainers by them, and to be avenged upon Satan, which you may, if you do as they did, Acts xix. when they heard that ſome would ſpeak againſt their goddeſs Diana, they cried out for the ſpace of two hours, *Great is Diana of the Epheſians*, ver. 28, 34.; ſo that whoſoever ſhould go about to ſpeak againſt Diana could not be heard. Do thou likewiſe; when Satan throws in blaſphemous thoughts, break thou forth into bleſſing and praiſing of God; and if thou canſt not do ſo, try to read or ſing ſome pſalm full of praiſes, as Pſal. ciii. cv. cxvi. cxlv, *&c.*: and if thou art private enough, read or ſing them with a loud voice, and when Satan ſhall ſee that thou art the gainer by his temptations, he will be weary of tempting thee. Theſe blaſphemies are Satan's railings and revilings againſt the God of heaven; therefore you are to do with them as Hezekiah did with Rabſhakeh's railing let-

* This ends what was delivered on the Sabbath-evening. In the firſt edition of this diſcourſe, we are acquainted, that the Author enlarged the application, in ſome other inferences, upon the Sabbath-day; but the notes of that diſcourſe were not written. What follows, we are told, was delivered upon the Monday, after the ſacrament.

ter, Isa. xxxvi. 21. he went and *spread the blasphemy before the Lord.* He did not so much as read over the letter, but spread it before the Lord: so, without naming over that blasphemy, you should pray against it, that God would suppress this smoak that ascends out of the bottomless pit.

You may lawfully dispute and argue with Satan against some of his blasphemies; as when he tempts you to question the being of a God, and the truth of divine revelation, as the archangel disputed with the devil about the body of Moses; so when you are tempted, for example, to doubt if the scripture be the word of God, you may consider the plain arguments that prove it, and ask Satan, Why dost thou fly before it? If the ark were not the ark of God, why doth Dagon fall before it? If it were not the word of God, why doth Satan tempt me not to believe it? But do not depend upon thy arguing; Satan is too strong for reasoning; betake thyself to the Lord Jesus by prayer. Though Satan may stand out against thy arguments, he will not be able to stand against the prayer of faith. The archangel said, *The Lord rebuke thee.* Though he will not fly at thy rebuke, yet he will, and must, at the rebuke of God. And, by the way, see the excellency of Christ above the archangel: Christ rebukes Satan by his own power and authority; for he said not, *The Lord rebuke thee;* but, *Get thee behind me, Satan.*

2*dly*, There are temptations of Satan with reference to *heart-wanderings* in duty. Satan knows, that if he can get these flies to come and rest in this precious ointment, they will putrify it. He knows, if the thoughts wander, God regards not what the tongue says; and if he can spoil your prayers, he fears not any ordinance what good it can do thee. If your thoughts be earthly, he cares not how heavenly your words are.—Herein Satan gets assistance from the *evil heart; Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts*, Mat. xv. 19. They arise out of the heart as sparks out of a furnace; they stay not in the heart, but are active, and ascend up to the head: and they come out of the heart, not as sparks out of a flint, by concussion and violence, forced out; but they *proceed out* of it, says Christ; they come out of themselves, and they proceed always in a continued act.—Satan's temptations to heart-wandering in duty, are also furthered by a *multitude of business*, and that two ways.

(1.) If we *come from* a multitude of business; for our hearts are like the troubled sea, it must have some considerable time before it be composed, though the winds that raised the storms cease; so when we come from business, there must be some time after our business is ended before our hearts can be sedate and quiet, and fit for prayer; nay, in this our hearts are worse than the sea, because,

(2.) *Future* business will distract us before it come. The sea is not tumultuous before the wind blow, but the business we have to do will trouble us before it comes to be done. It is a hard thing to keep business out of our thoughts when we pray, and make it stay till our prayer be ended.

Now, to fortify against these, I offer the following four advices shortly.

1. O study to *mortify the love of the world:* where our love is, there will our thoughts be. To set your love on the world, and your thoughts on God, you will find altogether impossible; *He that loveth the world, the love of the Father is not in him.* O seek to mortify this.

2. Lay up your *treasure in heaven; For, where your treasure is, there will your heart be also*, Matth. vi. 21. The heart of the Jews *went after their covetousness*, Ezek. xxxiii. 31.; when they were hearing the word they could not keep their hearts where their bodies were, but they would be where their love was, and where their treasure was.

3. Let not the *world be your familiar friend*, for familiar friends come in without knocking or asking leave; therefore be thou a *stranger in this present world*, Heb. xi. 13. They were not strangers in this or that part of the earth, but in the whole earth: be a stranger to the world, and the world will not visit you in prayer.

4. Make *prayer your delight*, not your task. Children are subject to look off their books, because they delight not in them; but when they are playing, they are eager and earnest. The bird flutters in the cage; but sits quietly on the tree, and sings there: *I will go to God*, says David, *to God my exceeding joy*, Psal. xliii. 4. When our thoughts find satisfaction, they set up their habitation and wander not.

3*dly*, There are temptations of Satan with reference to *omission of duty:* as for example, he represents to them the difficulty that there is therein. O I cannot pray nor hear aright; I cannot meditate nor mortify aright; therefore I may let it alone. Now, in order to fortify against these temptations, consider,

1. That this is *necessary;* you must be *exercised unto godliness;* exercised in *keeping a conscience void of offence towards God and man;* and be *stedfast and immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labour shall not be in vain in the Lord*, 1 Cor. xv. 58. As for the wicked, who are otherwise disposed, having no heart nor will to the Lord's service at all, what can they expect at his hand, but this, *Take these mine enemies, that would not that I should reign over them, bring them hither, and slay them before me?* Yea, *he will come in flaming fire to take vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel.* It is therefore absoultely necessary.

2. Consider, that it is *possible* to serve the Lord acceptably by his grace. Though duty be difficult to nature; yet, if you get the Spirit of God to help you, you will do well enough; and God hath promised his help, Isa. xl. 29,—31. *He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might, he encreaseth strength*, &c. *They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength.* Hence all the saints of old, and of late too, have tried the Lord's way, and found that the way of the Lord was *strength to them;* yea, *that wisdom's ways are pleasantness:* their *delight* was *in the law of the Lord; in keeping of his commands there is a great reward.* One smile of God's countenance is worth all your pains, though you were at a hundred times more. There is always some thing savoury and sweet in religion that accompany the sedulous exercise thereof. Though the soul hath nothing to claim on the account of its own works or duties; yet the Lord is graciously pleased to own and countenance his own way, when the soul is found in it, beside the glorious and gracious reward that abides it in heaven.

Therefore, let faith batter down this temptation

tation of Satan, saying, What though Satan present difficulties in the way, Christ underwent greater difficulties: He hath borne the burden and the heat of the day. I am not called to go and *satisfy justice*; Christ hath done that to my hand: I am not called to go and *fulfil the law as a covenant of works*; Christ hath done that to my hand: I am not called to *work for life*, but to work for love to him that *worketh all my works in me, and for me*; and who, as he calleth me to this work of love, so promiseth to *work in me both to will and to do*: and therefore, in his name and strength, I will go forward, *making mention of his righteousness, and his only*; and, in his name, I will encounter and grapple with the devil himself, for Christ hath conquered him to my hand.

4thly, There are temptations of Satan with reference to the *commission of sin*: he will suggest to them that it is but a little sin, and God will not be angry for a little sin; such as a lye in droll, an idle word, &c. Can such a little sin endanger the soul? Now, to guard you against this temptation, consider,

1, That the *first sin* which brought all mankind into a miserable state, was, in appearance, but a *small* and *little* sin: it was but eating a little forbidden fruit, the tasting of an apple; yet, had it not been for Christ's satisfaction, it would have destroyed irrecoverably all the posterity of Adam. There was a man, Sirs, that gathered a few sticks upon the Sabbath-day; you would have thought that was but a little sin, yet God's thoughts are not your thoughts, for God thought that sin worthy of death, Num. xv. 32, 33. Uzziah's putting his hand to the ark, and touching it when it tottered, seemed to be but a small sin, and yet you know he was smitten instantly with death for it, 2 Sam. vi. 7. It is dangerous to give even a little wrong touch to a tottering ark.

2. Consider the *nature* of every sin; though some are comparatively small, and others greater; that is, by reason of several aggravations, more hainous in the sight of God than others; yet, in themselves, none are small. The least sin is against an infinite God, and infinite authority; and so, objectively considered, an infinite evil; and therefore cannot be expiated without infinite satisfaction: and it is not little promises, or little threatenings that your little sins do slight; yea, there is no little ingratitude towards God in little sins: there is great unkindness to God in little sins. To displease God, your best friend, for a little sin; O ungrateful thing! *Is this your kindness to your friend? The wages of every sin is death eternal.* It is not little misery that every sin doth expose you to. Will you make light of the wrath of the infinite God? Then do not make light of little sins. In a word, remember that boldness in little sins will be an encouragement to greater. Sin is of an encroaching and bewitching nature: a little theft may open the way to a greater. The devil tempts people to go from one degree to another; he tempts them to the reverse of the *blessed man*, mentioned Psal. i. 1. He tempts them to *walk in the council of the ungodly*; having taken a walk with them, he tempts them next to *stand in the way of sinners*, which is more; and then having stood a while with them, he tempts them last of all *to sit in the seat of the scornful*, even to the height of wickedness. The devil first makes you sit down with the drunkard, then to drink with him, and at last to be drunk. Thus he leads people from unclean thoughts to unclean looks, words, and actions: therefore, let faith resist this temptation, and set you upon your watch against that which you call a little sin. No man that ever saw sin truly can call any sin little or small, nor can it ever be, till there be a little law to break, a little God to offend, a little guilt to contract, a little wrath to incur; all which are impossible to be, blasphemy to wish, and madness to expect.

5thly, There are temptations of Satan with reference to *unworthy apprehensions of God*. Satan may suggest very strange thoughts of God, very base thoughts of God, most unsuitable apprehensions of him, such as are not to be spoken of; and the prince of this world hath much in us, who are so ignorant of God, to further these mishapen thoughts of God. And to fortify you against these assaults, there are these two directions I would offer concerning the way how we are to conceive of God.

(1.) We are to conceive of him as *inconceivable*: for the thoughts we are to have of him are overwhelming thoughts. As long as we are merely active, and are able to master our thoughts of God, they are utterly unworthy of him. Whatsoever we know, comprehensively, I mean, except we see it to be infinitely beyond us, that is not God, nor to be adored. I have read a dialogue between a Christian and a Gentile: the Gentile seeing the Christian very fervent in prayer, and seeing no image before him, asked him, "whom he worshipped:" he answered, *I know not.* "Why then do you wor-"ship him?" *I therefore worship him*, says he, *because I cannot know him.* "It seems strange, said "the Gentile, to see one so seriously worship "that he knoweth not." *More strange it is for one*, said the Christian, *to worship that which we can comprehend.* If we are not lost in our thoughts of God, our thoughts of God are lost. When we throw a stone into a pond, it makes circles larger and larger, and quickly they come to the shore: but if one should throw a millstone into the midst of the calm ocean, though it would make larger and larger circles, yet it would not reach the shore, because the strength would be spent long before it come the length: So, when we think on the creature, we easily enlarge our thoughts so as to see an end of their perfection, and to be more than comprehensive of their excellency; but when we think of God, we can never know him to *perfection*, Psal. cxix. 96. Here our knowledge must end in admiration, and our love in extasy. Nay, we must conceive of God as above all words, above all knowledge, and above all admiration; above all love, and above all extasy. But let us go to scripture, God knows best how to speak of himself, and we may safely acquiesce in scripture expressions, Neh. ix. 5. *Thy name is exalted above all praise, above the praise of men and angels*; this is a very high expression; but doth this reach him? Nay, if it did, God should not be exalted above all praise, since this would reach him.

(2.) We are to conceive of God in *Christ*: Christ must be eyed in our addresses and acts of worship. All the former considerations set us but at a greater distance from God, and make us afraid of God, and fly from him, if we go no further; and, indeed, human reason can go no further. The utmost it can do, is

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but to think of mercy without a promiſe, which is a very arbitrary thing: and we ſee that God hath not ſhown mercy to fallen angels; for never was any devil converted; therefore we muſt neceſſarily have thoughts of Chriſt: *We are to honour the Son as we honour the Father*; and to honour him,

1. As a *King*. God hath exalted Chriſt *far above all heavens*; and hath *commanded us to do all in his name*; *And whatſoever you do in word, or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jeſus*, Col. iii. 17. He orders that *all men ſhould honour the Son, even as they honour the Father*, John v. 23. I ſhall relate a hiſtory to this purpoſe; it is this, Theodoſius the emperor having made an edict for the giving liberty for the Arians to preach; Amphilochius took this courſe for prevailing with the emperor to recal that edict. Theodoſius having made Arcadius co-emperor and Cæſar with him, ſeveral biſhops came to ſalute the emperor, to congratulate Arcadius, and to ſignify their conſent to Theodoſius his act, and by their reſpect and honour done to Arcadius, to ſhew that they took him for the ſucceſſor of Theodoſius in the empire; among others came this Amphilochius, biſhop of Iconium, who, after he had done obeiſance very ſubmiſſively to Theodoſius, was going away without ſhewing any reſpect to Arcadius, though he ſat by Theodoſius in all his royal robes; Theodoſius therefore called to Amphilochius, ſaying, "Know you not that I have made Arcadius, "my ſon, emperor with me?" Upon which Amphilochius went to Arcadius, and ſtriking him on the head, ſaid, *He was a very hopeful boy*. Theodoſius being very angry at this indignity done his ſon, commanded him to priſon. Amphilochius, after he had gone a little way, turned back, ſaying, "O Theodoſius, "you are angry that I give not your ſon the "ſame honour I give you, ſince you have made "him equal in majeſty to yourſelf; and think "you God will be well-pleaſed that you ſuffer "the Arians to abuſe Chriſt, whom he hath "*ſet at his right-hand* in glory, and *will have all* "*men honour the Son, as they honour the Father*." Upon which the edict was reverſed. I may ſay, Can you think that God will accept your worſhip to him, be it never ſo great; if you take no notice of Chriſt; be ſure God will reject you and your ſervices. But then again,

2. As God will have Chriſt to have the glory of his kingly office, ſo alſo of his *prieſtly*. Thus, ſuppoſe ſome great monarch, his ſon conſenting, ſhould lay upon his ſon the puniſhment due to ſome rebellious ſubjects, intending the ſon's honour as well as their pardon; the king ſends forth a proclamation to them, to let them know that his ſon had ſatisfied juſtice, and procured a pardon: but many of them not truſting to this, would not come in, but would ſend the king gifts and preſents to gain his favour: the emperor ſcorns their gifts upon that account; eſpecially they thus robbing his ſon of the honour of making their peace, and thereby alſo plainly ſhewing, that they thought their crime was not ſo great, but a ſmall matter would make it up, ſuch as their gifts. Surely, if gifts would have done the buſineſs, his ſon had greater gifts than theirs; ſo that he needed not have died or ſuffered. The reddition of this ſimile may be eaſily made: God abhors our prayers, alms, and all our ſervices, if we bring them as ſatisfactory to his juſtice, and ſprinkle our puddly waters, our tears, upon the mercy-ſeat, and fill the holy place with the ſtinking ſavour, the ſtinking vapours of our prayers, which are unperfumed with the incenſe of Chriſt's righteouſneſs, or that are no better than the reeking ſteams of a dunghill, the noxious vapours of an hollow cavern, or the ſmoke of ſome ſulphruous vulcano; I ſay, to go to the holy place with theſe, inſtead of the incenſe of Chriſt's merit and interceſſion, is not to make atonement, but provocation. This makes popiſh auſterities to be acts of pride, inſtead of being acts of mortification.

3. God will have him get the honour alſo of his *prophetical* office; for it is by his Spirit that he inſtructs and teaches us how to pray as well as perform. By his merit we have acceptance, and by his Spirit aſſiſtance. If a child ſhould write ſome excellent tract in the mathematics in Greek, we would infallibly conclude ſome did learn him, or dictate to him; ſo when you pray in the Spirit, and ſpiritually, for ſuch or ſuch ſpiritual bleſſings, who do you think dictates to you? This is not your mother-tongue; doubtleſs it is the Spirit of Chriſt that helps your infirmities. In a word, Chriſt by his active and paſſive obedience, whereby he hath ſatisfied juſtice, hath a wonderful intereſt with God, more than all the angels of heaven, inſomuch, that God delights to pardon the greateſt of ſinners for Chriſt's ſake: therefore, in prayer, conceive of God as a great, an infinitely great God, and as a God in Chriſt. Look on God through Chriſt, keeping the humbling ſenſe of your own diſtance and provocation; look upon God as through Chriſt the moſt compaſſionate fondeſt Father in the world; if he give thee not every thing thou thus aſkeſt, it proceeds not from his unwillingneſs to give, but thine unfitneſs to receive.

6thly, There are temptations with reference to *ſelf-murder*: Satan many times tempts people, particularly theſe that are coming to Chriſt, he throws them down and tears them, urging them to tear themſelves to pieces, to make away themſelves, and cut off the thread of their own life. This is a ſubject I ſeldom or never took occaſion to ſpeak in this manner upon; but now, I think it the more neceſſary that we are living in a time, wherein we are compaſſed about with awful inſtances of profeſſors being left under the power, and ſwallowed up with the violence of this temptation; yea, ſuch inſtances thereof, as have perhaps made the hearts of many here preſent to tremble. And ſince what hath been, may be, and not knowing but in ſuch a great company as is here, ſome one or other may be under ſuch temptations, I would offer theſe following advices ſhortly, to fortify you againſt theſe aſſaults.

1. Conſider that ſelf-murder is a ſin againſt the very *light of nature*, and the very *letter* of the *law of God*, Exod. xx. 13. *Thou ſhalt not kill*. And you may be ſure, that no thought of this ſort that enters into your heart, can be from God; for it hath the very image of the devil upon it; *He was a murderer from the beginning*.

2. *Yield not to the tempter*; for, though this is a temptation incident to God's people, inſomuch that, perhaps, there are few of them that have not been thus tempted, as our Lord Jeſus Chriſt himſelf was, to whom the devil ſaid, *Caſt thyſelf down from the pinacle of the temple*; yet we read of no ſaint in ſcripture that yield-

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ed to the tempter. We are therein told of none but wicked wretches that deſtroyed themſelves, ſuch as Saul, Achitophel, and Judas; and ſure you would not deſire to be like them.

3. Conſider the *contrary practice of the ſaints in ſcripture*, both in their *beſt* and *worſt* time.—Old Simeon got an armful of Chriſt, and did he now attempt to cut off his own life, that he might win away to heaven? No; he wiſhes to be away, but he puts himſelf in God's will; *Now letteſt thou thy ſervant depart in peace.* Paul is wrapt up to the third heaven, and his deſire of death must have been very great; yet he is content to ſtay till he was *diſſolved.*—Again, on the other hand, if pains of body, and terrors of mind, might contribute to ſtrengthen ſuch a temptation, Job did not want his ſhare of both; yet, inſtead of putting a period to his own days, though indeed *he curſed the day of his birth*, and *wiſhed for the day of his death*, yet he ſays, *All the days of my appointed time, will I wait till my change come*, Job xiv. 14.

4. Conſider, that by ſuch horrid ſuggeſtions as theſe, you are tempted to aſſume to yourſelf a *prerogative that belongs to God only.* It is he that lives for ever and ever that ſays, *I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal*, Deut. xxxii. 39. Your life is not your own to diſpoſe of; and as you cannot lengthen your life, ſo you may not ſhorten it. Therefore,

5. When you are thus tempted, *keep not the devil's counſels*, nor be thou his *ſecretary*: go to ſome faithful miniſter, or experienced Chriſtian, and tell them how you are tempted; for this temptation is partly conquered, when it is revealed.

6. Theſe who think they ſhall be *damned*, and go to *hell* when they die, it is the *greateſt madneſs* in the world for them to haſten their death. That the fear of hell ſhould make them leap into hell, is ſo contrary to all common ſenſe, that it is a wonder that any one ſhould ſo much ceaſe to be a man, not to ſay a Chriſtian, as to do a thing ſo contrary to nature, let be to grace. Let me aſk you, Can you endure to be among blaſphemers? Can you endure to blaſpheme God yourſelf for a year together, or an hour, and to ſpend it all in curſing and blaſpheming? If your ſoul abhor this, why will you leap into hell, a place of everlaſting blaſphemy? I read of one, who having been a long time tempted to make away herſelf, at laſt reſolved to do it, for the thoughts of the torments of hell were not prevalent enough to deter her; but as ſhe was going to deſtroy herſelf, it was brought to her mind, that in hell ſhe ſhould blaſpheme God for ever; which ſhe abhorring to do, upon that very account forbore the wicked action. If you were to be only in a ſtate of horror and torment, it were ſad enough; but for thee to put thyſelf into a ſtate of blaſphemy, how canſt thou endure to think of it?

7. Take heed of fighting againſt Satan with *human reaſon*, for this Leviathan laughs at the ſhaking of this *ſpear*; his ſcales are too cloſe to be pierced by it: but take the *ſword of the Spirit, which is the word of God*, which *divides between the joints and the marrow*; ſay to Satan, *It is written, Thou ſhalt not kill.*

8. *Pray, pray much*; for the ſword of the Spirit muſt be wielded by the ſkilful arm of the Spirit. If thou goeſt out in confidence of thy being able to manage ſcripture by thy own ſtrength and ſkill, it will fare with thee, as it did with theſe, Acts xix. 15, 16. *They thought to caſt out devils by the name of Jeſus, but the devil rent and wounded them, and made them to fly, ſaying, Paul I know, and Jeſus I know; but who are ye?*

The great argument that the devil uſes to perſuade thee to ſelf-murder, is by perſuading thee that thou art a *reprobate*; but thou mayeſt conſider that Satan cannot know that thou art a reprobate: Was Satan, think you, on God's council, when he made his eternal decrees? Satan, who is not ſo much as one of God's hired ſervants, but a ſlave and a malefactor kept in chains, he is ſo far from being of God's council, that he is not ſo much as one of his family. If thou ſayſt thy conſcience tells thee that thou art a reprobate; know, that no man living can tell who are reprobates; nor can any man know himſelf to be a reprobate, except he hath committed the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, which no man hath committed, that is ſorry to think he hath committed it; *For it is impoſſible that ſuch a man* ſhould *be renewed, either by or to repentance*, Heb. vi. 6.

Ye that walk in darkneſs and ſee no light, that are haunted with theſe temptations, conſider what a God we have to do with; we ſerve ſuch a great Lord, that all the monarchs of the world are beggars to him; and ſuch a gracious Father is our God, that the tendereſt parents in the world, and your deareſt friends, are tyrants, yea, wolves and tygers compared to him. And if we ſhould provoke them, as we provoke him, and they could as eaſily cruſh us as God can, we would quickly find that their tendereſt mercies are cruelty; whereas the ſeveral providences of God will be to thee, not like the *gall of aſps*, bitter and deadly, but like God's rubarb and aloes, by which thine iniquity ſhall be purged, *and all the fruit of it ſhall be to take away thy ſin*; and *though for the preſent the afflicting hand of God upon thee, is not joyous, but grievous, yet if thou art exerciſed thereby, it will bring forth in thee the quiet fruit of righteouſneſs.* Lay aſide therefore your fears of hell, and hard thoughts of God.

But now, to add no more particulars, let me *exhort* you and all that hear me, to come to our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, whatever oppoſition from hell ſtands in your way; and though the devil ſhould throw you down and tear you as you are coming; yet Chriſt will lift you up, and heal you. Oh! what offends the world at our Lord Jeſus? Will you tell me, ſinner, what ails you at Chriſt? What diſobliges you at his *perſon?* Is he not the *brightneſs of the Father's glory, and the chief among ten thouſand?* Is he not the *roſe of paradiſe*, the heart of heaven?—What ails you at his *offices?* Is he not a Prophet, that can teach you; a prieſt, that can atone for you; a King, that can conquer for you?—What ails you at his *relations?* Is he not a Shepherd, to feed you; a Phyſician, to heal you; a Father, to pity you; a Huſband, to cheriſh you?—What ails you at his *doing*, to fulfil the law for you; or his *dying*, to ſatisfy juſtice for you?—What ails you at his *yoke?* Is not his *yoke eaſy and his burden light?* his *ways pleaſantneſs and his paths peace?*—What ails you at his *grace* and *glory?*

What ails you at him, Sirs? O! is he not worth your while, though you ſhould run through hell to come to him? Is there not a heart in all this company that would fain be at him? Alas! would you rather go to the devil than

than come to Christ? That a comely Jesus cannot get two or three hearts in all this company, O pity, pity! and a thousand pities that the beauty of the Godhead cannot get a lover! Will you all be so mad as to run by Christ to other lovers, while he begs your love, as if he were upon his knees, and sends us to pray you in his stead to be reconciled with him, and come to him?

And, therefore, Sirs, in his blessed name I pray you, go not by him. I beg it as the best favour you can do to my Master and me, that you come to him; I beseech you, by the *mercies of God*, and by the *bowels of Christ*, that you come to him. He will welcome the worst of you that will come to him; and if you but endeavour to stretch out the withered hand, or put out the withered heart toward him, he will help you to it, and embrace you with hand and heart both. He is content to come to you on any terms; and, will you not come to him? He stands at the door of your heart, and waits that you will but allow him to come in, and let him have access. Have you a *hard* heart? He would be in to soften it: Are you pleased? Have you a *filthy* heart? He would be in to wash it: Are you content? Have you a *wicked* heart? He would be in to renew it: Are you satisfied?

If you will not come to him, will you let him come to you, that he may make you willing? Consider what is a-coming. O Sirs, is not a day of *calamity* coming? And why will you not come to Christ? Is not a day of *death* coming? And why will you not come to him? Is not a day of *judgment* coming? And why will you not come to him? Or, why come you to any thing else? Why come you to *ordinances*, if you will not come to Christ, [illegible] he is the life of ordinances? Why come you [illegible]*rmons*, if you come not to Christ, who is the substance of all sermons? Why come you to a *communion-table*, if you will not come to Christ; for he is the heart of the communion? Why do you hope for heaven, if you will not come to Christ, for he is the all of heaven, the heaven of heavens? A thousand heavens are lighter than a feather when laid in the balance with him. Had I the tongue of a seraphim, I could not commend him enough to you; but, O may he commend himself to your heart, and cause you to throw your immortal soul into his saving arms, notwithstanding all the down-casting temptations of Satan, and whatever objections and oppositions stand in the way of your coming to him.

SERMON LXXIV.

DARK PROVIDENCES cleared in *due Time*.*

JOHN xiii. 7. —*What I do, thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.*

MY friends, the invisible God acts like himself, even amidst all the visible and sensible tokens he gives of his presence; such as he hath been giving you at this occasion: for, amidst all his ways and workings that are seen and felt, yet still his way is invisible, unsearchable, and mysterious. How small a portion do we know of him! What is said of his presence and absence, or of his coming and going sometimes, may be said also of his doing: his coming near once to Jacob was dark to him; therefore he said, *Surely the Lord was in this place, and I knew it not.* His going away from Samson was dark to him; therefore it is said, *He wist not that the Lord was departed from him.* And what is thus said of his coming and going, may be said of his doing, and perhaps of his doings among us at this occasion; *What I do, thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.*

We have here, in this chapter, the remarkable history of our Lord Jesus, his washing his disciples feet while he was at supper with them. It was great condescension to sup with them; and yet greater to wash their feet. How far Christ will stoop down to the necessities of his people, is amazing! It is observed, ver. 3. that *Jesus knowing that the Father had committed all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God: he rises from supper, and laid aside his garments, and took a towel and girded himself, and poured water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples feet*, ver. 4, 5. All power and sovereignty was committed to him, yet the knowledge of his excellency did not hinder his condescension; in the view he had of his greatest glory, he evidenced the greatest humility. Neither the greatest sufferings he was just now to endure, nor the greatest honour he was advanced unto, could make him forget his poor people; his heart was set upon them as much as either upon his sufferings or his glory: why? for them he suffered, and for them he was to be glorified. And as the thoughts of his glory formerly did not hinder his condescension; so the possession of his glory now doth not hinder his stooping down to serve, yea, to wash, and save them. And the higher the Father hath exalted him, the more hath he fitted him for doing service to us in our low case and condition.

Now, we have here Peter's amazement, *Lord, dost thou wash my feet?* ver. 6. What! might he say, Thou, the Lord and Ruler of the world, dost thou stoop to do this for me, a worthless worm, a sinful man? Here is a paradox I cannot understand. O! but Christ's condescensions, wherein we find ourselves taken notice of by his grace, are justly matter of admiration. *Is this the manner of man? What are we, and what is our Father's house?* It well becomes us, and the best of the sons and daughters of Adam

* This sermon was preached at Dunfermline, on Monday, July 2. 1736. after the celebration of the sacrament of the Lord's supper there. It hath undergone three impressions.

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to fit down at his feet and wash them with tears, and wipe them with the hairs of his head. But, O! what is this! dost thou wash my feet, Lord; O *King of kings*, and *Lord of lords?* Christ's abasing himself, and stooping so low to us, ought not to obscure his majesty, or make us think the less of him, as if he did what was too mean and unbecoming his grandeur; nay, if we have *faith as a grain of mustard seed*, the lower that he stoops towards us, the more will we honour him, and the higher thoughts will we have of him.

The text is an answer to Peter's amazement, *What I do*, says Christ, *thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.* Where he tells him two things. 1. That the *design* of this work was at present hid from him. 2. That it should be afterwards *revealed* to him. So ignorant was Peter of this work, which was afterwards explained to him, as signifying another inward washing, and giving to us a copy of humility, and of humble service one towards another; so ignorant was he hereof, that his sinful modesty makes him refuse this act of kindness and condescension; as you see in the following verse. Though it be commendable to *fear the Lord and his goodness*, and to be amazed at his condescending grace and mercy; yet it is sinful to run to that extreme of fear and trembling, as to shun, decline, and refuse it: and though our Lord's stooping down be a great abasement; yet it is the great error of the saints to think he will not reckon it his glory and honour to serve them. It is a part of their ignorance and error, when he stoops down to them with his blessing, to think that he hath forgot himself in his condescension, and that it is not possible he means such favour to them.

In the general, we may learn from the words in their connexion with the text,

1. That when we *refuse* any favour at Christ's hand, or shun any act of his condescending grace, as if unbecoming his greatness to grant it, or our meanness to receive it; we but discover our great ignorance and error.

2. Christ may be very *near* to his people, and doing great things to them in steps of gracious condescension; and yet they may be very ignorant of him, and of his acting: *What I do, thou knowest not.*

3. Every work of Christ towards his people carries something more *great* and *precious* in the bosom of it, than we are capable, at the time, to understand; it is more loaden with wisdom, power, goodness, grace, and faithfulness, than for the present we can apprehend: *What I do, thou knowest not now.*

4. Though we cannot *dive* into the depths of Christ's counsel in his doing towards us; yet we ought to *reverence* and adore him therein, and to yield implicite obedience to his will, without quarreling his way, or censuring his proceeding, while through darkness and ignorance we are such incompetent judges thereof; thus did Abraham, Heb. xi. 8. *By faith, when he was called to go out into a place which he should afterwards receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.*

5. Our Lord Jesus doth not *explain all his mind* to his people at the first; what he intends by such a work, and such a promise, and such a providence, until afterwards, that subsequent works explain preceeding works, and subsequent providences explain preceeding ones.

6. Learn that we are therefore to *wait* upon him till he see fit to explain what may now be dark and hidden unto us; and we shall afterwards know and see what was the tendency of events that seemed most cross and strange. We must let Christ take his own way both in ordinances and providences; and we will find, in the issue, that it is the best way. *What I do, thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.*

But passing all these, the point of doctrine I would speak to is this.

OBSER. *That the works of Christ towards his people may be very dark and mysterious, hidden and unknown to them, till afterwards he make them manifest.*

What I do, thou knowest not now, Peter; *but thou shalt know hereafter:* what need thou hast of being washed, when thou shalt be guilty of the hainous crime of denying me thrice: or, when thou shalt, in the discharge of thy office, be employed as an instrument to wash away the sinful defilements of others.

But this doctrine may be verified from many instances.—Joseph's dreams, as well as Jacob's being bereft of him, was dark and mysterious, till afterwards it was manifested in the course of providence.—Abraham's call to go and offer up his son, as well as his being ordered to go, *not knowing whither he went*, was very dark and mysterious till afterwards.—Esther's marriage with Ahasuerus was a kindly providence, but the design of it was not manifested till afterwards, to break Haman's cruel project.—Christ manifested his glory to Peter, James, and John, upon the mount; but what he did they knew not the design of, till afterwards it appeared what eminent duties and trials he was preparing them for.—Moses little knew what was the mystery of the manifestation he got of God, when he saw him in a flame of fire out of the midst of the bush, and *the bush burned and was not consumed*; and when God spake to him, saying, *I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*; Moses hid his face, and was afraid to look upon God, till the Lord thereafter shewed what was the design of this appearance, and what service he was calling him to.—Little did Israel know, when brought through the Red-sea, and singing triumphantly at the shore over all their drowned enemies, that this glorious appearance of God was to usher in a forty years weary travel through the wilderness; and that what the Lord did then, by the hand of Moses, was but typical of the great salvation through Jesus Christ.—Little did Paul, our apostle, while he was yet Saul the persecutor, know what the Lord did when he appeared to him in his road to Damascus, till afterwards that the Lord shewed him what he was to do and *suffer for the name of Jesus.*——His ways, even of grace and mercy, are dark and unknown; therefore says the psalmist, Psal. lxxvii. 18, 19. *Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary; thy way is in the seas, thy paths in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known.* Psal. xxxvi. 6. *Thy righteousness is like the great mountains; thy judgments are a great deep.* Psal cxi. 2. *The works of the Lord are great; sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.*

The Lord works and carries on his gracious work, according to his rule of divine policy, that every one cannot penetrate thereinto. As great

great politicians carry on their designs in a way that ordinary onlookers cannot understand; so, much more doth infinite wisdom work, as it were, by a holy and majestic stratagem, and carries on his work in the dark, and in a way much hidden and unknown to us; for, *clouds and darkness are round about him:* and hence says the apostle, Rom. xi. 23. *O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!* Whatever then God hath been doing or saying to you at this occasion, think not that you are wise enough now, or that you know all that he hath been doing or designing by this work. *What I do, thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.*

Having thus confirmed the doctrine, the method, for the farther prosecution of the subject, may be the following.

I. To speak to some things the Lord doth towards his church and people, that are *dark* and *mysterious*, *hidden* and *unknown*.
II. To shew in what *respects* these things that he is doing for them may be hid and unknown to them.
III. Shew for what *reason* the Lord takes this way of doing, so hid, dark, and mysterious, that what he doth they *know not*.
IV. Observe some of the *seasons* when it is that he makes them *know* what now they are in the dark about, according to his word here, *Thou shalt know hereafter*.
V. Deduce some *inferences* for the *application* of the whole.

I. We are to speak of some of these things the Lord doth towards his people that are *dark*, *mysterious*, *hidden*, and *unknown*.

Here we might, to view it more distinctly, mention some *common* steps of his dealing with his people, that, for a long time, may be dark and unknown to them; such as, what he doth with respect to their *outward state* in the world: what he doth by ordering such and such circumstances of prosperity or adversity in the world: what he doth with respect to their birth and education; his design in their being born of gracious, or of graceless parents; his design in ordering the bounds of their habitation, in such a spot of the world; his design in bringing them under such and such a ministry; to such a sermon, and such a sacrament, and such a table; why he cast such a book in their way: all may be hid and unknown to them till afterwards, that the Lord discovers what good and great designs he had thereby; what he doth by such a mercy, and such a judgment; such a word, and such a rod.

Again, we might condescend on what he doth with respect to their *inward spiritual state:* they may be greatly in the dark, as to what he is doing, when, on the one hand, he is convincing and awakening them; when he is humbling and breaking them; when he is deserting and forsaking them to their sense; when he suffers them to be tempted of Satan, and conquered by their lusts; and leaves them under the power of their enemies; denying their requests; refusing to help them in prayer, and to hear them; and seeming to reject and cast them off: what he thus doth, they know not till afterwards that he return.

And then, on the other hand, his *way* and *work* may be hid and unknown, even when he *returns*, so as they know not what he is doing: when he washes their feet, or condescends to give them some tokens of his pardoning and purifying grace; they may expect fair weather and clean way, or a prosperous journey, all their life-time afterwards; while yet he may be preparing them for a new storm. They may little know what he doth when he is manifesting himself anew to them; they may reckon it is a preparatory for more glorious displays immediately: but they may be mistaken, and may find themselves tumbling down the hill into a mire, or ever they are aware. They may little know what he doth, when, at a communion solemnity, he comes to loose their bonds; and when he is comforting, strengthening, or sealing them, and speaking in to their hearts, they may be thinking now that their *mountain stands strong*, they shall *never be moved*, never be what they have been, nor doubt as they have done; yet quickly they may be at that with it, *Thou didst hide thy face and I was troubled.* They may little know, when he brings them *to the banquetting house, and makes them sit down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to their taste*, what is he doing and designing; they may think now this is for my present comfort, now my cup runs over, and I hope it will continue running; while yet he may be feeding them for the hunger to come, victualling them for a voyage, laying in provision for a siege, preparing them for a battle, or perhaps anointing them for a burial. *What I do, thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.*

But here I shall mention some of the special works of God, that are covered with a cloud of majesty, that his people seldom know what he is doing with them. As,

1. When his word and his work, his promise and his providence seem to *clash* and *contradict* one another; this is a dark and hidden rod. *What he doth, we know not then*, when his dispensations seem, to human reason, to be driving on a design to defeat the promise; we cannot see through the cloud without an eagle-eye of faith, nor pry into the depths of his infinite wisdom. Thus Moses was sent to deliver Israel out of Egypt, and to tell them the good news, that now the Lord was to deliver them from their bondage; but behold their bondage is increased, their slavery is doubled, they are filled with anguish, Exod. v. 21. Moses himself could not well see through this dark cloud; and therefore complains to God of it, ver. 22, 23. When things like this fall out to the church of God, or a child of God, that here is a promise, but where is the accomplishment, when the quite contrary appears? Then we are to think on his word, *What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.*

2. When his dealings and dispensations are so dark and unintelligible, that his people know not whether they speak *mercy* or *wrath*; thus it was with Job, when he said, *Shew me wherefore thou contendest with me?* Job x. 2.; intimating, how utterly ignorant he was, as to what the Lord was intending by that strange dispensation: in such a case he is saying, *What I do, thou knowest not now.*

3. When the Lord comes with salvation in a *surprising* way; or, while his people are quite out of *frame* and *fitness* for it; as when it is said, Isa. lvii. 17. *For the iniquity of his covetousness was*

I wroth

I wroth, and ſmote him; I hid me, and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart; and yet it follows, *I have ſeen his ways, and will heal him: I will lead him alſo, and reſtore comforts to him, and to his mourners.* O what is this! will he ſhew himſelf a God of love to me, when I have been ſhewing my ſelf a devil of enmity againſt him! Or, while he ſurpriſes them with a mercy that they were never hoping nor waiting for; as Iſrael, when the Lord returned their captivity, were like them that dream. His ſtately march this way is ſo hid from their eyes, that *what* he doth they *know not;* it is above their capacity to underſtand his ſovereign way.

4. When ſalvation comes, not only in a way of merciful ſurprize, but notwithſtanding all *appearance to the contrary;* when enemies are ſtrong and invincible, by them prevalent, and victorious over them; and when his *peoples ſtrength is quite gone*, Deut. xxxii. 36. And when their *hope is gone*, and they *are cut off for* their *parts*, Ezek. xxxvii. 11. When in ſuch a point of extremity he ſteps in and ſaves; and ſaves, perha ps,by very unlikely means; as by the blowing of rams horns he throws down the walls of Jericho; or, by the ſtripling David, he kills the great Goliath, and defeats the army of the Philiſtines; in theſe ways there is much hidden majeſty. *What I do, thou knoweſt not.*

4. When hopeful beginnings of relief and ſalvation meet with *unexpected ſtops* and *hindrances*; and when the building of the ſpiritual temple, after the foundation is laid, comes to be retarded, and the work ſeems to go back rather than forward, as in the building of the material temple in the days of Ezra. How little do we underſtand what that means, when the Lord ſays, by Jeremiah to Baruch, Jer. xlv. 4. *Behold, that which I have built, will I break down?* When he ſuffers enemies to prevail, and *break down his carved work*, as with *axes and hammers*, who can ſee through ſuch a diſpenſation, when it befals a church in general, as to the work of reformation; or a child of God in particular, as to the work of grace in the ſoul? *What* he doth, we *know not now.*

6. When the Lord's way towards the godly and the ungodly ſeems *unſuitable* to their different ſtate, as if he frowned on his friends and favoured his enemies; how dark and hidden is his work herein? The proſperity of the wicked, and adverſity of the godly was for a time a great myſtery to Aſaph, Pſal. lxxiii. Yea more, ſometimes the godly are left to be a great ſtumbling block to others; as when the Lord left Aaron to make the golden calf in the wilderneſs, that brought ſo much ſin and wrath upon the people. I might inſtance David, Solomon, Peter, and others: how dark is this, and the like diſpenſations! And when, on the other hand, he imploys the wicked themſelves to carry on his work, and makes their wicked deſigns contribute to advance his holy end and glorious deſign; as he did make the treaſon of Judas, the ſentence of Pilate, the malice of the Jews to contribute for the work of our redemption. Surely, *what he doth, we know not;* his glorious works are hidden and unknown. He can neceſſitate enemies, contrary to their will, to do that which is a manifeſt forwarding of his work, as when the Philiſtines were conſtrained to ſend home the ark of Iſrael, 1 Sam. vi.

7. In a word, how dark and hid is his work, when he *cuts off inſtruments* that ſeem to be moſt fitted for it; and that either before their work be begun, as David, that prepared materials for building of the temple, but was not employed therein; or before their work be ended, as Moſes that brought Iſrael through the wilderneſs, but is taken away then, and not employed to end the work of bringing them in to the promiſed land, which he would gladly have done!—How dark and unknown is his work, when he calls them to believe what ſeems contradictory to *carnal ſenſe* and *reaſon;* as that Abraham ſhould have a ſon, when his body and Sarah's womb were both dead, who yet *believed in God, who quickens the dead, and calls things that are not, as though they were?* Or when he calls them to do that which ſeems expreſly againſt his own *revealed will;* as when Abraham was called to go and ſacrifice his ſon; this was a command of trial, and by faith, Abraham went all the length therein that was deſigned!—How dark is the providence and trial, when *duty* is ſeemingly ſet *againſt duty*, as when churchmen and prophets ſet upon Nehemiah, and preſs him to that as duty which was no duty; as you ſee the hiſtory, Neh. vi. 10,—14.? And when prophets are ſet againſt prophets, not only Baal's prophets againſt the prophets of God, but prophets of the Lord againſt prophets of the Lord; as in the caſe of the old prophet pretending angelical information, and deceiving the man of God, 1 Kings xiii.?—Finally, how dark and unintelligible is his work, when he *lifts up* with the one hand, and *caſts down* with the other; when he *heals* with the one, and *wounds* with the other. Thus the child, Mark ix. 19,—26. that Chriſt took in hand to cure, grew worſe; for, *The devil threw him down and tare him.* The ruler of the ſynagogue got Chriſt ingaged to go along with him, and heal his daughter; but, behold, what a wound is given, one coming from his houſe, ſaying, *Thy daughter is dead, trouble not the maſter!* —In theſe and the like works he ſays, *What I do, thou knoweſt not now; but thou ſhalt know hereafter.*

II. The *ſecond* thing propoſed was, To ſhew in what *reſpects* we may be *ignorant*, and in the *dark* about the Lord's doing towards us. And,

1. What he doth, as to the very *matter* of his work, may be hid and unknown, whether it be a common or a ſaving work; whether it be a merciful or a wrathful work, ſuch as what Manoah and his wife met with, Judges xiii. 22, 23. He and ſhe differed in their judgment about what they ſaw; *Manoah ſaid, Surely we ſhall die, becauſe we have ſeen God. But his wife*, on the contrary, *ſaid, If the Lord were pleaſed to kill us, would he have received a burnt-offering and a meat-offering at our hand? Or would he have ſhewed us all theſe things?*

2. What he doth may be hid and unknown to them, as to the *manner* and method of his doing. His way of bringing about his purpoſe is very ſtrange and unperceivable; for he is the God that *quickens the dead, and calls things that are not as though they were*, Rom. iv. 17. He brings things of nothing, and one contrary out of another, 2 Cor. iv. 6. *Light out of darkneſs*, life out of death, ſtrength out of weakneſs, *Meat out of the eater, and ſweet out of the ſtrong.* How unknowable then to us is his work, who makes death the way of life, and wounding the way to healing, breaking down

down the way to building up, and losing the way to gain?

3. What he doth may be hid and unknown, as to the *causes* of his working. There may be reasons of state that we are ignorant of: the reason why he doth so and so now; and why he desists at another time; why Zion is filled with judgment; why he shines on the counsel of the wicked, that pray not to him; and why the just and upright man is laughed to scorn. Surely touching *the Almighty we cannot find him out: for who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been his counseller?* Rom. xi. 34.

4. What he doth may be hid and unknown, as to the *beauty* of his work; *Lord, dost thou wash my feet?* Where is the beauty and glory of this work? Is it becoming for thee to do so? We may be ignorant of the glory of divine wisdom that shines in his dealings; the glory of his holiness, grace, love, and mercy that shines therein, till afterward he make his work appear. There is a beautiful connexion between what he hath done, what he is doing, and what he will do afterwards, that may be greatly hid, and the beautiful *season* of his doing; he hath made every thing beautiful in his time. O! there is a lustre in the very time of his coming, when he makes our time of need his time of love, our extremity his opportunity; yet for a time this beauty may be hid.

5. What he doth may be hid and unknown, as to the *excellency* and greatness of his work; it may appear little, and low, and mean, as Peter thought when he said, *Lord, dost thou wash my feet?* Yet, in due time, it may appear to be a very great and excellent work. His greatness and grandeur is not hereby diminished, but more and more displayed. *When the Lord turned back the captivity of Zion, they were like them that dreamed,* did not see or consider the greatness of the work, till afterwards they see and say, *The Lord hath done great things for us,* Psalm cxxvi. 1, 3.

6. What he doth may be hid and unknown for a time, as to the *necessity* of the work, and the *usefulness* of it; part of Peter's meaning here, when he said, *Lord, dost thou wash my feet?* was, Lord, what is the need of thy washing my feet? And therefore he ignorantly says in the following verse, *Thou shalt never wash my feet;* whereupon Christ opens up to him the absolute necessity of what he now did, and designed by this work: *If I wash thee not, thou hast no part in me.* There is a great need for all that Christ doth to us, though we be in the dark about it; and we ought to see a *need be* in every thing he doth; *If need be, you are in heaviness through manifold temptations for a season;* and if need be he will give a more joyful and heartsom season; he knows best what you need, though you do not know.

7. What he doth may be hid as to the *variety* of his work, and the *changes* that befal us through the various changes and turns of his hand in working; though his heart and mind, his love and covenant, be unchangeable. Sometimes he will let his people ask what they will, and he will give them to the *half*, yea, to the *whole of his kingdom;* and at other times they may cry and shout, and he shut out their prayers. Sometimes he will let them hold him, and not let him go, yea, and command him, as it were, *Concerning my sons and my daughters, command ye me:* thus he let Moses ask, and he said, *Shew me thy glory;* and God says, *I will make all my goodness pass before thee:* and yet behold, at other times, he will condescend to nothing, and seem inexorable; *Though Moses, Daniel, and Job, were to make intercession in the matter.* Who can understand this variety of his doing, and the secret reasons of the vicissitudes and changes, that hereupon befal his people in their inward frame and outward lot?

8. What he doth may be hid and unknown, as to the *end* and *design* of his doing, and as to the *upshot* and *issue* thereof; and what he is to bring out of that which now he doth. What he did in washing the disciples feet, was not known in the design of it till afterwards. Many things he hath done, the meaning whereof was not known till afterwards. What he did, when he became man, when he became *a worm, and no man;* what he did, when he lived our life; what he did, when he laid down his life, and hang upon the cross between two thieves, were not understood till afterwards; and then it appeared that it *behoved him,* Heb. ii. 17. And what he doth at this communion, we know not now. The way that he takes may seem to be far about, and yet afterwards appear to be the only right way: and when he leads his people *in a way they know not, and in paths they have not known,* may afterwards appear to be the best way for his glory, and for their good. And no wonder that we be in the dark, if we consider that the worker of these works is *wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working,* Isa. xxviii. 29.; infinitely beyond worldly politicians, whose projects and purposes are often hid from us, and much more may the infinitely deep counsels of God.

III. The *third* thing proposed was, To offer some *reasons,* why the Lord takes such a hid mysterious and unknown way of doing with his people; that *what he doth, they know not now.* And,

1. It is to discover *himself* in a way suitable to himself and his own glorious perfections; and to shew that his *thoughts are not our thoughts, as his ways are not our ways.* If he should work according to our thoughts and imaginations, and in a way not transcending our apprehensions, how would it appear that he is JEHOVAH, a sovereign God that acts like himself, whose will is a law to us, and a rule to himself; and whose *way is in the deep waters,* so as his *footsteps cannot be seen.*—Herein he shews his *wisdom* to be hidden wisdom, while his own people are apt to think that he is about to destroy his work in them and in his church, when he is upon his way to raise them up, and to bring down the enemy.—Herein he shews his *truth* and *faithfulness* miraculously when he comes with salvation, after he had wrought so long under ground, and out of sight, and all hope was gone; but when it shines out from behind the dark cloud, then it appears with a more than ordinary glance and lustre. O then, they see his *mercy is in the heavens, and his truth reaches to the clouds, and his faithfulness to all generations,* Psal. cxix. 90. So that no changes or vicissitudes here below can alter, no length of time can change, his mind.

2. It is to discover his *enemies,* that they may appear to be what they are: what he doth for his people, they do not know themselves; far less do hypocrites and false-hearted professors know

know what he is doing for them, and what good he is doing to them. If the Lord were appearing visibly for his children whenever they are in a strait, many false friends would take part with them, and seem to love and favour them; but that their enmity may be discovered, and they may be made manifest, he comes to his people in unknown ways, and hides his work; and then enemies shew themselves openly to be enemies to God's people, while God doth not shew himself openly to be their friend. He may hide himself and his work from his friends to discourage his enemies, and harden them in his righteous judgment; for, *whom he will he hardens*, Rom. ix. 18. by leaving them to themselves.

3. It is to discover the *dross* and *corruption* of his *own people*, that lies at the bottom of their heart unseen; for, while he keeps his work hid from them, how does then their *unbelief* appear, in many doubts and scruples that rise in their souls about his design? How doth their *impatience* appear, while he delays to clear up matters to them? Thus he shews them their sins, and humbles them under a sense of their ignorance. Such a discovery the psalmist got when he went to the sanctuary, and reflected on the mistake he was under about what the Lord was doing; *So foolish was I and ignorant, I was as a beast before thee.* He makes them thus to know what is in them.

4. It is to discover their *graces* also, and to try and exercise them: thus he tries their *faith*, when they are to believe, though they do not know how his word shall be accomplished, as he did the faith of Abraham, Rom. iv.—Thus he tries their *patience*, when they are to wait upon him, and they know not how long, Psal. xiii. 1. *How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord, for ever? How long wilt thou hide thy face from me?*—Thus he tries their *hope*, when all human appearances and probabilities fail, and they can see no ground of hope from without; for, *that which is seen is no hope.*—Thus he tries their *submission* to him, and their *obedience* to him, while he calls to stoop to his will, even when he hides his design, and gives not account of any of his matters; that we may be *still and know that he is God.*

5. In a word, he takes this hid and unknown way, that we may learn to *reverence* and *fear* him, and to wait upon him, till he teach us what we know not, and expound to us what we do not understand: *He is a God of judgment, and blessed are all they that wait for him.*—In this way he curbs the *curiosity*, and checks the *pride* of poor man, who, when he is done, must go to school again, and learn over what he learned before, and learn better.—In this way he stirs up to *prayer*, that they may take every piece of his work back again to him, that so he may make them know the secrets of his counsels, and the depth of his government; and that they may put no sense on what he doth but his own, which they are very ready to do, without waiting till he give them his own mind; that we darken not *counsel without knowledge.*—In this way he teaches us to be *modest* in our *minds*, and *sober* in our *sentiments* about what he doth, till once he hath done out his work, and told out all his mind; and that, in a sense of our ignorance, we may daily be learning to read and speak, to read his mind distinctly, and to speak of his actings knowingly; otherwise we cannot *order our speech by reason of darkness.*—In this way he not only quickens his people to prayer, but gives great matter of *praise* in the issue, when *what we know not now, he makes known afterward*, and brings *light out of darkness, yea, and makes darkness light before us.* How doth it accent their praise, when the dark clouds give way to the bright sun? The issue of his dealing is the more glorious, when afterwards his gracious and glorious design shall be made known.——But this leads me to the next thing proposed, namely,

IV. The *fourth* head, which was to point out some of the *seasons* when he makes them know afterwards, what now they are, or may be in the dark about: *What I do, thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.*

1st, In general, this hath a reference to the *partial discovery* he gives of his mind in *this world*, and the *perfect* and *full discovery* he makes of himself in the *world to come.* Here he sometimes discovers what was dark and mysterious formerly in his work and dealing; but still it is only a partial display; *For now we know but in part, we prophesy in part: And now we see but through a glass darkly*, 1 Cor. xiii. 9, 12. But in the world to come, *that which is perfect shall come, and that which is in part shall be done away*; and then we shall *see no more through a glass, but face to face. Now I know in part*, says the apostle; *but then shall I know, even as also I am known. At that day ye shall know*, says Christ, *that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you*, John xiv. 20. Here we know him but as he is NOT, but then *positively*; for, *we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is*, 1 John iii. 2. Ye shall know hereafter perfectly. But then,

2dly, In particular, it hath a reference to some *special seasons*, wherein, even in this world, he gives his people to know afterwards what he doth, which at present they do not know or understand; and I shall touch at some of these seasons.

1. Sometimes the season of making known what he doth, is very *soon*, very *quickly* after the work is done, and so it was here; for, after Christ had washed his disciples feet, he explains what he designed by it, and that first to Peter, by shewing what washing he especially intended; so that without it, they could have no portion in the son of Jesse: *If I wash thee not, thou hast no part in me.* And then afterwards to all the disciples he said, *Know you what I have done to you*; and so explains it further to them.—And as sometimes he very quickly explains his work; so he doth his *word* that was dark and unknown. Christ had said, John xvi. 17. *A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, A little while, and ye shall see me; because I go to the Father:* They were puzzled and perplexed about it, ver. 18.; and hereupon, before Christ was done with speaking to them, he explains it to them, ver. 19,—28.; whereupon they say, ver. 29, 30. *Lo now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb. Now are we sure thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God.* Yet this knowledge that now they got was but imperfect, as Christ's following answer shews.

2. Sometimes the season of making known afterwards what he now doth, is very *long after* the work is done, or the word spoken, which they are in the dark about. Our Lord may do great

great things, and ſpeak gracious words to his people, and yet they may be in great darkneſs as to the meaning and deſign thereof for a long time. God met with Jacob at Bethel, and gave him a glorious manifeſtation of himſelf, and a ſweet promiſe of his preſence and bleſſing, and it was to him *the houſe of God, and the gate of heaven*, Gen. xxviii. 17. But Jacob knew not what a feaſt this was to be unto him twenty years afterwards, when God gave him a new meal upon this old experience; ſaying, *I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedſt the pillar, and where thou vowedſt a vow unto me*, Gen. xxxi. 13. He knew not that it was to be a preface to twenty years ſervitude; and that the new rememberance, and reflection upon it was to be a pledge of a new viſit of the like nature: that the recognition of an old Bethel, was to be a preface to a new Peniel. What do I know but it will take twenty or thirty years to explain what ſome have met with at this occaſion in Dunfermline. *What I do, thou knoweſt not now; but thou ſhalt know hereafter.* But whether it be in a ſhort time, or after a long time that he opens up the myſtery of what he does, he is ſure to chuſe the fit time, the appointed time, the beſt time; beſt for reaching the great ends of his glory and our good: *The viſion is for an appointed time, at the end it will ſpeak, and not lye; though it tarry, wait for it: becauſe it will ſurely come, it will not tarry*, beyond the due time, Hab. ii. 3.

Again, there are ſome *circumſtances of time*, wherein the Lord thinks fit to communicate the knowledge of what was dark and myſterious, hidden and unknown in his work and doing to his people. — Sometimes after he hath hid himſelf in the dark from them in *private*, he meets with them in *public*, and tells them all his mind: when David *went to the ſanctuary*, Pſal. lxxiii. he got a reſolution of his cloudy caſe, and found, that even at the time his *feet was almoſt gone, and his ſteps had well nigh ſlipt*; that even then the Lord was holding him by his right-hand. They have ſeen his *power and glory in the ſanctuary*. — Sometimes he hides himſelf in *public*, and gives them more of his mind in a *ſecret* corner; *When the diſciples were alone, he expounded all things to them*, Mark iv. 34. What they hear, and yet do not know in public, he clears it up when he and they are alone. Hence the church affects retirement, Song vii. 11, 12. *Come, my beloved, let us go forth to the field; let us lodge in the villages; let us go up early to the vineyards; let us ſee if the vine flouriſh*, &c.; *there will I give thee my loves*: ſweet and ſenſible communion is ſometimes reſerved for a corner. — Again, ſometimes what he doth, he makes them know after a black and long night of *deſertion*, when he ſurprizes them with a new viſit, and makes them ſay, *The voice of my Beloved! behold, he cometh, leaping upon the mountains, ſkipping upon the hills*. — Sometimes he explains his mind more clearly to them, after he hath tried their *faith* and *patience* for a while, and brought them into great tribulation. John, in the Revelation, never had ſo much of Chriſt's mind, even when he leaned upon Chriſt's boſom, as when he was perſecuted and baniſhed into the iſle Patmos. Thus it was with Ezekiel, when he was among the captives by the river of Chebar, then was the heavens opened, and he ſaw the viſions of God. — Sometimes it is after *deep humiliation* and *fervent ſupplication*; ſuch as that of Daniel, chap. ix. 20, 21. Then he is informed by the angel Gabriel of ſome great things he was in the dark about before. — Sometimes the Lord hath remarkably countenanced his people with great and glorious diſcoveries of his mind, when they have ſet days apart for *prayer* and *confeſſion*, afflicting themſelves before him. But, Oh! where are the Chriſtians of former generations, ſome of whom would have ſhut themſelves up in their cloſets for many days, and got their meat ſhut in to them at the window, and holes of the door! — Again, ſometimes he reſerves the diſcovery of what he is doing, till the time that he gives a more full and plentiful *out-pouring of the Spirit*. *What I do*, ſays Chriſt here to Peter, *you know not now, but you ſhall know* partly, juſt now after I am done with waſhing your feet; I will explain it, but you ſhall know afterwards more clearly and diſtinctly in the day of Pentecoſt, when the Spirit ſhall be poured out; and hence ſee Acts ii. how Peter then preached and publiſhed the doing, dying, and riſing of Jeſus: What he did was then no more a myſtery to him. And you ſee John xvi. 26. the Spirit, the Comforter is promiſed for this very end, to *teach us all things, and to bring all things to rememberance, whatſoever Chriſt hath ſaid unto us*. And when the Spirit is more plentifully afterwards communicate, then he brings Chriſt's words and works to rememberance, in ſuch a manner, as to tell us what he inended by ſuch a word and ſuch a work; what he ſaid and did at ſuch and ſuch a time.

Again, ſometimes he doth it a little *before their death*; he ſometimes has anointed them before their death with eye-ſalve, and let them ſee farther than ever they ſaw; as it was with old Jacob, when his natural eyes were dim, he ſaw Shiloh coming, to whom the gathering of the people ſhould be; he ſaw a little further then, I think, than he did either at Bethel or Peniel, and ſomething more concerning Chriſt was then explained to him than he knew before. Thus it was alſo with old Simeon before his death; he had got a believing ſight of Chriſt before, but now he got an arm-full of him, and a more ſenſible ſight than ever before: *Now, letteſt thou thy ſervant depart in peace; for mine eyes have ſeen thy ſalvation*. I have known ſome get very clear manifeſtations of Chriſt before their death.

In a word, ſometimes *at death itſelf*; though ſome of the Lord's ſervants and ſaints have died in much darkneſs, yet others have got Chriſt's doings explained at death, that have been hid from them all their days before. Death may make a breach among forty or fifty experiences, and bring them down to two or three perhaps. But death to ſome has multiplied their experiences, and made them go *through the valley of the ſhadow of death*, triumphing in God's everlaſting love. I read of Adolphus Clarebachius, who had been all his life-time kept under much bondage; when he became a martyr, and went to the ſtake to be burnt, he then ſaid, "I have "lived a moſt melancholy and dejected life till "this day; but now I believe there is not a "merrier heart in the world than mine." What the Lord did, by ordering his former dejection, he knew not, till now that it appeared the Lord's deſign, by his grievous and heavy life, was to be a lane and avenue to that glorious and joyful death. Some have gone through the dark trance between time and eternity with

with more light and knowledge of the Lord's mind and works than ever they had. Jacob never had a brighter view of his old Bethel-visit than when he was upon his death-bed, and had all his children about him, and some of his childrens children: he now saw more clearly what God had done, and what he was further to bring out of the Bethel-promise, with reference to his numerous issue, and their future possession of the land of Canaan: and therefore he begins his dying words with what past between God and him at Bethel, Gen. xlviii. 3, 4. *God Almighty appeared to me at Luz, in the land of Canaan, and blessed me; and said, Behold, I will make thee fruitful, and multiply thee; and I will make of thee a multitude of people, and will give this land to thy seed after thee, for an everlasting possession.* Then might he say, I had neither wife nor children; but now I see my children, and my childrens children; and I see what God is about to do with them: and so he propheſies of their future increase, and various circumstances and appearances they were to make in after-ages. Thus his Bethel-blessing was extended, and explained more clearly to him in his dying moments. What you met with, believer, in such a place, and what you have met with in Dunfermline, what he hath been doing at former occasions, or at this occasion, may be, you do not see through at present, perhaps the further explication of it is reserved for a death-bed feast unto you, when he shines upon his former words and works, and makes you sing of his salvation, and say, "O! I re-"member what he said to me in such a place, "and what he did to me at another. What he "designed by it was dark and unknown to "me, but now I see more of his mind; I see "he hath been as good as his word, and that "*he hath done all things well.*" *What I do, thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter*, perhaps sooner or later, even before you go into eternity.

V. The *fifth* and *last* thing proposed was, To deduce some *inferences* for the *application* of the whole. Is it so, *That the works of God, the doings of Christ Jesus, towards his people may be so dark and mysterious, hid and unknown, till afterwards he make them known?* Hence,

1. See that we have great cause to be *humble* and *sober:* whatever the Lord hath been doing among us at this occasion, let us not think that we know all that he hath done, since he is saying, *What I do, thou knowest not now.* Let that great question humble us under a sense of our own ignorance, Job xi. 7. *Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection? It is higher than heaven, what canst thou do? Deeper than hell, what canst thou know?* Think not you have learned your lesson perfectly; the greatest believers on earth are but scholars as long as they are in the body. Divine light shines gradually more and more to the perfect day of glory; therefore, whatever they see they need to see more clearly; whatever they are taught they need to be taught over again more perfectly: What a small portion of God do we know?

2. Hence see, what reason believers have to *long for heaven*, since clouds and darkness will never be altogether dispelled till the beatifical vision of God and of the Lamb. That *city hath no need of the sun, nor of the moon to shine in it; for the glory of God doth enlighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. I saw no temple there; for the Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple of it*, Rev. xxi. 22, 23. It may be said of all the great works of God that at present he doth, *What I do, thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter*, when time shall discover it, even the Lord's time, the fit time; and even when that time hath made the discovery of what he was doing formerly, it may be also said of that discovery, *What I do, thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter;* when eternity shall discover it, and heaven make it manifest in another and more glorious manner; then all his dealings with his people will be conspicuous; and all his designs appear, that before were dark and mysterious.

3. Hence see, that the church and children of God, while in this world, must not think of being *exempted from clouds* and *darkness*, even when they have the Lord near to them; for, *Clouds and darkness are round about him*, Psal. xcvii. 2. And he makes the *clouds his chariots* wherein he rides towards his people. It is true, the clouds that surround him have sometimes a dark side, and sometimes a bright side; yet even at the brightest, it is but a cloud, wherein he appears, and they know not how far he is to ride upon it, how soon it will disappear, and what weather it prognosticates. The Lord designs to give his people, while here, a proof of his promised care, Isa. xlii. 16. In leading *the blind in a way they know not, in paths they have not known: making darkness light before them, and crooked things straight.* And hence they are mostly kept in the dark; sometimes about providences befalling the *church*, while heavy clouds hang over it; sometimes in the dark about *duty* relating to the cause of God, in the day wherein they live, and the *word of his patience;* sometimes in the dark about their *state*, and their assured interest in Christ; sometimes in the dark, as to *comfort*, when destitute of that necessary consolation their heavy case may require; sometimes in darkness about the *word* of God, when a vail is drawn over it; sometimes about the *work* of God, and what he is doing, when they cannot see his steps, nor hear his voice, nor read his mercy and loving kindness by reason of darkness.

4. Hence see, that the Lord's time of *doing* is not always his time of *shewing* what he doth. He takes his own time of working, and his own time of shewing his work. He may *wash his disciples feet*, and not let them understand what he is doing, till a more proper time, wherein he will shew the glory of his work which was hid. Hence prays the church, Psal. xc. 16. *Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children.* And his time of shewing himself and his work is ordinarily very surprizing and unexpected; may be, it is when their night is at the darkest, and their darkness at the blackest, then, according to his promise, *To the upright there arises light in darkness*, Psal. cxii. 4. *He makes darkness light before them; When I sit in darkness, the Lord will be a light unto me.*—Sometimes indeed he manifests his work to them, when they are *longing* and hoping: *For he satisfies the longing soul, and fills the hungry with good things*, Psal. cvii. 9.—And yet sometimes he doth it, when they have *lost hope*, as it were, and are least looking for it; *For the needy shall not always be forgotten: the expectation of the poor*

poor ſhall not periſh for ever, Pſal. ix. 18. Intimating, that they may be forgotten for a long time, but they *ſhall not always be forgotten*; their hope and expectation may ſeem to periſh for a long time, but they *ſhall not be forgotten for ever*: when it is juſt at the periſhing, he pities poor periſhing hope.—Sometimes to ſhew his regard to holineſs and ſtrictneſs of walk, he makes his glory appear to them, when they are exerciſed in *practical piety* towards God and man. Hence, *To the upright there ariſes light in darkneſs*, Pſal. cxii. 4. And, *He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me, ſhall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and manifeſt myſelf unto him*, John xiv. 21, 22. And it is in this way we are to expect his coming to manifeſt himſelf and his work.—Yet ſometimes, to ſhew the ſovereignty of his grace, he manifeſts himſelf and his gracious work, when their religion is at a *low ebb*; their praying frame is gone; yea, and their backſlidings multiplied, and their rebellion increaſed; Iſa. xliii. 22. *Thou haſt not called upon me, O Jacob; thou haſt been weary of me, O Iſrael*; yet upon the back of the challenge, that he may melt their hearts with his ſurprizing grace, he ſays, ver. 25. *I, even I am he that blotteth out thy tranſgreſſions for my name's ſake, and will not remember thy ſins.* Iſa. lvii. 17, 18. *For the iniquity of his covetouſneſs was I wroth, and ſmote him: I hid me, and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart. I have ſeen his ways, and will heal him:* And *I will lead him alſo, and reſtore comforts unto him, and to his mourners.* Some think even this is the ſeaſon the text hath a relation to, *What I am doing, by waſhing thy feet, thou knoweſt not now; but thou ſhalt know hereafter.* When after *thou haſt denied me thrice*, I will give thee a look, and thou ſhalt *go out, and weep bitterly.* When, upon the crowing of the cock, thou ſhalt run away to a corner, and reflect upon thy grievous ſins, and my gracious look, then ſhalt thou, with a melting heart, ſee more into the myſtery of this waſhing. *What I do, thou knoweſt not now; but thou ſhalt know hereafter.* Again,

5. Hence ſee ground of enquiry, what the Lord hath been *doing*, and what you know thereof, and if it be hid and unknown to you or not.

[1.] Enquire what hath the Lord *been doing*, or what *is he doing* towards you at this occaſion; hath he been ſtooping down to waſh your feet?

QUEST. *When may Chriſt be ſaid, in a ſpiritual ſenſe, to ſtoop down and waſh his diſciples feet?*

ANSW. (1.) Then he may be ſaid to waſh their feet, when he ſhews them their *foul* feet. O Sirs, hath the Lord been ſhewing to you, by his convincing grace, what foul feet, what filthy affections you have, what a filthy heart, and what a filthy walk and converſation you have had? Hath he made *the iniquity of your heels to compaſs you about?* as it is, Pſal. xlix. 5. Hath he been making you ſay, with ſhame and ſorrow, *Iniquities prevail againſt me? O wretched man that I am!* How have I grieved his Spirit, and defiled my feet, by running into the mire? O was there ever ſuch foul feet as mine, that carried any to a communion-table?

(2.) Then he may be ſaid to waſh their feet, when he makes them *dip* their foul feet into the *fountain of his blood, opened for ſin and for uncleanneſs.* Hath he been ſhewing you the fountain of ſin and wickedneſs that is in you, and the fountain of cleanſing and purification that is in Jeſus; and making you, by faith, to run in to this fountain of the Lamb's blood, that *cleanſeth from all ſin?* If thus he hath ſprinkled his blood upon your heart and conſcience, and intimate peace and pardon in his blood, and made it precious to you, not only as pardoning, but alſo purifying blood, then he hath indeed been waſhing your feet.

(3.) Then he may be ſaid to waſh their feet, when he makes them, with the woman, Luke vii. 38. that *ſtood behind him weeping, to waſh his feet with tears, and to wipe them with the hair of your head.* Have you been admitted to ſuch nearneſs to him, that with humble boldneſs you have laid yourſelf down at his feet; the woman was aſhamed to look Chriſt in the face, but came behind him *weeping?* Have you been filled with holy humble ſhame, and confuſion of face before him becauſe of your ſinfulneſs, and in the view and apprehenſion of his being *pacified towards you*, Ezek. xvi. 63.

(4.) Then he may be ſaid to waſh their feet, when they are made to waſh their feet in the *blood of his enemies*; as it is ſaid of the righteous, *He ſhall waſh his feet in the blood of the wicked, and rejoice when he ſees the vengeance*, Pſal. lviii. 10.: ſo we may ſay of believers, when Chriſt is waſhing their feet, they deſire to ſee the heart-blood of their and his enemies, their unbelief, atheiſm, and all their luſts and idols: their joy would be to ſee the vengeance of God upon them; they are filled with holy *revenge* againſt them, 2 Cor. vii. 11. The reaſon of this being an evidence of his waſhing, is, becauſe, when he waſhes them, he doth it according to that promiſe, Ezek. xxxvi. 25. *I will ſprinkle clean water on you, and you ſhall be clean: from all your filthineſs, and from all your idols will I cleanſe you.* Now, hath he thus been waſhing your feet?

[2.] Inquire what you know, with reference to his *work*: if you know that he hath been waſhing you, this is more than ſimple waſhing; and in ſuch a caſe, he is ſaying to you in effect, *What I do thou knoweſt, and thou ſhalt know* more *hereafter.* It is one thing to be waſhen, another to be aſſured of it; and if he hath given you the aſſured knowledge of his work, ſurely ſomewhat of Peter's amazement will fill your heart, *Lord, doſt thou waſh my feet?* O Sirs, wonder, wonder men and angels, that the Lord of glory ſhould have ſtooped down ſo far below himſelf to ſuch a filthy worm as to waſh me in his blood! *What ſhall I render to the Lord? Is this the manner of man?* But this is not every one's allowance. O be thankful and humble; and whatever you know this way, remember you know but in part, and there is much more in what he doth than yet you know. There are other believers here, that perhaps know not all what Chriſt hath been doing with them; *He hides his face, and they are troubled.* They cannot ſay he hath been waſhing their feet, but rather wounding their hearts, and frowning upon them; ſtanding at a diſtance, and keeping them at the back of the door; the *Comforter that ſhould relieve their ſouls being far away.* Well, as the believer, that is clear, knows not how ſoon he may be under a cloud; ſo the believer that is under a cloud, knows not how ſoon the ſky may be cleared, and both theſe caſes may be paving the way for what is a-coming, when the Lord's deſign breaks out: therefore, whatever be the caſe, let this word be ſtill the conſideration, *What I do, thou knoweſt not now; but thou ſhalt know hereafter.* Therefore,

6. Hence

6. Hence let us see the *duty* of all, both *saints* and *sinners* in this great meeting of people. It yields special instruction to all the saints and children of God, whatever their case be, and whatever the Lord is doing, especially if his way be hid and unknown, dark and mysterious in any respect to them: and first to disciples.

(1.) It is your duty, O believer, to *mark* what the Lord is doing; to *observe his stately steps and goings in the sanctuary*, though they be very hid and unknown; yea, the rather that they are dark and mysterious, they are the more worthy to be known. It is a mark of the graceless, they consider not the operations of his hand. *But whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord.* This observing comprehends a believing that the Lord is carrying on his work, though clouds hide him from our sight, and a passing a suitable judgment on what he is doing, construing all for the best; this is to *consider wisely of his doing*, Psal. lxiv. 9. Believing that all is good, and for the good of his people, we should consider his work, till we observe his loving-kindness therein. Therefore,

(2.) It is your duty never to *judge harshly* of his doings, however hid and unknown they may be; yea, however heavy and afflictive: will you measure God's love by outward dispensations, or even by inward desertion? Though, indeed, it becomes you to weep when the bridegroom is away, as well as to rejoice when he is present; yet measure not his love by his providence, but by his promise. It is the foolish child that thinks the mother hath cast him off every time she is out of sight, or has given him out of her arms; therefore, say not, when he hides himself, "Oh! his heart is "changed; his love is gone; all he did was "but a delusion; there is no hope; all is un-"done!" Whatever be his dealings, though you should not be able to give an account of them; yet what you cannot believe by knowing, you must know by believing: we must believe when we cannot know; wink at providences, and open our eyes to promises.

(3.) Do not *quarrel* and *question* what you do not know, but stoop down, and stand in awe; *Be still, and know that he is God*; and will act like himself; set not *limits to the Holy One of Israel*, by concluding that he will not come, because he comes not in the time and way that you imagine. Be afraid to think that you could manage otherwise, and do better than infinite wisdom sees fit to do. What abominable pride is that! O entertain high thoughts of him, whose ways are so high above your reach, that what he doth you know not: and if his works are so high above you, how high and unsearchable are his counsels; yet, O still remember, whatever clouds are, or may be in your sky, he hath established a firm connexion between black dispensations and fair promises.

(4.) If you would know more of what the Lord is doing, you must study to be *practical Christians*, and to walk in the fear of the Lord; for, *The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him*, Psal. xxv. 14. The nearer you live to God, the more may you expect to know of his mind, and to be led by an unseen hand in a dark day; for, *The meek will he guide in judgment; the meek will he teach his ways:* study, therefore, to walk humbly with your God; and *what he doth, though you know not now, you shall know hereafter.*

(5.) Be not *proud* and *lifted up*; if you know more than others, and if he be using you as friends, according to John xv. 15. *Henceforth I call you not servants, for the servant knows not what his Lord doth; but I have called you friends: for all that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you.* And, *lest you be exalted above measure*, think not strange though he should order a *thorn in the flesh* for you, and a cross to keep you down; remember how formerly the cross hath born down your pride, restrained your predominant, and put you to your prayers, and sent you groaning to a God in Christ. Be not proud of what you know; for, though you be in higher favour than some of your neighbours, you know not what weather is coming, nor what storms may blow upon you, or upon the church of Christ; or whether this be your last communion.

(6.) If what he doth be dark and unknown to you now; O *wait upon him* who says, *You shall know hereafter.*—O wait upon him *believingly:* when his work is dark and hid to you, it is the proper season for faith to bud and bring forth; *I will wait upon the Lord, that hides his face from the house of Jacob*, Isa. viii. 7. Even when promised things look like improbable and impossible things; yet, having the firm word of God that cannot lye nor change, there you are to rest as anchored upon that immoveable rock, and ride out all storms of carnal reasonings and corrupt suggestions.—Wait upon him *patiently; The Lord is a God of judgment, blessed are all they that wait for him.* Psal. xl. 1, 2. *I waited patiently upon the Lord, and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me out of the horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings; and he put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God.* Whatever be his dispensations, though *he slay me, yet will I trust in him;* whatever dark clouds appear, either in his work or his word. The poor woman of Canaan met with many discouraging things, even in her application to Christ: at first he answers her not a word; and when he speaks a word, the first thing he said, seemed to exclude her out of his commission; *I am not sent, but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.* Alas! now might she say, I need pray no more, I am a cast-away! Nay, but she goes on, saying, *Lord, help me:* then he calls her a *dog;* yet still she waits, and then gets a merciful and marvellous hearing; *O woman, great is thy faith, be it unto thee, even as thou wilt.* Go on thus, believer: O incredulous believer, give him trust, and give him time, and he will clear all to you in the issue, though it should be *through fire and water*, that *he brings you to the wealthy land.* You have his promise sealed with his precious blood, and his solemn oath, that when you go *through the fire and through the water, he will be with you*, whether you discern him or not. You know not now what he doth or designs; you know not what *deep* steps are before you in point of *trouble*; but with his promise in your hand, you may say as it is, Psal. lxxi. 20. *Thou which hast shewed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shall bring me up from the depths of the earth. Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side.*—You know not what *foul* steps are before you in point of *sin.* Now I am washing thy feet, might Jesus say to Peter, but thou knowest not that this is but a dark specimen of another sort of washing you will very soon need;

For

For before the cock crow twice; you will deny me thrice, notwithſtanding your preſent reſolution, *That though all men forſake me, yet wilt not thou.* You know not now, that you will fearfully defile your feet, even after I have waſhen them. O wonderful Jeſus, that he ſhould waſh the feet he knows will be ſo ſoon in the puddle again! But whatever ſhould come about, though Satan, through his temptations, ſhould hurry you into the mire of ſin; yet beware of being hurried on the back of that into the depth of deſpair; for that is what the devil drives at, that he may make you affront both the law and the goſpel of God at once; that having tempted you to diſhonour his name, by breaking his commandments in the law, he may thereupon tempt you to diſcredit his grace, by deſpairing of any good from him by the promiſe of the goſpel: therefore, O believer, ſee the need of waiting and watching every moment, and the need of the Lord's waſhing and watering every moment, according to the promiſe, Iſa. xxvii. 3. *I the Lord do keep it, I will water it every moment.* Think not that one waſhing or watering now will do your buſineſs; though, through the Lord's ſhining upon you, you were in a heaven of joy and conſolation this moment, you know not but, through his hiding and withdrawing, you may be in a hell of ſin and ſorrow the next moment; and though our glorious Lord were waſhing your feet this moment, I cannot promiſe, but before the cock crow twice, your feet will be as dirty as ever they were: therefore, O wait and depend upon him for waſhing and watering you every moment.

O beware of *ſecurity*; for you never got ſo much of his grace and fulneſs one moment, as ſhall allow you liberty to ſlacken your dependence upon him the next. In this way of waiting upon him, though now you know not what he doth, *Yet you ſhall know hereafter*, and he will give you occaſion to ſee him bring his work, though it ſhould be through terrible ways, to an amiable iſſue, and give occaſion to ſay, as Pſal. lxvi. 5, 6. *Come and ſee the works of the Lord; he is terrible in his doings towards the children of men; he turned the ſea into dry land, and there did we rejoice in him.* He turned a ſea of tribulation into a dry land of conſolation; and ver. 16. *Come and hear all ye that fear God, and I will tell what he hath done for my ſoul.* What he doth now, by all the blinks and ſhowers, the viciſſitudes and changes, the ſtorms and calms of your caſe, the dark and myſterious ways he takes you through, he will come, ſoon or late, afterwards and explain to you, ſaying, as it is Pſal. lxxxi. 7. *Thou calledſt in trouble, and I delivered thee; I anſwered thee in the ſecret place of thunder; I proved thee at the waters of Meribah.* Iſa. xlv. 5. *I girded thee, though thou didſt not know me. What I do, thou knoweſt not now*; it may take ſome days or years to explain what he now doth: however little or much you know; perhaps a day of approaching trial will make you know more; a day of death may make you know it better; but the day of glory beſt of all. *You ſhall know hereafter*, believer, partly on earth, and perfectly in heaven; graciouſly in time, and glorioufly through eternity.

I ſhall now conclude with a word to *enemies*, to *ſinners*, that are yet utter ſtrangers to our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt. O ye that are deſpiſers of the Lord of glory, though he hath been *ſet forth evidently crucified before you* at this occaſion, What ſhall I ſay to you? May not I tell thee, O ſinner, how this text may be applied to you? Chriſt is ſaying even to thee, *What I do, thou knoweſt not now; but thou ſhalt know hereafter.* He hath been doing ſomething *before your eyes*, at this occaſion, and you know it not; yea, he hath been doing ſomething *to you* that you do not know and conſider; though he hath not been waſhing your feet, yet he hath been offering to waſh you, and not your feet only, but your head and hands; for the believer that is waſhed already by regenerating grace, needeth not, ſave to waſh his feet; but you need that your head and heart be waſhen, as well as your hands and feet. You need to be waſhen from the filthineſs of your ſtate, as well as from the filthineſs of your ways: but whatever waſhing you need, he hath been offering it, and himſelf to be the doer of it, ſaying, *If I waſh thee not, thou haſt no part in me.* And to this moment he is offering himſelf to you, ſaying, *Wilt thou be made clean?* wilt thou let me waſh thy heart, and hands, and feet? No, no, ſays unbelief; thou ſhalt never waſh my feet, it is too much for Chriſt the Son of God to do; I will waſh myſelf, and repent and turn religious againſt ſome other time; for the preſent, I am otherwiſe taken up. Will you reſolve to put no employment in Chriſt's hand? Is that the way you treat his kindly offer, when he opens the door of mercy to you, and calls you by this miniſter and that miniſter, and the other miniſter, all telling you, that you ſhall be welcome for all your ſins, and ſaying, *Him that cometh, I will in no wiſe caſt out?* Be who you will, young or old ſinner, behold the humble Jeſus makes the moſt condeſcending offer to you, that ever men or angels heard. O filthy ſinner, will you let me waſh you; *For, if I waſh you not, you have no part in me*, nor ever ſhall?

If you are ſo wedded to your filthy luſts, that you are not willing to be waſhen from them, I muſt tell you, that you know not what you are doing, and know not what Chriſt is doing; *but you ſhall know hereafter*, either in a way of wrath, to your great confuſion; or in a way of mercy, to your deep remorſe.

1. What he doth by this offer to waſh you, *you ſhall know hereafter* to your *confuſion*. Perhaps, when you are gaſping for breath upon a death-bed, and conſcience awaking, ſhall begin to ſay, O many a ſweet offer of Chriſt and mercy did I get, and ſlighted, and this amongſt the reſt, when he offered to waſh my feet, and I refuſed and rejected his offer! *You ſhall know hereafter*, when you ſhall hear the awful doom paſs againſt you, *Depart from me, ye curſed, into everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels*; and when, with *weeping and gnaſhing of teeth, you ſhall ſee Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, apoſtles, and followers of the Lamb in the kingdom of heaven, and yourſelf ſhut out*; and when thou ſhalt think and ſay, "O vile wretch that I was, I "might have been yonder in glory; but I was "taken up with the vain world, and my vile "luſts, and was unwilling to be waſhen from "them, and now I muſt be lodged in hell a-"mong devils and damned reprobates for ever." Oh! think upon this before it be too late!

2. If mercy prevent you after this refuſal: *What he now doth, you ſhall know hereafter* to your bitter *remorſe*. If ever the Lord have mercy on you,

you, and manifeſt himſelf to you, oh! how will it go like a ſword to your heart, and pierce you to the quick, when he ſhall ſay, *I am Joſeph, your brother, whom you ſold into Egypt!* I am Jeſus, your Saviour, whom you ſlighted! I am he whoſe cries you contemned, and whoſe kind offers you diſregarded: when I offered to waſh your feet, you lifted up your heel againſt me; and now, *How ſhall I put thee among the children?* How ſhall I deliver thee, that haſt ſo undervalued my kindneſs, and trampled on my blood, wherein I offered to waſh you? What a knell will this be to your heart, if he have mercy upon you afterwards: and, O that the bitter remorſe were begun in your boſom this moment, with a wo is me that I have ſlighted ſuch an offer ſo long. O! is he ſaying to the vileſt ſinner in this company, Come and let me waſh you! O then, were your heart ſaying, Lord, come, and welcome! O come and waſh my conſcience from the guilt, and my heart from the filth of ſin; it were good. Are you cordially willing, and preſently willing, and univerſally willing to be waſhen in his blood *from all your filthineſs*, and *from all your idols?* Why then? I hope he is doing ſomething upon your heart and will, which, though now you cannot underſtand, he will explain mercifully in due time; for it is his own promiſe: *What I do, thou knoweſt not now; but thou ſhalt know hereafter.*

SERMON LXXV.

The GREAT TRUMPET of the *Everlaſting Goſpel.* *

ISAIAH xxvii. 13.

And it ſhall come to paſs in that day, that the great trumpet ſhall be blown, and they ſhall come which were ready to periſh in the land of Aſſyria, and the outcaſts in the land of Egypt, and ſhall worſhip the Lord in the holy mount at Jeruſalem.

MY friends, it is only the trumpet of common providence that hath, perhaps, gathered you together to this place, you hearing the news go through the country, that the ſacramental feaſt was to be kept here, and ſo you have come along with the reſt; but it is the great trumpet of ſpecial powerful grace that can gather periſhing ſinners together to Chriſt, and make them come to him for life and ſalvation, liberty and redemption from their ſpiritual captivity. And, O may the ſound of this trumpet be ſo heard, as many may come to Jeſus at this occaſion, that they may worſhip the Lord ſpiritually in his holy mountain!

Theſe words are to be conſidered, firſt in their *literal*, and then in their *typical* and *ſpiritual* meaning, in order to deduce a ſuitable doctrine from them.

1*ſt*, As to the *literal* import of the words, they relate to the church of Iſrael that was ſcattered, their being gathered together and brought back to Jeruſalem. Though the body of the people was abandoned as a people of *no underſtanding*, ver. 11.; yet mercy was laid up in ſtore for ſome that were to be gathered as the ſheep of the flock, when the ſhepherds (the rulers in church and ſtate) that ſcattered them ſhould be reckoned with; *Thus ſaith the Lord God, Behold, I am againſt the ſhepherds, and I will require my flock at their hand, and cauſe them to ceaſe from feeding the flock; neither ſhall the ſhepherds feed themſelves any more; for I will deliver my flock from their mouth, that they may not be meat for them. For thus ſaith the Lord God, Behold, I, even I, will both ſearch my ſheep, and ſeek them out. As a ſhepherd ſeeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his ſheep that are ſcattered; ſo will I ſeek out my ſheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been ſcattered in the cloudy and dark day*, Ezek. xxxiv. 10,—12. Now, concerning theſe ſcattered Iſraelites you may obſerve theſe particulars.

1. From what *place* they were to be brought and gathered. We are told, the Lord ſhould *beat them off*; that is, as fruit from a tree, which is carefully gathered for the uſe of men; and he ſhould beat them off *from the channel of the river to the ſtream of Egypt*; that is, from the river Euphrates to the river Nilus, which were the two borders of the land of promiſe. All the Iſraelites left in the land are here oppoſed to theſe of them that are diſperſed into foreign parts, ſuch as Aſſyria and Egypt: he ſhall find out his ſcattered people, and ſeparate them from theſe with whom they ſeem to be incorporated; theſe that were driven to the land of Aſſyria, ready to periſh for want of neceſſaries, and ready to deſpair of deliverance; and theſe that were outcaſts in the land of Egypt, whither many of theſe that were left behind, after the captivity into Babylon, went, contrary to God's expreſs command, Jer. xliii. 6, 7. and there lived as outcaſts.

2. In what *manner* they were to be gathered; ver. 12. *Ye ſhall be gathered one by one, O ye children of Iſrael*; pointing out either the ſmalneſs of the remnant of that numerous people, or rather God's exact and ſingular care of them, that not one of them ſhould be loſt. As God had mercy in ſtore for periſhing outcaſts, and will make it appear that, though they are caſt out, they are not caſt off; ſo he takes particular care of gathering them one by one; not in multitudes, but firſt one, as it were, and then another. This, indeed, is the way of God's gathering his elect remnant: for ordinary they are but few; *And of Zion it* is *ſaid, This man and that man* is *born there.*

3. By what *means* they ſhall be gathered, *The great trumpet ſhall be blown*; that is, by the pro-

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clamation of liberty by king Cyrus to the captives, which awakened the Jews, that were asleep in their thraldom, to beſtir themſelves and return to Jeruſalem and their own land; of which proclamation you read, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 22, 23. Ezra i. 2, 3, 4. This was like the ſounding of the jubilee-trumpet, which publiſhed the year of releaſe: thus God was to ſummon them, as it were, by the ſound of a trumpet from the remoteſt parts of the earth, by an eminent call or act of his providence in their behalf; and particularly from Aſſyria, where the ten tribes were carried captive; and from Egypt, where many of the Jews were.

4. For what *end* they ſhould be gathered, namely, *To worſhip the Lord in the holy mountain at Jeruſalem.* Though the holy temple was in ruins, yet they had the holy mount, the *place of the altar*, Gen. xiii. 4. Liberty to worſhip God in his inſtituted ordinances is a moſt valuable and deſirable liberty.

2*dly*, As to the *typical* and *ſpiritual* meaning of theſe words. That they have a further view than what I have yet mentioned, will appear, if you conſider, that as king Cyrus was an eminent type of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; ſo the deliverance of Iſrael from the Babyloniſh captivity and Egyptian thraldom, by his means, was eminently typical of the redemption to be wrought for ſinners through Jeſus Chriſt, from their ſpiritual bondage. To this purpoſe you may read, Iſa. xliv. 28. and xlv. 1,—4. In all this Cyrus was a type of Chriſt, who was made victorious over principalities and powers, and intruſted with *unſearchable riches*, for the uſe and benefit of God's ſervants his elect. When he aſcended on high, he *led captivity captive*, taking theſe captives who had taken others captive, and *opened the priſon to them that were bound.*

Again, Cyrus's proclamation of liberty to the captive Iſraelites, which was here propheſied of, more than a hundred years before it came to paſs, is compared to the *blowing of a great trumpet*, in alluſion plainly to the ſilver trumpets which the prieſts were to uſe, Num. x. 2. for aſſembling the Iſraelites: which ſignified how the miniſters of Chriſt ſhould *lift up their voice like a trumpet*, to ſhew *people their ſins*, Iſa. lviii. 1.; and to call them home to Chriſt out of their captive ſtate. To the ſame purpoſe, Lev. xxiii. 23. we read of the *feaſt of trumpets;* a memorial of the blowing of trumpets on the firſt day of the ſeventh month, the beginning of the year of jubilee. This was typical of the preaching of the goſpel; and, in alluſion to this, they are ſaid to be *bleſſed that hear the joyful ſound*, Pſal. lxxxix. 15.; that are invited to come to Chriſt, and to wait upon God in his public inſtituted ordinances. Mount Zion alſo here mentioned being an eminent type of the goſpel-church, this text is not only applicable to the preaching of the goſpel of Chriſt, for gathering ſinners to him; but the typical and ſpiritual ſenſe of it is a prophetical declaration and promiſe of the converſion of the nations to the faith of Chriſt, by the blowing of the ſilver trumpet of the everlaſting goſpel.

Here then in the words you have theſe four things repreſented to you.

1. The *ſad* and *miſerable* caſe of ſinners by nature, they are *outcaſts, ready to periſh*, under their ſpiritual captivity to ſin, and Satan, and the wrath of God.

2. The *relief* provided and proclaimed in their ears, by the great trumpet of the goſpel, which proclaims the *acceptable year of the Lord*, the year of liberty to periſhing captives; *The great trumpet ſhall be blown.*

3. The *power* and *efficacy* of this relief, thus proclaimed by ſound of trumpet, for determining all the choſen Iſrael of God, to betake themſelves to the city of refuge; *They ſhall come;* the goſpel of Chriſt ſhall be the power of God to their ſalvation: they ſhall come to Chriſt.

4. The *end* and *deſign* of their coming to Chriſt, namely, that they may *ſerve and worſhip the Lord in his holy mount*, and that they may have fellowſhip and communion with God in Chriſt; and, being accepted in the Beloved, may offer acceptable ſervice to him in his holy place.

Paſſing many doctrines that may be drawn from the words, I ſhall, as the Lord may aſſiſt, ſpeak to this only.

OBSERV. *That as it is the duty of periſhing ſinners, who hear the goſpel, to come to God in Chriſt, as the only Saviour and glorious object of worſhip; ſo it is an encouraging promiſe, that when the great trumpet of the goſpel is blown, a number of outcaſt ſinners, ready to periſh, ſhall come, and ſhall worſhip and ſerve him acceptably in his holy mount.*

I might, at conſiderable length, prove every branch of this doctrine.

1. That it is the *duty of periſhing ſinners to come to Chriſt the Saviour:* this is plain from all the calls of the goſpel; *Whoſoever will, let him take the water of life freely*, Rev. xxii. 17. *Ho, every one that thirſteth, come ye to the waters*, Iſa. lv. 1. *Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you reſt*, Matth. xi. 28.

2. That they ought to come to him as *God the Saviour*, and *God the glorious object of worſhip*, by whom we are to worſhip God, and whom we are to worſhip as God; Iſa. xlv. 22. *Look to me, and be ſaved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none elſe.* John v. 23. *All men muſt honour the Son, even as they honour the Father;* who therefore ſays, *This is my beloved Son, hear ye him.*

3. That it is the *great trumpet of the goſpel* that is the means for gathering ſinners to Chriſt, is plain, Rom. x. 17. *Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.* For this end a goſpel-miniſtry is given, Eph. iv. 12.; and therefore miniſters are called to *preach the goſpel to every creature*, Mark xvi. 15.

4. That a *number of ſinners, ready to periſh*, ſhall come at the blowing of this trumpet, and that it ſhall be powerful and effectual for bringing them, is alſo plain; for, Rom. i. 16. the goſpel is *the power of God to their ſalvation: for therein is the righteouſneſs of God revealed from faith to faith. The election ſhall obtain. And as many as were ordained to eternal life ſhall believe*, Rom. xi. 7. Acts xvii. 48. His *people ſhall be willing in the day of* his *power*, Pſal. cx. 3.

5. That, being thus brought back to God in Chriſt, they *ſhall worſhip him acceptably in his holy mount*, is alſo plain from theſe and the like promiſes, Pſal. xxii. 27. *All the ends of the earth ſhall remember and turn to the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations ſhall worſhip before thee: for the kingdom is the Lord's, and he is the governor among the nations.* Pſal. lxxxvi. 9. *All nations whom thou haſt made ſhall come and worſhip before thee, O Lord; and ſhall glorify thy name.* They will *worſhip towards his*

his holy temple, Pſal. cxxxviii. 2. Hence ſays David, Pſal. li. 18, 19. *Do good in thy good pleaſure to Zion; build thou the walls of Jeruſalem. Then ſhalt thou be pleaſed with the ſacrifices of righteouſneſs, with burnt offerings, and whole burnt-offerings; then ſhall they offer bullocks upon thine altar.* When he ſends forth his *light* and *truth*, then he brings them to his *holy hill* and to his *tabernacle*; and then do they come to the *altar of God, to God their exceeding joy*, Pſal. xliii. 3, 4.: then they ſhall worſhip a God in Chriſt acceptably and joyfully, Iſa. lvi. 6, 7.

Thus you may ſee the doctrine plain in every branch of it: *That as it is the duty of periſhing ſinners, that hear the goſpel, to come to God in Chriſt, as the only Saviour and glorious object of worſhip; ſo it is an encouraging promiſe, that, when the great trumpet of the goſpel is blown, a number of outcaſt ſinners, ready to periſh, ſhall come, and ſhall worſhip and ſerve him acceptably in his holy mount.*

The method wherein I would ſpeak to it, as the Lord may aſſiſt, is the following.

I. To conſider a little the *ſtate* and *condition* of ſinners by nature, as *outcaſts, ready to periſh.*

II. The *duty* of ſinners to come to Chriſt as the Saviour, the great Lord-deliverer, and glorious object of worſhip.

III. Speak of the *means* by which the Lord gathers theſe ſinners thus to him, namely, the *blowing of the great goſpel-trumpet.*

IV. Touch at the *efficacy* of theſe means, and ſhew why it is promiſed *they ſhall come.*

V. Speak of the *end* for which they ſhall come, their *worſhipping* him in his holy mountain.

VI. Deduce ſome *inferences* for the *application* of the whole.

I. We are to touch a little at the *ſad ſtate* and *circumſtance of ſinners by nature.* Now, there are two words here, by which, O ſinner, your natural ſad ſtate is repreſented; 1. As *outcaſts*, or ſinners caſt out. 2. As ſinners *ready to periſh.*

1. We are *outcaſts*, as Iſrael in Egypt were deſigned: and this is the name ſeveral times given to ſinners in ſcripture, in alluſion to the outcaſt Iſraelites; Pſal. cxlvii. 2. *The Lord ſhall build up Jeruſalem, the Lord gathereth in the outcaſts of Iſrael.* Iſa. xi. 12. *He ſhall ſet up an enſign for the nations; he ſhall aſſemble the outcaſts of Iſrael from the four corners of the earth.* The Lord ſeems to glory in this name of *gathering outcaſts*; for I find him again taking it to himſelf, Iſa. lvi. 8. *The Lord, which gathers the outcaſts of Iſrael, ſaith, Yet will I gather others to him, beſides theſe that are gathered to him.* Now, if you enquire in what reſpect ſinners are *outcaſts*, (the conſideration of this is neceſſary, in order to your coming to Chriſt, when the goſpel-trumpet is blown in your ears; for, you will not prize the proclamation of mercy, if you do not ſee what a miſerable outcaſt ſtate you are in,) know then, O ſinner, that by your ſin and fall in the firſt Adam, you are caſt out of God's *favour* and *fellowſhip*, being an *alien from the commonwealth of Iſrael, and a ſtranger to the covenant of promiſe, having no hope, and without God in the world*, Eph. ii. 12. Like the wretched infant, Ezek. xvi. 5. *caſt out into the open field, to the lothing of thy perſon in the day that thou waſt born; having no eye to pity, or have compaſſion upon thee.* O ſinners, you are ſuch outcaſts, that not only have you caſt out yourſelves, by ſin in Adam, and in your own perſon, by original and actual ſin, but you are caſt out by the juſtice of God, executing the law-ſentence againſt you. You are under the curſe of the law, Gal. iii. 10. *Curſed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.* You are not only under the ſentence of the law, the ſentence of condemnation, but the ſentence is partly executed; the ſentence is, *Thou ſhalt die, thou ſhalt ſurely die*, Gen. ii. 17. And behold, thou art dead, thou art ſurely *dead in ſins and treſpaſſes.* The ſentence is paſſed on thee, thou art legally dead; the ſentence is executed in thee, thou art ſpiritually dead: Being legally dead, thou art condemned already; and, being ſpiritually dead, the ſentence of condemnation is partly executed already; and there is nothing but the ſmall hair of a mortal life between thee and the full execution of that ſentence in thy eternal death.—Thus you are caſt out of God's preſence, caſt out of his vineyard; not only ſet out, or gone out, but, by virtue of the law-wrath you are under, caſt out like a dead dog caſt over the wall of a city; *For without are dogs*, Rev. xxii. 15.

In a word, O ſinner, you are caſt out to the *devil*, and led captive by him at his pleaſure. The devil hath poſſeſſion of you, he *works in the heart* of the *children of diſobedience.* The devil is your god; for he is *the god of this world, that blindeth your minds that believe not*, 2 Cor. iv. 4.

In theſe, and the like reſpects, you are outcaſts, caſt out of God's houſe, and caſt out to the devil; caſt out into the mire, and wallowing in the mire of ſin and luſts; poor, vile, and miſerable outcaſts.

2. You are *ready to periſh* in your outcaſt ſtate, on the very brink of periſhing for ever, if mercy interpoſe not; ready to die both the firſt and ſecond death. Ready to die the *firſt death*; for your life is but a ſpan, and the half of it is paſt already, and perhaps much more. Pray, where are your grandfather and grandmother? Yea, may we not ſay to ſome here, Where are your fathers and mothers? Is not their time paſt, and their acquaintance, whom you and your neighbours knew? Is it not juſt a dream to think on the days of old? Are they not all gone like a ſhadow, and the place where they were knows them no more? Like a bird that flies through the air, leaving no veſtige behind it; or like a ſhip that cuts out its way in the ſea, and immediately the water cloſes up behind it, and the place is not known through which it went. Is not your life periſhing in that ſame manner? And you cannot promiſe upon another year, nay, nor upon another month, nay, not upon another week, nay, not upon another day, nay, nor upon another hour, nay, not upon another minute, another moment.—You are ready to periſh in your outcaſt ſtate, ready to die; and, if you die in it, then you die for ever.

You are ready to die the *ſecond death*, which you have deſcribed, Rev. xxi. 8. *But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and ſorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, ſhall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimſtone, which is the ſecond death.* You have it deſcribed alſo, 2 Theſſ. i. 8. where it is ſaid, Chriſt *will come in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the goſpel; who ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction from the preſence of the Lord, and the glory of his power*; or, by his powerful and wrathful preſence,

ſence, which they ſhall for ever have; and by being baniſhed from his gracious and glorious preſence which they ſhall for ever want: for, as heaven is a *being for ever with the Lord*; ſo hell is a being for ever without him. The wicked may think it an eaſy puniſhment to be without God now, while they know not his infinite excellency; but beſide the puniſhment of ſenſe, and ſenſible pain for ever, the puniſhment of loſs will be found to be dreadful. Hunger puts no poſitive torment or pain upon a man; yet his ſuffering, through hunger, may be very great, when he can get nothing to eaſe it: now, the nature of perfection is ſuch, that whatever rational creature apprehends it, cannot but deſire union with it, and be pained for the want of it. Now, if once God had unmaſked his infinite glory and excellency (for there is no atheiſt in hell) they will ſee what infinite excellencies they are deprived the enjoyment of. What unexpreſſible uneaſineſs and torment will it be, to be under a neceſſity of deſiring that happineſs which can never be granted! A man may be deeply in love with a mortal, a piece of clay which God hath painted amiable and lovely in his ſight, and that mortal perhaps ſlight his addreſſes, and he may ſuffer ſuch torment by his being ſlighted as may pine him away to death: and if one bit of clay deſired, and not granted, be ſo tormenting and uneaſy to bear, let none have ſlight and light thoughts of the pain of loſs that theſe will ſuſtain, who are ſecluded the preſence of the Lord, and his infinite beauty and excellency. Here then is the ſecond death; God's everlaſting wrathful preſence, and privation of his glorious preſence for ever.——Thus you are ready to periſh: O diſmal caſe! ready for hell, prepared for it, and ready every moment to be thrown into that place of perdition!

II. The ſecond thing propoſed was, To ſpeak a little of the *duty* of outcaſt ſinners, ready to periſh; and that is, to *come to Jeſus*; to come back to God, by this new and living way, that they periſh not in their outcaſt ſtate and miſerable condition. I ſhall here conſider a little what this coming *imports*, and in what *capacity* they are to come to him.

1. This coming to Chriſt, or to God in him, as it ſuppoſes that *natural*, *outcaſt*, *periſhing* ſtate and condition, which is a ſtate of diſtance from God; and a *ſenſe* or *conviction* of this diſtant and diſmal ſtate, ſeeing the firſt ſtep in God's way, is to ſee ourſelves intirely out of the way, and that the devil and our luſts are driving us to hell: ſo it ſuppoſes, indeed, a *drawing power of divine grace*, making the ſoul willing to be ſaved in a way of free grace, both from ſin and wrath, through the righteouſneſs of Jeſus Chriſt. It ſuppoſes one's hearing of the *way of relief* to be had in Jeſus Chriſt, and a *weighty errand* that brings the ſoul to Jeſus. Being ſenſible of blindneſs, he comes for light; being ſenſible of guilt, and under fear of wrath, he comes for juſtification and reconciliation with God; being ſenſible of the power of ſin, and hell of corruption within him, he comes for ſanctification and freedom from theſe maſſy chains of hell; being weak, they come for ſtrength; being weary, they come for reſt; being naked, they come for clothing; being deſtitute of all good, they come for ſupply of all in him, who is *all in all*. And hence,

More particularly, this coming imports a *knowledge* of the perſon to whom we come; for there is a *ſeeing of the Son* neceſſary to *believing in him*, John vi. 40. By the light of heaven the comer is made to ſee his abſolute need of Chriſt, and the glorious excellency and ſuitableneſs of Chriſt. A man's coming to any place, ſuppoſes his knowledge where he is going.—It imports *ſpiritual life* and *motion*, without which none can come or go any where in a ſpiritual ſenſe; no more than there can be any coming in a natural ſenſe without natural life and motion. In the day of coming to Chriſt, the ſoul is quickened by the ſpirit of life, by the ſpirit of faith; and quickened to a lively hope: for this coming imports a hope of coming ſpeed, at leaſt a *may-be* the merciful king of Iſrael will pity me. A poor man will not come for an alms to any perſon that he thinks hath nothing to give him: the believing comer is perſuaded there is fulneſs enough in Chriſt; fulneſs of virtue, in his blood; fulneſs of merit, in his death; fulneſs of power, in his arm.—And hereupon chiefly this coming imports a *reſolute outgoing of ſoul after Chriſt*, as offered in the goſpel; an actual cloſing with him, by a practical aſſent of the underſtanding, a pleaſant conſent of the will, and a vigorous egreſs of the affection towards the Son of God. Seeing an abſolute need, he ventures on an offered Chriſt for *wiſdom*, *righteouſneſs*, *ſanctification*, *and redemption*, 1 Cor. i. 30.—— But this leads to the next thing here to be conſidered, for I muſt not inlarge.

2. In what *capacity* we are to come. We are to come to him in a twofold capacity. 1. It is to him as the *Lord Redeemer*. 2. As the LORD, the glorious object of worſhip: *They ſhall come and worſhip*.

(1.) It is to Chriſt as the *Lord* and *Saviour*, *Redeemer* and *Deliverer*. Chriſt ſtands as a Saviour upon mount Zion, inviting all ſorts of ſinners to come to him; old ſinners, young ſinners, great ſinners, groſs ſinners, the vileſt and blackeſt outcaſts, to come and get ſalvation: for it is his name to ſave; it is his nature, his delight, his office to ſave. We are to come as captives to a Redeemer, ready to deliver thoſe who are ready to periſh in their captivity to ſin, Satan, juſtice, death, and hell: and hence his voice is, *Turn to your ſtrong hold, ye priſoners of hope*: come to me outcaſt ſinners, ready to periſh; here am I ready to ſave.

(2.) It is to Chriſt as the LORD JEHOVAH, the glorious object of worſhip. This, I think, is alſo imported in the words, *They ſhall come and worſhip in his holy mount at Jeruſalem*. Before men come to Jeſus Chriſt, from their ſpiritual captivity, they are worſhipping and ſerving the devil and their luſts; but, whenever they come to Jeſus, they both worſhip him, and worſhip God in him; *He is thy Lord, worſhip thou him*, Pſal. xlv. 11. *When they ſaw him, they worſhipped him*, Mat. xxviii. 17. And then, and not till then, do they worſhip God acceptably, when they worſhip God in the Spirit, and by the Spirit of Chriſt; and worſhip the Father, in the Son, by the Spirit: for the Spirit is the way to Chriſt, *He ſhall teſtify of me*; and Chriſt the way to the Father, *No man cometh to the Father but by me*. Faith, in coming to Chriſt, takes him up both as God, the great JEHOVAH, the glorious object of worſhip; and as the CHRIST of God, the way to God: becauſe he is both God and man; IMMANUEL, *God with us*. Thus he is both the end and the way; and ſo both the

the glorious object of worship, and the person in whom our worship is acceptable: *They shall worship the Lord in the holy mount.* — But of this more afterward.

III. The third thing proposed was, To speak of the *means* by which the Lord gathers outcast sinners, ready to perish, and makes them come to him and worship him, namely, by the *blowing of the great* GOSPEL-TRUMPET: *The great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come.* This, as I have already shewed, is the preaching of gospel of Christ, and the proclamation of the grace of God therein to poor outcast perishing sinners.

That I may speak a little of this the more distinctly, I shall shew, 1. Why the preaching of the gospel is compared to the *sounding* or *blowing of a trumpet.* 2. Why it may be called a *great* trumpet. 3. What sort of a *sound* this great trumpet makes; or what the meaning of it is, as to the *contents* of the proclamation made by it. 4. The *quality* of the sound when blown.

1st, Why the preaching of the gospel is compared to the *blowing of a trumpet.* I design not to stretch the metaphor beyond the design of the thing: I shall only mention these two or three particulars.

1. A trumpet is a *royal* and *majestic* sort of an instrument, and hence usually kings of the earth are crowned and proclaimed by their heralds with sound of trumpet: so the gospel is the royal and majestic trumpet of the great King of kings, and therein he discovers his glory and his majesty, when he rides prosperously on the word of truth, meekness, and righteousness, Psal. xlv. 3, 4. Therein is Christ proclaimed king of Zion, and the royalties of his grace published.

2. A trumpet is a *high* and *loud sounding* instrument, and the sound of it heard at a considerable distance. Such a trumpet is the gospel; and therefore it is said of the heralds of the great King, that preached the gospel, *Their sound went into all the earth, and their words into the ends of the world*, Rom. x. 18. It is the loud voice of the Son of God by his ambassadors; and it is to be heard through all the earth before the end of time: *The gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come*, Mat. xxiv. 14.

3. A trumpet is a *martial*, *warlike* instrument, and usually blown to proclaim peace or war: and thus the gospel is a proclamation of peace with God, and war with the devil. The first sound that ever this trumpet made was a sound of peace and war both: war with the devil, the destroyer of mankind; *The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent*: and peace on earth, upon this ground, because the *God of peace* was, in this way, *to bruise Satan under our feet.* The gospel is the great instrument, many ways useful in directing in the holy war.—Sometimes it is to sound a *gathering*, a *gathering of the people to Shiloh*; the rendezvouse under the standard of the Captain of salvation, calling all to come to him, and inlist with him.—Sometimes to blow an *alarm*; *When ye blow an alarm, the camp shall go forward, and take their journey*, Numb. x. 5, 6.—Sometimes to sound a *march*, to go forward to the battle against the enemy, in his name and strength, of whom it is said, Psal. lxviii. 7, 11, 12. *He went forth before the people; he marched through the wilderness. The Lord gave the word; great was the company of these that published it: kings of great armies did fly apace.* It never sounds a retreat, nor a sist from war, except in so far as he himself sees fit to spare his enemies alive for necessary uses towards his people, saying, *Slay them not, lest my people forget.* But when they *fight the good fight of faith*, and fight lawfully and successfully, the trumpet sounds the victory and the triumph; *Thanks be to God, which always causes us to triumph in Christ*, 2 Cor. ii. 14. *We are more than conquerors, through him that loved us*, Rom. viii. 37. *O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is victory?* 1 Cor. xv. 55. *To him that overcometh will I give to sit with me on my throne, even as I overcame, and am set down with the Father on his throne*, Rev. iii. 21.

4. The blowing of a trumpet requires *life*, *breath*, and *wisdom* also: even so, in order to the blowing of the gospel-trumpet, the spirit of life is necessary, and the breathing of the spirit of life. They who are not quickened by the Spirit of Christ, and do not enjoy the breathing of the Spirit of Christ, cannot blow the gospel-trumpet to any good purpose, at least, they are not God's ordinary instruments of quickening others: but, *who is sufficient for these things? Not that we are sufficient of ourselves, to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God, who hath made us able ministers of the new testament, not of the letter but of the spirit; for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life*, 2 Cor. iii. 5, 6. The gospel-trumpet will do little service, if the Spirit of God be not the breath that blows it. A great trumpet requires great breath; and therefore, O Sirs, look to heaven for the great breathing of the Spirit to accompany the gospel. Yea, the blowing of the trumpet requires wisdom and skill; one may have both life and breath, and yet want skill to blow a trumpet: even so, much spiritual wisdom is requisite in blowing the gospel-trumpet, that we *handle not the word of God deceitfully*; that we blow not a false alarm or a false peace; that we give not an *uncertain sound*; for, as the apostle says, 1 Cor. xiv. 8. *If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?* If it be not precious truth, and pure gospel that is preached, we are not to regard it, though the trumpet were blown by the mouth of an angel; *If we or an angel from heaven preach another gospel, let him be accursed*, Gal. i. 6.

2dly, I am here to enquire, why the gospel may be called a *great trumpet.* This I shall dispatch in a few words.

1. It is a great trumpet, because it is the trumpet of the *great God*, and of the great King, the great Saviour; for so our Lord Jesus is called, Isa. xix. 20. *They shall cry unto the Lord, because of the oppressors; and he shall send them a Saviour and a great One, and he shall deliver them.* O how great is this man, this God-man! Great in his *person*, being the *brightness of the Father's glory*, and *the express image of his person*; the *Prince of the kings of the earth*: great in his *offices*: a great Prophet, a great High-priest, a great King: great in his *relations*, great in his *names*; great in his *promises*; great in his *purchase*; great in his *victories*; great in his *fulness*; having all the *fulness of the Godhead in him.*——It is the trumpet of the great King.

2. It is the trumpet of a *great salvation*: Heb. ii. 3. *How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation*, published by the gospel-trumpet? The great Saviour comes with a commission under

the great seal of heaven; *For him hath God the Father sealed.* And he comes upon a great design, the salvation of great sinners, in such a way as the ultimate end thereof is the glory of God's great perfections, and the praise of his grace. It is salvation from the greatest moral evil, namely, sin; and salvation from the greatest penal evil, *from the wrath to come*, that is proclaimed by this trumpet.

3. It is a great trumpet, in opposition to all other *earthly* trumpets, that are but little emblems of this great one. What are the trumpets of earthly kings and conquerors, when laid in the balance with the gospel-trumpet, sounding the triumph of our glorious Conqueror, and saying, *Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? This that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save?* Isa. lxiii. 1.

4. It is a great trumpet, in respect of the *great consequence* of the sounding and blowing of it: for, as the gospel is called the *everlasting gospel*; so *everlasting life*, or *everlasting death* will be the consequence of your hearing thereof: *To some we are the savour of death unto death, and to others the savour of life unto life*, 2 Cor. ii. 16. Not that the gospel brings a sound of death and damnation to any of itself; no, by no means; it is a word of salvation to sinners: but when this joyful sound is slighted by final unbelief and impenitency, then it brings the greatest ruin and perdition. See and read, to this purpose, Heb. x. 28, 29. and xii. 25. To slight the sound of this great trumpet, then, brings the greatest damnation, the hottest hell; but in itself it is a merciful sound. Therefore,

3*dly*, I am here to consider what sort of a *sound* this great trumpet brings, and what sort of a *proclamation* is made by it. In general, When this great trumpet is blown, it gives a sound of *grace* and *mercy* to poor outcast sinners ready to perish. It is called, Tit. ii. 11. *The grace of God, that bringeth salvation to all men*, as you may read in the margin. More particularly,

1. The sound of this great trumpet is a sound of *life* to dead sinners; John x. 10. *I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.* John v. 25. *The hour cometh, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live.* John xi. 25. *I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.* This trumpet is for rouzing and awakening the dead; and blessed are they that are awakened and quickened with the sound of it; for the voice of it is, *Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light*, Eph. v. 4. No trumpet but that of the living and life-giving God can sound after this manner: and it is like himself; for he is the *God that quickens the dead, and calls things that be not, as though they were*, Rom. iv. 17.

2. The sound of this great trumpet is a sound of *liberty* to *captive* sinners; *The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, for he hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted; to proclaim liberty to the captives; and the opening of the prison to them that are bound: to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn*, Isa. lxi. 1, 2. O captive sinner, lying in the chains of sin and Satan, and in the chains of unbelief and enmity, would you have your chains loosed, and your soul set at liberty? Hear the voice of the trumpet; *The Lord looseth the prisoners*, Psal. cxlvi. 7. *Turn ye to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope*, Zech. ix. 12. *By the blood of thy covenant have I sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water*, ver. 11.

3. The sound of this great trumpet is a sound of *pardoning grace* to the *condemned* sinner; it proclaims indemnity to all the guilty rebels against heaven that hear and welcome the sound of it; *Be it known unto you, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins. And by him all that believe, are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses*, Acts xiii. 38, 39. It is free indemnity through Christ, to the praise of his glorious grace, that is proclaimed; *In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace*, Eph. i. 7. O! will any condemned sinner accept of pardon and indemnity upon these gracious terms? The condition is already fulfilled; the blood of Jesus Christ hath bought remission. This blessing of his blood comes therefore to you freely, that you may accept of it freely, and you have it. *Not for your sake, not for your sake doth he give it, but for his own name's sake;* Isa. xliii. 25. *I, even I am he that blotteth out your transgressions for mine own sake;* for no other reason but that you may have the good of it, and I may have the glory of it.

4. The sound of this great trumpet is a sound of *purifying grace* to the *filthy* sinner; *In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin, and for uncleanness*, Zech. xiii. 1. The trumpet proclaims to you, O filthy, polluted sinner, going quick with vermine, all overspread with the ugly vermine of sin and corruption; it proclaims, saying, Behold, the God of heaven hath provided a fountain of purification, both for sin, and for uncleanness; both for taking away the guilt of sin and the filth of sin: yea, behold, he hath provided both a Red-sea, and a crystal river; a Red-sea of blood, *The blood of Christ cleansing from all sin*, 1 John i. 7.; and the crystal river that *proceedeth out of the throne of God and of the Lamb:* and this is to be in you as *a well of water springing up to everlasting life*, in his quickening, purifying, and sanctifying presence and operation, John iv. 14. You cannot sanctify and purify yourself, no more than you can create a world; but here am I that can create a clean heart within you: *Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world;* therefore, *take with you words, and say, Take away all iniquity*, thou whose work it is, and whose promise thus sounds in mine ears, *I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you*, Ezek. xxxvi. 25. This great trumpet then, hath a sound of life and liberty, pardon and purity; life to the dead, liberty to the bound, pardon to the guilty, and purity to the filthy. These comprehend all that you need, both in time and for eternity; for the everlasting gospel proclaims everlasting blessings, everlasting life, everlasting liberty, everlasting pardon, everlasting purity and holiness; all to be had in Christ, the everlasting Lord and Saviour, *who was dead, and is alive, and lives for evermore:* and all to be had, partly and graciously here; and fully, and gloriously hereafter.

5. In a word, the sound of this great trumpet is a sound of *complete salvation*, in all the respects

ſpects wherein poor ſinners that hear the joyful ſound need to be ſaved. It is a ſound of inſtruction to the ignorant, ſaying, *They ſhall be all taught of God.* A ſound of direction to the bewildered, ſaying, like a voice behind them, *This is the way, walk ye in it.* The trumpet proclaims, ſaying, Here is reſt, for the weary ſoul; comfort, for the drooping ſoul; ſtrength, for the weak; riches, for the poor; raiment, for the naked; ſight, for the blind; ſupply, for the needy ſoul: here is ſalvation for the loſt ſoul, grace, glory, and every good thing for theſe that have nothing. Here, in ſhort then, is the matter of the proclamation by ſound of trumpet from heaven. You have a ſum of the joyful ſound of this trumpet, Iſa. xxv. 6. *In this mountain ſhall the Lord of hoſts make unto all people a feaſt of fat things, a feaſt of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined.* Iſa. lv. 1. *Ho, every one that thirſteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea, come buy wine and milk, without money, and without price.* Ho, every one that pleaſeth, come and match with the Son of God: *All things are ready, come to the marriage*, and ſo come to the marriage-feaſt.——So much ſhall ſuffice for this particular.

4*thly*, I propoſed here to ſpeak a little of the *quality* of this ſound of the great goſpel-trumpet, when it is blown in Zion. And,

1. It is a *joyful* and a *charming* ſound, Pſalm lxxxix. 15, 16. *Bleſſed is the people that know the joyful ſound: they ſhall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance. In thy name ſhall they rejoice all the day long: and in thy righteouſneſs ſhall they be exalted.* The voice of the trumpet is, *Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which ſhall be to all people: For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Chriſt the Lord*, Luke ii. 10. Some that were once delivered by a conqueror from outward bondage, made the elements ring, and the birds fall out of the air with their voice, crying out, SOTER, SOTER, *a Saviour, a Saviour.* O how much more ſhould the glad news of a Saviour, to ſave from ſin and everlaſting wrath, be received with joy! It is a joyful and charming ſound: ſhall the voice of the Charmer be rejected and deſpiſed by the deaf adders here?

2. It is a *divine, awful* ſound; it is the voice of the Son of man; yea, the voice of the Son of God: it is the voice of the great God that is to be heard through this trumpet, that *voice that ſhakes the heaven and the earth*, Heb. xii. 26.—It is a *lofty* ſound, from the *high and lofty One, that inhabits eternity*; a *majeſtic* ſound; for, *The voice of the Lord is full of majeſty.* Though it be a ſtill ſmall voice, like that Elijah heard, 1 Kings xix. 12.; yet *the Lord is in it:* and happy they that, through the voice of a man, hear the voice of God, by *receiving it not as the word of man, but, as it is in truth, the word of God, which worketh effectually in you that believe*, 1 Theſſ. ii. 13. Hence,

3. It is an *internal* and *ſpiritual*, as well as an *external* ſound; *It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the fleſh profiteth nothing: the words that I ſpeak unto you, they are ſpirit, and they are life*, John vi. 63. Hence it is a ſound that both wounds and heals the ſoul; that firſt kills, and then quickens the ſoul: and ſo it appears to be the voice of the living God, who ſays, *I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal.* It is *external*, in the publication to the ear; and *faith comes by this hearing:* and then it is *internal* and *ſpiritual*, in the operation of it upon the heart: and, O may it be a living and life-giving, and ſoul-quickening ſound to many here; for, it is the *voice of the Son of God* that makes the *dead to hear and live.*

4. It is a *long* and *laſting* ſound. The ſound of common trumpets, when they are blown, is but a dying ſound; but the great trumpet of the everlaſting goſpel is not ſo: it is *the word of God that lives and abides for ever*, 1 Pet. i. 23. The echo of this joyful ſound will be heard for ever, both in heaven and in hell. The joyful echo among the redeemed, and the dreadful tormenting echo among the damned, will be everlaſting: it will not ſound for ever as now it doth; but the echo thereof will be heard louder and louder to all eternity, when all things elſe will wither and fade: this you ſee clear from 1 Pet. i. 24, 25. compared with Iſa. xl. 6. *The voice ſaid, Cry. And I ſaid, What ſhall I cry? All fleſh is graſs, and all the glory of man as the flower of the graſs. The graſs withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away; but the word of the Lord endureth for ever: and this is the word which by the goſpel is preached unto you.* And as to the preſent external diſpenſation of the goſpel, God keeps the count of the time how long the trumpet ſounds in your ears; *All day long have I ſtretched out my hand to a diſobedient and gainſaying people*, Rom. x. 21.

5. It is a *near* ſound, not at a diſtance, like news from a foreign country, but near at hand, and bringing heavenly things near to us; *Hearken unto me, ye ſtout-hearted, that are far from righteouſneſs: I bring near my righteouſneſs; it ſhall not be far off; and my ſalvation ſhall not tarry.* He *placeth* this *ſalvation in Zion, for Iſrael his glory*, Iſa. xl. 12,—13. *The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is the word of faith which we preach*, Rom. x. 8. The word is nigh to your heart; for the Lord is dealing with your heart by it: O may he not only deal, but prevail. For,

6. It is a *powerful, conquering* ſound: it will overcome and prevail, ſo as to reach the end of it one way or another; *It ſhall not return unto me void; but it ſhall accompliſh that which I pleaſe, and it ſhall proſper in the thing whereto I ſent it*, Iſa. lv. 11. God will not blow his trumpet in vain; all rejecters and diſpiſers ſhall be rendered inexcuſeable by it; and all his elect ſhall be mercifully conquered: for the trumpet hath a ſurmounting ſound; it ſounds over the top of all the hills and mountains of ſin and guilt, and of unbelief and enmity; *The voice of my Beloved! behold, he cometh, leaping upon the mountains and ſkipping upon the hills*, Song ii. 8. The voice of the Lord is powerful, melting down mountains in his way. *The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars of Lebanon.* This leads,

IV. To the *fourth* general head propoſed, To touch at the *efficacy* of this means; and why it is promiſed, that a number of *outcaſt ſinners, ready to periſh*, by the blowing of the great trumpet, *ſhall come.* Arminian doctrine, that aboundeth in our day, makes the efficacy of the goſpel depend upon man's free-will; but, *we have not ſo learned Chriſt:* he hath made ſurer work; and all the efficacy to depend upon his free grace: and this is ſecured by his *ſhall be: The great trumpet* SHALL BE *blown, and they* SHALL *come.* The Father's promiſe to the Son ſecures it; *Thy people ſhall be willing in the day of thy power*, Pſal. cx. 3. *He ſhall ſee his ſeed. He ſhall ſee the travail*

travail of his ſoul, and be ſatisfied. The Father's promiſe to the Son is ſecured and confirmed by his oath upon this head, Pſal. lxxxix. 35. *Once have I ſworn by my holineſs, that I will not lye unto David. His ſeed ſhall endure for ever*; his ſeed among Jews and Gentiles, and among the nations afar off; *I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the utmoſt ends of the earth for thy poſſeſſion. He ſhall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles, and the iſles ſhall wait for his law.* Amidſt all the diſcouragements that men may give us in our preaching the goſpel, here is the encouragement that God gives us in blowing the great trumpet in the ears of *outcaſts, ready to periſh.* There is a number among them that ſhall come; *Other ſheep I have, that are not of this fold: them alſo I muſt bring, and they ſhall hear my voice,* John x. 16. I *muſt* bring them, and they *muſt* come. The ſweet neceſſity he is under of bringing them, produces, in the day of power, a ſweet neceſſity in them, ſaying, O we muſt come to Chriſt; we periſh without him: we hear the ſound of his trumpet; and therefore we muſt ſay, *Behold, we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God.*

QUEST. *Why is it promiſed, that a number of outcaſts, ready to periſh ſhall come, when the goſpel-trumpet ſhall be blown?*

ANSW. 1. Becauſe none would have *encouragement* to come, if there were not a promiſe that *they ſhall come.* Here is encouragement to all that hear the ſound of the trumpet. It is true, may a ſoul ſay, I know not if I be intended, but I ſee the promiſe reſpects the like of me: the promiſe of *drawing grace*, reſpects the like of me, that cannot come of myſelf; the promiſe of *pardon*, reſpects theſe that are *guilty*; the promiſe of *cleanſing*, reſpects theſe that are *filthy*; the promiſe of *taking away the ſtony heart*, reſpects theſe that have a *hard, ſtupid heart.* Now, this is my caſe; and therefore, here is a door of hope; here is ſome encouragement for me to come to him, and wait upon him. And as none would have encouragement if it were not ſo; ſo all may have encouragement here: the door of hope is open.

2. He hath promiſed *they ſhall come*, becauſe as none would have encouragement to come, ſo none would have *grace* to come, if it were not promiſed; and if it were not by virtue of the promiſe made in Jeſus Chriſt: for, it is grace coming out of the promiſe, that is turned to grace in the heart. Then, indeed, the ſoul comes, when the grace that lies in the promiſe is turned to grace in the heart, and wrought there by the means of the promiſe. It is by virtue of the *great and precious promiſe* we are made *partakers of the divine nature*, and of the Spirit of faith; the promiſes being pleas and arguments for faith, and for the prayer of faith, ſaying, Lord, haſt thou not ſo and ſo ſaid to ſuch as I am; and wilt thou not *do as thou haſt ſaid?* Haſt thou not ſaid, That *Solomon ſhall reign*, that grace ſhall reign? and wilt thou ſuffer ſin to reign? And the promiſe being thus the pipe and channel for the communication of grace, the conduit from Chriſt to us, *All the promiſes* being *Yea and Amen in Chriſt*, and the conduit-pipe reaching from the heart of Chriſt to the mouth of faith, we ſuck in his fulneſs. As the law begets terror, ſo the promiſe begets faith; both by the *freeneſs* of it to the moſt unworthy, and the *fulneſs* of it, being a plaiſter as big as the ſore, and exactly anſwering to its want; and by the *efficacy* of it, through the ſecret working of the Spirit, diſcovering this fulneſs and freeneſs of divine grace, and drawing the heart towards this promiſing God.

3. He hath promiſed *they ſhall come*, that thus he may ſecure his own *glory*, which he deſigns to ſhew forth in his way. His great deſign, in ſaving any poor periſhing ſinner, is the glory of his name, and the honour of all his perfections: *Sing, O heavens; for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himſelf in Iſrael*, Iſa. xliv. 23. He deſigns, by redeming them, to glorify himſelf; and that he may ſhew forth his perfections, and they may ſhew forth his praiſe: *This people have I formed for myſelf, they ſhall ſhew forth my praiſe*, Iſa. xlii. 21. He thus ſhews forth the glory of his wiſdom, power, holineſs, juſtice, mercy, and truth; and therefore he hath promiſed *they ſhall come:* and this, with all the other promiſes of God, are *Yea and Amen in Chriſt, to the glory of God*, 2 Cor. i. 20.

4. He hath promiſed *they ſhall come* by faith to him, that their *ſalvation* may be ſure; *Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace: to the end the promiſe might be ſure to all the ſeed*, Rom. iv. 16. As God's word, *Let it be*, brought the world into a being; ſo his *ſhall be*, is the cauſe of what comes to paſs in the new creation. His ſaying, *They ſhall come*, is the cauſe of their coming, otherwiſe they would never come. He hath declared his will in this world, concerning their coming to him for life and ſalvation; and *by his will they are ſanctified*, and ſaved *through the offering of the body of Jeſus Chriſt once for all*, Heb. x. 10. And what can be ſurer than the will of God, and that God will have his will? *He worketh all things after the counſel of his own will*, Eph. i. 11.

V. The *fifth* head I propoſed was, To ſpeak a little of the *end* for which they ſhall come, namely, *To worſhip the Lord in the Holy mount at Jeruſalem.* To ſpeak now of divine worſhip at any length, is what I cannot propoſe; there are only four things concerning it, that, I think, the words here lead me to, namly, here is the *nature*, the *object*, the *manner*, and the *ſpring* of worſhip.

1. The *nature* of it, imported in the name *worſhip.* "To worſhip, is to give to any one "the honour due unto him; ſo to worſhip God, "is to render that honour and homage that "is due to him, Pſal. xxix. 2." Now, the worſhip of God is twofold, internal and external. — *Internal* worſhip, is to love God, to fear him, to believe and truſt in him; theſe are acts of inward worſhip, and the ſum of that honour we are required to give to God in the firſt command. — *External* worſhip, is the ſerving of God according to his own ordinances and inſtitutions, which is the ſum of the ſecond command, comprehending all the ſeveral ways wherein he will be honoured and ſerved, ſuch as, prayer, praiſe, *&c.* Both theſe muſt go together: *internal* worſhip, pleaſeth God beſt; *external* worſhip, honoureth him moſt, and ſetteth forth his glory in the world. Hence the temple was called, *The place where God put his name, i. e.* his *worſhip*; by which God is known, as a man is by his name. *They that worſhip God, muſt worſhip him in Spirit and in truth:* in *Spirit*, that is, with inward love, fear, reverence, and uprightneſs; in *truth*, that is, according to the true rule of his word. The former reſpects the inward power, and the latter the outward rule;

rule; the former ſtrikes at hypocriſy, and the latter at idolatry; the one oppoſes looſneſs of our hearts in worſhip, and the other oppoſes the inventions of our heads.

2. The *object* of worſhip is the LORD; *They ſhall worſhip the Lord.* Hence we read, Matth. iv. 10. *Thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord thy God, and him only ſhalt thou ſerve.* To me it would ſeem, that by the *Lord* here, in the text, we are to underſtand the *Lord* and *Saviour* CHRIST, becauſe I ſee no difference made between the object of *faith* here expreſſed by *coming*, and the object of *homage* here expreſſed by *worſhip*; *They ſhall come and worſhip the Lord.* However this be, it is God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, that is the object of religious worſhip; and the Unity muſt be worſhipped in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity: and, when we direct our worſhip to any one perſon, we muſt include the reſt in the ſame worſhip; and we are to conceive of him as he hath manifeſted himſelf to us in his word. If we worſhip God out of a Trinity, as the Turks; or God out of Chriſt, as the Jews; we worſhip not the true God, but an idol.

3. The *manner* of worſhip, and the *acceptable way* thereof, is here pointed out: *They ſhall worſhip the Lord in the holy mount at Jeruſalem;* that is, to *worſhip him in the beauty of holineſs*, Pſal. xxix. 2.; *i. e. In his holy temple*, or, *in his beautiful ſanctuary*; in a way honourable to him, which can only be in and through Jeſus Chriſt.

Now, for the further underſtanding of this, you would conſider, that Jeruſalem of old was the place of worſhip, *Whither the tribes went up, the tribes of the Lord to the teſtimony of Iſrael*, Pſal. cxxii. 3, 4. But now, under the New-teſtament diſpenſation, ſuch is the great goodneſs of God to us, he doth not now tye us to any place. See and read John iv. 20, 21. He doth not tye us to go to the father part of the nation to worſhip: no; the land is every where holy: wherever his *name is recorded*, there is a Jeruſalem, there is a Zion.

Again, conſider, that the *holy mount* at Jeruſalem, mount Zion largely taken, including mount Moriah, was the place of the temple, which was eminently typical of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. And as all the true worſhippers of God then were to worſhip at or toward them aterial temple (hence the expreſſion of *worſhipping at his holy hill*, Pſal. xcix. 9.; and *worſhiping toward his holy temple*, Pſal. v. 7. *In thy fear will I worſhip toward thy holy temple:* and thus, Pſal cxxxviii. 2.); ſo, to worſhip the Lord now, in the holy mount, is to worſhip God in Chriſt. And as to *aſcend into the hill of the Lord*, and to *ſtand in his holy place*, Pſal. xxiv. 3. thus to worſhip God in the holy mount at Jeruſalem, is, in the language of the New-teſtament, to *worſhip God in Chriſt*; in the Spirit of Chriſt, for aſſiſtance; and in the faith of the merit and righteouſneſs of Chriſt, for acceptance: for, *We are accepted in the Beloved*, Eph. i. 6. It is an *entrance with boldneſs into the holieſt by the blood of Jeſus*, Heb. x. 19. It is to have acceſs to God in our prayers and praiſes, and in the ordinances of the word and ſacrament of his own appointment and inſtitution; and *acceſs with boldneſs and confidence by the faith of him*, Eph. iii. 12. This is the ſame with that of David, *Bring me to thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacle: then will I go to the altar of God, to God my exceeding joy*, Pſal. xliii. 3, 4.

4. Here alſo is the *root* and *ſpring*, or the cauſe of this worſhip, implied in theſe words, *They ſhall come, and they ſhall worſhip*; importing, that faith is the internal principle that leads on the ſoul to religious duties and worſhip: for firſt *they ſhall come*, namely, by faith; and then *they ſhall worſhip. Without faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe God*, and to worſhip him acceptably. And importing alſo, that the power of the Spirit is the internal efficient cauſe of ſpiritual worſhip, ſtirring up and exciting the ſoul to it: for here is a double promiſe; firſt, *They ſhall come*; and then, *They ſhall worſhip*; which ſays, that not only, muſt the Spirit give us faith to come, but alſo grace to worſhip when we have come. One may be a believer in Chriſt that hath come to him, and yet out of caſe to worſhip the Lord in his holy mount, till the Spirit by his new breathing and influence raiſe up the dormant ſeed of grace; and, by his *blowing upon our garden, make the ſpices thereof flow out.* The ſame power that is firſt put forth in the mighty ſound of the great goſpel-trumpet, by virtue of that promiſe, *They ſhall come*, is neceſſary alſo to be put forth by virtue of that promiſe, *They ſhall worſhip.* Our coming to Chriſt believingly this day needs a powerful *ſhall be*, for that, *They ſhall come*; our communicating worthily to-morrow needs another powerful *ſhall be*, for that, *They ſhall worſhip.*—So much for this head, *They ſhall worſhip in his holy mount at Jeruſalem.* I come now,

VI. To the *ſixth* and laſt thing propoſed, which was, To draw ſome *inferences* for the *application*. And,

1*ſt*, By way of *information*. If it be ſo, as has been ſaid, hence,

1. We may ſee the *infinite mercy* of God toward poor periſhing ſinners, eſpecially theſe within the pale of the viſible chruch. Though they be *outcaſts*, by caſting out themſelves; yet he ſends the great trumpet of the goſpel to call them in. They are *ready to periſh* in their ſin and miſery; and behold, he here ſhews himſelf ready to pity, and ready to ſave them, ſaying, *To you, O men, do I call; and my voice is to the ſons of men. Incline your ear unto me; hear, and your ſoul ſhall live.*

2. Hence we may ſee what is the *work of miſters*, whom the Lord ſends forth, namely, to *blow the trumpet in Zion*, Joel ii. 1. There is a twofold trumpet they are to blow; the trumpet of the *law*, and the trumpet of the *goſpel*.

(1.) Sometimes they are called to put the terrible trumpet of the *law* to their mouth, to *tell Jacob their ſins, and Iſrael their tranſgreſſions*; to *cry aloud, and not ſpare*, Iſa. lviii. 1. They are neither to ſpare their pains, nor to ſpare their breath in blowing from Sinai, to ſhew ſinners both their ſinful and miſerable ſtate, and how they are upon the very brink of ruin, and ready to periſh. But then ſtill they are to preach the law with a view to the goſpel, and as a *ſchoolmaſter to lead them to Chriſt.*

(2.) Again they are called to blow the great *goſpel-trumpet* to theſe periſhing ſinners, proclaiming life, liberty, and ſalvation to them in a way of coming to Jeſus, as the *end of the law for righteouſneſs*, that the curſe of the law may be put to an end with reſpect to them; not that from henceforth they may be lawleſs, but that they may be conform to the law, as a rule: for, in coming to him, they come to *worſhip the Lord in his holy mount.* Thus, indeed, the true goſpel-miniſter preaches always Chriſt, whether it be the law or the goſpel that is in his

his mouth; and he brings in more honour to the law than all the legal preachers in the world with their moral harangues, and high encomiums upon moral virtue: for the gospel-minister preaches the law and its curse, to bring the soul to Christ, in whom the law gets full satisfaction and complete payment, as it is a covenant of works; and the sinner coming to him gets redemption from all the curses of it: and then he preaches the gospel of the grace of God in Christ, so as the sinner, being come to Christ, may come to his duty of right worship toward God, according to the direction of the law as a rule. He shews their perishing state, that they may come to Christ, and he calls them to come to Christ, that they may come to God in him, and worship the Lord in his holy mount.

Great skill then is requisite in blowing this great trumpet. It is true, some are qualified of the Lord for blowing more loud and awfully, like Boanerges, as *sons of thunder*; others for blowing more softly and sweetly, like Barnabas, as *sons of consolation*; and, indeed, *There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit*, 1 Cor. xii. 4. Some are qualified and set apart for one piece of the tabernacle-work, and some for another; some to be founders, and some to be, as it were, barrow-men in the work of the spiritual temple: some for this post and station, and some for the other. Let the great God be reverenced in all this; for it is he that qualifies and separates every one for his own proper work. If he call one and the same person, at different times, to different work; or, if he call out one to go forth and *blow an alarm*, with a terrible sound, and another to trumpet forth grace, and make the *people know the joyful sound*; there is need for each of them: let infinite wisdom be adored.

3. Hence we may see the *duty of people*, with reference to *ministers* and their *message*, when blowing the great gospel-trumpet; it is surely peoples duty, both to *pray* for them, and to *receive* their message, by *hearkening to the sound of the trumpet*.

On the one hand, it is their duty to *pray for poor ministers*, that they may blow the great trumpet with the breath of the Spirit; and preach the gospel in the *demonstration of the Spirit, and with power*, 1 Cor. ii. 4. *Brethren, pray for us*, says the apostle; pray that a *door of utterance may be given us*. Never was there a time wherein God's people had more need to pray for ministers: it is a day wherein it is much for them to hold their feet. There are grievous defections among the most part in Scotland, and these breaking out in judicatories, which we should lament over, and give our testimony against, as sometimes we essay to do: yea, there are sinful defects in testifying among these that desire to do so; and yet sin in not doing so much as they ought. But I say again, ministers had much need to be prayed for; and I have a word to say to you upon this head, not to offend you, but to deal plainly with you in the sight of the great God, whose trumpet I am honoured to put in my mouth. I see some offence is taken at some worthy ministers, whom you and I both, perhaps, reckon so; I mean, these that, upon the main, are known to be faithful, so far as their light and ability goes, and that have the seal of their ministry upon many souls, and whose ministry the Lord is still owning and blessing; when these do any thing that is amiss in your eyes, whether it be seemingly or really, I ask you, Whether you be more taken up in judging them, or in praying for them? As to *rash* judgment, there is nothing you are more cautioned against in God's word; and as to *praying* for ministers particularly, there is nothing more expressly commanded. Now, I ask you again, before God and conscience, Whether you are more taken up in judging them, or in praying for them? I shall suppose they are really left to some wrong step; but, if you have been neglecting to pray for them, perhaps that is the cause why God hath left them, and thereupon you turn your back upon them also and revile them; and so the poor men suffer both the rebukes of God, and the reproaches of men, for your sin in neglecting to pray for them: and therefore, hereupon I ask you again, Whether or not, before ever you be offended with them before the world, you are first displeased with yourself before God, and humble yourself before him, for your sinful neglect in praying and wrestling with God for them? If this be not your way, but, on the contrary, you be rashly disobliged at the poor honest ministers for the evil which your sin hath brought upon them; then I must tell you, in God's name, though you were as the signet on his right-hand, God will take his own time and way of restoring them, and rebuking you.

But again, as it is your duty to *pray* for ministers, so also to *receive their message*, and hearken to the sound of the trumpet in their mouth; and, indeed, if it be God's great trumpet that they blow, then surely not to listen to it, is to *stop your ears at the voice of the charmer*, like the deaf adder, and to *refuse him that speaketh from heaven*, which is a sin; how deep it runs, you may see, Heb. xii. 25. *See that ye refuse not him that speaketh: for if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven.*

4. Hence we may see, from this doctrine, what it is that makes the preaching of the gospel *effectual* to the salvation of perishing sinners, when the great gospel-trumpet is blown. It is not any virtue of this or that preacher; no; it is the *power of God* exerted according to the promise, that then *they shall come* and *they shall worship*. What is it that will make the dead sinner to believe savingly? It is the efficacy of this word, *They shall come*. What is it that will make the believer a worthy receiver at the Lord's table? It is the efficacy of this word, *They shall worship the Lord in his holy mount*. It is a day of power that is here promised to accompany the blowing of the great trumpet, which he makes the *rod of his strength*, and sends it *out of Zion*. The gospel is the *ministration of the Spirit*, which is received by the *hearing of faith*. This leads me to the next use we intend from the doctrine.

The *second* use, we make is for *examination*. You may try both your state and frame from this doctrine, in these following particulars, whether or not you be of these who, by the blowing of the great trumpet, have been made to *come* to Christ, and to *worship the Lord in his holy mount*. Examine by these two particulars, 1. If you have been made to *hear* the voice of God in the great trumpet of the gospel. 2. If thereupon

thereupon you have been made to *live*, ſo as to come and worſhip. Theſe two are the ſum of God's ſaving work comprehending all; *The hour cometh, when the dead ſhall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear ſhall live*, John v. 25.

1. Have you *heard* the voice of God in this great goſpel-trumpet? I aſk not if you have heard this or that *man* ſpeaking to you; but if you have heard *God* ſpeaking by the word to you, and heard it, *not as the word of man, but as the word of God.* More particularly, have you heard,

(1.) So as to be *convinced* of your Egyptian thraldom and Aſſyrian bondage; and found yourſelf to be an outcaſt wretch, a ſinner ready to periſh, whereas before you was ſleeping in your chains? Hath God's trumpet alarmed you, ſo as you have ſeen yourſelf lying under the curſe of the law, and put you in fear of everlaſting wrath and damnation, as one lying on the very brink of hell, and made you to cry, Oh! *What ſhall I do to be ſaved?*

(2.) Have you heard ſo as to be *awakened*, as it were, from among the dead, to ſee that life and ſalvation is to be had in the glorious IMMANUEL, Jeſus Chriſt, who is proclaimed a Saviour and Redeemer by the ſound of the goſpel-trumpet? There is a *ſeeing of the Son*, by a ſpiritual diſcerning, before there can be a *believing in him*, John vi. 40. Hath the great trumpet then ſo far rouzed and wakened you up, that you have got your eyes opened, not only to ſee the maſſy chain of ſpiritual captivity you were under unto ſin, Satan, and wrath; but alſo to ſee the Redeemer and Deliverer that is *come out of Zion*, to *turn away ungodlineſs from Jacob*, and that there is ſalvation in none other? Hath Chriſt, revealed to you, by the word, been thus revealed in you, ſo as you have ſeen and perceived him to be the glorious and only Saviour?

2. Have you not only been made to hear the ſound of the trumpet, thus wakening you out of your dead ſleep, to a ſenſe of ſin and ſight of the remedy; but, have you thereupon been made to *live? The dead ſhall hear his voice, and they that hear ſhall live.* Now, how may this life be tried? Why, the text mentions alſo two parts of this life; firſt, they ſhall *come;* and next, they ſhall *worſhip in his holy mount.*

(1.) Then, have you been made to *come;* that is, to believe in Jeſus, to fly for refuge to him, and to fly out of yourſelf, as having nothing but ſin and guilt, hell and miſery about you; to him, as having all for *wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification, and redemption?* Have you been brought under a ſweet neceſſity of coming to Chriſt, and reſolutely to throw yourſelf into his ſaving arms, ſaying, If I periſh, let me periſh there, where never one did? Have you found ſome ſecret drawing cord about your heart, making you reſtleſs till you came to Chriſt for reſt to your heart and conſcience? Faith is an *entering into this reſt*, Heb. iv. 3.

(2.) Have you hereupon been made to come and *worſhip in the holy mount;* to worſhip God in Chriſt with holy fear and reverence, coming with humble boldneſs to the throne of grace? Hath your faith wrought by love, and the love of Chriſt conſtrained you to ſeek and ſerve him in his temple, and ordinances of his appointment? And, is this holy place the place of your abode, deſiring ſtill to *aſcend to the hill of the Lord*, and to *ſtand in his holy place?* The ſum of this mark is, Are you brought to David's *one* thing? *One thing have I deſired of the Lord, and that will I ſeek after, that I may dwell in the houſe of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire into his temple*, Pſal. xxvii. 4.

Now, examine yourſelf by theſe plain marks; for if you know nothing leſs or more thereof, whatever be your good diſpoſition at the time, you are a ſtranger in Iſrael, and have no right to a communion-table; but, if you have the experience of theſe marks, then, whatever be the alterations of your frame, you may conclude you are in a ſafe ſtate, as well as ſometimes in a ſpiritual frame; and ſo have a right to the great goſpel-feaſt of the Lord's ſupper in the holy mount, and may venture to it in his name and ſtrength.

The *third* uſe, with which I ſhall cloſe, may be in a word of *exhortation*, eſpecially to all the ſinners here that are yet in a *loſt ſtate* and condition, *ready to periſh*, and like *outcaſts in the land of Egypt*: and we would blow the great trumpet in your hearing, and *he that hath ears to hear, let him hear.* Our preaching the goſpel to you, is the accompliſhment of one promiſe; *It ſhall come to paſs in that day, that the great trumpet ſhall be blown*: and we are encouraged to this work by the promiſes annexed to it, concerning outcaſt ſinners, ready to periſh, *They ſhall come, and they ſhall worſhip.* Why then, in the name of the great King, whoſe unworthy herald I am, I do, as it were, by ſound of trumpet, proclaim life, to dead ſinners here; and liberty, to you captive ſinners; pardon and indemnity, to guilty rebellious ſinners; and purifying grace, to filthy polluted ſinners; and all to be had freely: *Whoſoever will, let him come and take of theſe waters of life freely.* Will you give a hearing to our great Lord, whoſe treaſure is put into earthen veſſels, and whoſe voice ſounds through earthen trumpets: for God's ſake, look over the poor unworthy inſtrument; little matter who blow the trumpet, if the breath of the Spirit convey the ſound into your heart. Look over the head of the poor ſervant; *The Maſter calls you*, even you that are afar off, and farer from God than Egypt and Aſſyria are from you; yet the ſound of the trumpet reaches to you.

What is your name, man, woman? Surely your name is in this text, if you be a *ſinner, ready to periſh.* "Alas! may ſome ſay, I am ſo ready to periſh, that I am ready to give over all duties of religion, and ready to doubt of all revealed religion, and of the very being of God, and truth of the ſcriptures; I am ready to blaſpheme, and to ſay, God is a liar. Oh! ſays another, I am ready to raze the foundation of all that ever was done in me, and ready to conclude, that now it is impoſſible I can be ſaved." Say on, ſoul; and tell me more in what reſpects you are ready to periſh. "Oh! ſay you, I am ready to pine away in my iniquity, and live in rebellion all my days, ſuch is the power of my corruption; yea, I am ready through fear and dread, and terrible temptations, to kill, deſtroy, and put away myſelf; and, *While I ſuffer the terrors of God, I am diſtracted:* I am ready to think, that the day of grace is paſt, and that I am a caſt-away." Are you an outcaſt, ready to periſh in the wilderneſs of darkneſs, ignorance, and confuſion? Are you an outcaſt,

outcaſt, ready to periſh in a priſon of unbelief, atheiſm, enmity, and hard bound with all the chains of hell about you? Well, whatever priſon you be into, whatever outcaſt ſtate you be into, and in whatever reſpect you are ready to periſh, yet, O hear the ſound of the great trumpet, ſaying, Come, ye that are outcaſt ſinners; come all ye that are ready to periſh; come to the great King, whoſe heralds we are; come to the great Saviour and Redeemer: you will never *worſhip* acceptably *in his holy mount*, till firſt you come; you will never communicate worthily, till firſt you come to Chriſt. O come while the trumpet ſounds, come and take his helping hand, who comes to *ſeek and ſave* you *that are loſt*. He offers to ſave you fully, to ſave you freely, to ſave you everlaſtingly. Since you cannot ſave yourſelf, will you welcome a Saviour? O what diſobliges you at him, who is as ready to ſave, as you are ready to periſh; and who ſays, *Welcome* to the worſt of you all? Young ſinner, old ſinner, great ſinner, chief of ſinners, come while the trumpet ſounds.

The ſecond coming of Chriſt to judgment is haſting on, and then the *trumpet ſhall ſound, and the dead ſhall ariſe*; dead bodies will then riſe and come to the Judge at the ſound of the laſt trumpet. But now the great goſpel-trumpet calls dead ſouls to riſe and come to the Saviour; *The dead ſhall hear the voice of the Son of man, and they that hear ſhall live.* Whenever dead bodies hear the laſt trumpet, they ſhall live; and whenever dead ſouls now hear the voice of the Son of God, in the great goſpel-trumpet, they ſhall live alſo.

"Alas! ſay you, I do not find a quickening power accompanying the word, and raiſing my ſoul to life." Why, what is the reaſon of that? Surely, *where the voice of a king is, there is power*, Eccleſ. viii. 4. And where the word, the voice of King Jeſus is heard, there is power. Perhaps, you are hearing the word delivered by us as the word of a man, and not as it is indeed the word of God, which would work effectually. As long as you hear but the voice of a man ſpeaking to you, there is no power, virtue, or efficacy: but, O tell me, do you hear the voice of the Son of God through this trumpet of man's voice? For we ſpeak to you in his name, whoſe name is *the God that quickens the dead, and calls things that be not, as though they were.* O then tell me, do you hear his voice, a voice that goes not into your ear only, but into your heart? Is the ſound of God's trumpet going in-through and out-through your heart? Then, hope, there is ſome power; and if you be hearing his powerful voice, then riſe, *the Maſter calls you.* Riſe, dead Lazarus; riſe, ſtupid ſoul, ye that are as ſtupid as the earth beneath your feet. *O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord.* The laſt trumpet will not be more powerful, to make the earth and ſea give up their dead bodies, than this great goſpel-trumpet is powerful to raiſe dead ſouls, if the Lord by the breathing of his Spirit be blowing it, and if you be hearing his voice; *They that hear ſhall live.* I have no more to ſay; and I have ſaid nothing that will be heard, unleſs he ſay the word. Riſe and live; riſe and come to Jeſus, and in this way *come and worſhip in his holy mount.*——May the Lord himſelf ſpeak powerfully to you.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

THE

THE INDEX for the First VOLUME.

A

ABRAHAM, saw Christ's day afar off, page 276. his difficulties in crediting the promise of his having a son in his old-age, 383. his trials in being ordered to sacrifice his son, 386. his faith delineated, 410.

Absence, sensible presence, sudden absence, 739. remarks concerning the finding and missing the presence of God, 741. in what respects he may absent from his people, 742. he may absent from them in duties, frames, and their best cases, *ibid.* they may miss him in their worst cases, *viz.* the time of confusion, persecution, temptation, and affliction, 743. they may lose him in the ordinances, instruments, societies, and places where they have formerly found him, *ibid.* eight reasons assigned of this dispensation, 743. the duty of such pointed out, 745.

Access to the holy of holies, how obtained, 8, 12. who are intitled to this privilege, 632. what obligations it lays them under, 633. what they are admitted to see there, *ibid.* who have been admitted, 636. what effect this access has upon those who are admitted, *ibid.*

Act, the various acts of faith as it is a receiving Christ, 193. See *Faith, Receiving Christ, Walking in Christ.*

Acts of the church, some of them unscriptural and unwarrantable, 70, 149, 322, 454, 631, 648, 661, 701. See *Assembly.*

Adam, the covenant of works made with him and his seed, 49. stood as a public and federal head to all his posterity, 50.

Addresses, to the enemies and lovers of the Lamb, 660, 661. to these who doubt if their time has been a time of love, 736. their duty pointed out, *ibid.* to such who are assured their time has been a time of love, 737. how these ought to conduct themselves, *ibid.* to these who have enjoyed God's presence, 745. to such who know nothing of it, 746. to these who never yet came to Christ, 768. to such who are coming, *ibid.* to these who know something of his doings, 785. to such who know nothing of them, and are unconcerned thereat, 786. See *Exhortations.*

Adherence to, and perseverance in, the faith necessary, 669.

Admiration, the wonders of redeeming love, considered in its height, freedom, power, and wisdom, ground of admiration, 718. See *Love, Love of God.*

Adolphus Clarebachius, a martyr, some of his last words recorded, 782.

Advice to such who never met with a time of love, 719. to those who have enjoyed a time of love, 733.

Affliction, what ground the Lord's people have to sing when they meet with affliction, 100. the difference between the afflictions of the godly and the wicked, 720. the godly may lay their account with such afflictions as the wicked meet with, 721. what love-designs he may be carrying on by them, *ibid.* what love appears in them, *ibid.* what instructions we ought to learn from them, 722. their suffering and afflicted circumstances not inconsistent with his love, 723. who they are, whose afflicted circumstances are inconsistent with the love of God, 724. evidences of those whose time of affliction has not been a time of love, 725. of those whose time has been a time of love, *ibid.* evinced from the gracious effects of them, *ibid.* from the particular usefulness of them, 727. eight particular afflicting cases of the saints mentioned, and all shewn to be a time of love, 730, 731. the time of love ought to be remembered in all afflicting and distressing times, 737. See *Trouble.*

Age, how to know if the period of middle-age, and old-age has been a time of love, 727, 728.

Agricolaus, deputy to Licinius, a wicked persecutor of the Christians in the third century, 349.

Amphilochius, bishop of Iconium, lays a stratagem, in order to induce Theodosius, the emperor, to revoke his edict in favours of the Arians, and succeeds therein, 772.

Anger, seeming anger and wrath-like dispensations may notwithstanding be a time of love, 720. in what respect they may be so, *ibid.* what love-designs may be carrying on by these wrath-like dispensations, 721. what love is there in these dispensations, *ibid.* what instructive lessons we should learn from them, 722.

Anointing, of Christ's anointing, 342. the measure, duration, and efficacy thereof, 344.

Antinomianism, the friends to the doctrine of grace falsely charged with it, and the unjustness thereof refuted, 70, 149, 150, 178, 190.

Apostacy, unbelief the mother of it, 243. receiving Christ the best antidote against it, 220. an evidence of perilous times, 666.

Appearances of God in behalf of his church and people, eight remarkable instances thereof, 678.

Application, as there is a particular application of the law-threatening, so there must be of the gospel-promise, 402, 685.

Apprehensions of God, Satan tempts to unworthy ones, 771. how to conceive aright of him, *ibid.*

Approach, what kind of an approach Christ made to God as our Surety, 172 See *Engagement.* His joyful approach chearfully welcomed by the church, 704.

Appropriation, in the nature of faith, 52, 60, 193, — 195, 218, 221, 295, 296, 324, 360, 376, 381, 394, 402, 491, 569, 685.

Arguments, six different ones which faith makes use of with God, 250.

Arianism, robs Christ of his glory, 322. prevailing much in Britain, 322, 347, 793. is damnable blasphemy, 454. what is the best antidote against it, 582.

Arminians, maintain universal redemption, 60. that God loves his people on account of foreseen faith, 77. make the efficacy of the gospel to depend upon man's free-will, 793.

Assembly, the conduct of the general assembly, concerning the Marrow of Modern Divinity, laid open, 70, 149. concerning Professor Simson's affair, 322, 454. concerning patronage in the year 1732. 631, 648, 670. concerning the process carried on against Mr. Ebenezer Erskine, and his adherents, 661. make unscriptural and unwarrantable acts and terms of communion, 701. indulge Arians and blasphemers, destroy Reformation-principles, and injure the favourites of heaven, *ibid.*

Assent, a particular and cordial assent given to the word of God, 685.

Assurance, the difference between fiducial and evidential assurance, 194, 195, 295. the difference between the assurance of faith and the assurance of sense, 394.

Atheism, from whence its strength arises, 516.

Attributes, the harmony of the divine attributes displayed, 112. what these attributes are, 113. their several claims, 114, 115. when and where they met, 116, — 118. what kind of a meeting they had, 118, — 120. for what reasons they met together, 120, — 124. how they are glorified, 176, 369. how dishonoured by unbelief, 241. in what respects expressive of the name of God, 592.

Augustine, a quotation from him concerning the tyranny of sin, 503.

Authority, the fountain of all ministerial authority to preach the gospel and administer the sacraments, 559.

B.

BAPTISM, it seals to the visible church, a common and general right to God's covenant, 477.

Bar, all mankind, in their lapsed state, barred out from the presence of God by a threefold bar, 170. these bars broken by Christ, *ibid.*

Battle, God will not leave his own in their most extreme need and last battle, 717.

Beasts, what spiritual beasts are many times apt to increase upon the believer, 487.

Beginners in religion have sometimes to battle with the devil, 766, 767.

Believer, his freedom from the law, as a covenant of works, 59. what place his obedience hath in the covenant of grace, *ibid.* what motives should influence his obedience, 59, 85. and his taking the law out of the hand of a Mediator, 60. hath all things in Christ, *ibid.* his love to Christ described from the nature, kinds, degrees, dimensions properties, effects, object, and grounds of it, 79, 83. his character and dignity, as a receiver of Christ, delineated, 188.

Believers, their comfortable and happy state, 36, 392. wear a black and white garment, 107. their happiness, *ibid.* sundry marks of true ones, 109, 126. what they have in Christ, 146. have much ado with him, 220. under no obligation to obey the law as in the hand of God Creator, out of Christ, 222. nor under the yoke of the law, as a covenant, *ibid.* have a staff to lean unto in their journey, 232. the seasons of their progressive gathering to Shiloh, 306. children of the promise as Isaac was, 369. what their being children of the promise supposes, *ibid.* the nature of the promise of which they are children, opened up, 370. See *Promise.* Their happy state, 392. their particular duty, *viz.* to apply the promise in every case, 392, 393. how they differ from unbelievers, 396. liberated from the legal power of sin and legal pennance of works, 420. freed both from the command and curse of the law, 432. their life many times rather a life of unbelief than faith, 434. what grounds of consolation they have, 464. what spiritual beasts are many times like to increase upon them, 487. their multiplied and various experiences, 483, 484, 485. and the reason of them, 490. where their strength lies, 490. their ΕΠΙΝΙΚΙΟΝ, or song of triumph and victory, 496. in what respects freed from the strength of sin, though sensible of the prevalency of it, 529. the duty of those who are delivered from the law as a covenant, 532. their obligations to Christ, 537. what the strength of sin, that still remains with them while here, is, 537. and what it serves for, *ibid.* what it excites to, 538. under no obligation to the penal sanction of the law by their new sins, 432, 541. how they ought to walk, 585. what respect they have to God's covenant of grace and promise, 681. their happiness in that God hath a great respect for them, 682. they have the begun possession of heaven while here, by union to Christ, and communion with him, 697. will never be left of God, 697, 698. may be assured that God will never leave them till he has performed his word to them, 698, 699. the most happy persons, though seemingly the most miserable, 700. ought to be joyful in the promise and fruitful in the work of faith, 703. known by their holy desire, 731. mount up with wings as an eagle, 748. what these wings are wherewith they mount up, 749. the things wherein they do not mount up, 750. what these things are wherein they do ascend, *ibid.* the particular seasons hereof, 751. the manner in which this is done, 752. the reasons of it, *ibid.* what believers have above, 753. evidences of mounting believers, *ibid.* a genuine mark of true ones, 768. what reason they have to be humble and long for heaven, 783.

Bethel, the place where God signally appeared to Jacob, and gave him a glorious interview with himself, 690. who are thus privileged, 691. what is to be understood by Bethel-visits, *ibid.* they include a manifestation of his glory and a communication of his mind, *ibid.* are excluded from no place, may be when not sensibly known, usually quicken the soul, and fill it with a holy awe of God, 692. the ordinary circumstances attending such visits, *ibid.* many dark days and dismal nights may follow upon these Bethel-discoveries, 693. several of these condescended upon, *ibid.* how God speaks to his people, when they have a Bethel-visit of him, 695. the manner how he accomplishes what he hath spoken to them, *ibid.* when he will

will do what he hath ſpoken, 696. in what reſpects he may be ſaid to leave them, and wherein he will not leave them, 697, 698. thereaſonsofthis a ſſigned, 698, 699.
Blaſphemy, it is blaſphemy for any to affirm they are believers in Chriſt, and yet not lovers of God, 86. Satan tempts to commit it, 769. how this ought to be repelled, *ibid.*
Bleſſings, what perſons are the greateſt to a church or nation, 700. all ſpiritual bleſſings are from God, thro' the mediation of the Lamb, 757. are all everlaſting, *ibid.* an enumeration of ſome of them which are ſo, *ibid.* ſpiritual bleſſings compared to water, 758. the giving of them a part of Chriſt's royalty, 759. built upon a ſure bottom, 760.
Blood, the nature of Chriſt's blood ſhed by the ſword of juſtice, 33. is a fountain for cleanſing, *ibid.* the qualities of that blood, *ibid.*
Bond, the beſt bond; or, the ſureſt engagement, 167. See *Engagement.*
Breathings, what the eſtabliſhing breathings of the Spirit are, 676.
Bridegroom, Chriſt the bridegroom, and believers the bride, 1. See *Match, Marriage.*
Bulwarks, what bulwarks are uſed in beſieging the church, 641. what bulwarks are uſed againſt theſe who are without Chriſt, 650. See *City.*
Burgeſs, (Mr. Antony) a ſaying of his concerning idolatry, 228.

C

CALAMITY, the Lord's people have all a refuge in the time thereof, 729. what that refuge is, *ibid.*
Call, who are included in the goſpel-call, 286.
Calumny caſt upon the goſpel, a cauſe why people think ſo little of Chriſt, 358.
Camel, going through the eye of a needle, the ſignification thereof, 192.
Campbell, (profeſſor in St. Andrews) his ſentiments of the laws of nature, 671.
Canaan, the heavenly Canaan viewed in its types, epithets, parts, and properties, 473. what enemies and oppoſitions are in the way to it, 474. evidences of thoſe who are bound for it, 491.
Caſes, a variety of them condeſcended upon, and how the promiſe is adapted to them, 685, — 689. eight perplexing caſes of the ſaints mentioned, and all ſhewn to be conſiſtent with love, 730, 731. See *Conſcience.*
Catechiſm, *What think ye of Chriſt?* the main queſtion of the Chriſtian catechiſm, 336. the import of the queſtion opened up, 340, —352. Ten reaſons aſſigned, why it is the main queſtion, 352, —354. See *Queſtion.*
Cauſality, our beſt works have no cauſality in obtaining life, 222.
Caution, ſeveral cautions concerning the right uſe and application of the promiſe, 421. how the believer is to manage his ſpiritual enemies, 488. what ſentiments to entertain concerning the law, *&c.* 523. God's ſaving for his name's ſake, yields no encouragement to ſin, 598.
Caveats to fortify the Chriſtian againſt ſwerving from the truth, 187.
Centre, the Lamb is the centre of all the glory that ſurrounds the throne, 655.
Ceremonies, approving of aboliſhed ceremonies inconſiſtent with walking in Chriſt the ſubſtance, 207.
Chamber, a ſix-fold chamber in Chriſt for gathering his people into, 287.
Chaſtiſements of the godly, wherein they differ from the afflictions of the wicked, 720. what love appears in them, 721. what leſſons we ſhould receive from them, and how we ought to behave under them, 722. See *Afflictions.*
Children, whoſe children unbelievers are, 426.
Children of God, where their ſafety lies, 700.
Children of promiſe brought forth, and deſcribed, 367. the nature of the promiſe opened up, 370. their character, or, in what reſpects believers are the children of the promiſe, 378. after what manner they become ſo, 380. the compariſon ſtated, and the parallel run in ten particulars, between them and Iſaac, evincing that they are, as he was, children of the promiſe, 382. The reaſons why the promiſe hath ſuch prolific virtue for begetting children to God, 386. why God will have his children to be ſo by the promiſe, 887. why them, and them only to be ſo, 389. all the children of promiſe freed from the law, 391. wherein the children of promiſe and the children of the bond-woman differ, 403. evidences of the children of promiſe, 405. what the children of promiſe are freed from, 420. whoſe children the children of promiſe are, 428. See *Promiſe.*
Chriſt, God's fellow, 22. and in what reſpect he is ſo, 23. why he behoved to be ſo, 24. He is the man that is his fellow, and what kind of a man he became, 25. why our Redeemer muſt be a man, *ibid.* what need there was for his being both God and man in one perſon, 26. He is a ſhepherd, and what kind of a ſhepherd he is, *ibid.* why the Lord of hoſts calls him his ſhepherd, 27. the ſword of juſtice awaked againſt him, 28. the qualities of that ſword, *ibid.* the manner of its awaking, 30. the ſpecial hand Jehovah had in its awaking, 31. the reaſons why it did awake, *ibid.* the qualities of the blood ſhed by it, 33.
Chriſt the people's covenant, 47. called of God to be ſo, and given to the people as ſuch, 48. remarks concerning the covenant in general, 49. that the covenant of works was broken, and the covenant of grace provided, *ibid.* there is an oneneſs and identity betwixt the covenant of grace, as made with Chriſt, and as made with us in him, 50. Chriſt is the centre, in whom all the lines of the covenant meet, *ibid.* how Chriſt is the covenant, and in what reſpects he bears that name, 51. the covenant is radically, relatively, ſubſtantially, eminently, meritoriouſly, and efficaciouſly in him, *ibid.* and ſo called the Mediator, Meſſenger, Witneſs, Surety, Servant, and Performer thereof, *ibid.* for whoſe benefit he is a covenant, 52. denominated from their more general name, the people; from their more ſpecial name, Gentiles, dark and blind, bound and impriſoned, 53, 54. by what authority Chriſt is the covenant of the people, 55. ordained thereto of the Father, *ibid.* the import of the Father's ordaining him, and himſelf as ordained, *ibid.* the glorious manner of the ordination, and what is implied therein both negatively and poſitively, 55, 56. the gracious motive, ground, and reaſon of this ordination, 57. the reaſons why he is given for a covenant of the people, *ibid.* given to all in the goſpel-offer, and to ſome in actual poſſeſſion, *ibid.* the attributes of God glorified by Chriſt's being given for a covenant, 58. the duty of all the people to take hold of God's covenant, 63. conſiderations inforcing this, 64, 65.
Chriſt, the meeting-place of the divine attributes, 116. a very wonderful perſon, 124, 169. willingly approached to God in the work of our redemption, 168. The great duty of receiving Chriſt and walking in him, opened, 186. receiving him, and believing in him, equivalent terms, 188. how faith acts when it receives Chriſt, *ibid.* to what kind of perſons Chriſt is offered in the goſpel, 189. upon what grounds, 190. for what end, 191. what this act of receiving Chriſt conſiſts in, 193. the qualities of this act, 193, 205. the object of it, 195. conſidered doctrinally and perſonally, *ibid.* the capacities in which the object is received, 197, 206, 207, 208. what is received when Chriſt is received, 217, 239. What of God is in him, 237, 328. how maltreated by unbelief, 242. what kind of a remedy he is to ſinners, 243. See *Receiving, Walking.*
Chriſt, how Shiloh ſignifies Chriſt, and of the gathering of the people to him, 276, 277. what place there is in Chriſt for them, 287. what excellent things are in him to induce a gathering to him, 314. what pieces of work he performed for them, 316. what relation he ſtands in to them, and what he is ſent to be to them, 329. and what kind of a houſe he is for them, 331. what place there is in him for gathering to him, 332. See *Shiloh, Gathering.*
Chriſt, the main queſtion of the Chriſtian catechiſm, *What think ye of Chriſt?* 336. the import of the queſtion opened up, by conſidering it objectively, actively, formally, and ſubjectively, 340, — 352. ten reaſons aſſigned why it is the leading queſtion in the Chriſtian catechiſm, 352, 353, 354. See *Queſtion.*
Chriſt, the ſum of all Chriſtian knowledge is depoſited in him, 354. Though Arians think nothing of his Godhead, Arminians of the power and freedom of his grace, Papiſts of the merit and imputation of his righteouſneſs, Socinians of the ſacrifice of his death, Quakers of his word, Atheiſts of his Spirit, Deiſts of his revelations, 357. reaſons why the world think ſo little of Chriſt, *ibid.* what right thoughts of Chriſt are, 359. what it is in and about Chriſt our thoughts ſhould go out upon, 340, —344. 361, —366. the duty of thoſe who have right thoughts of him, 367. evidences of thoſe who have true love to Chriſt, 87, —90. 413. who are partakers of Chriſt by the promiſe, in his death, life, righteouſneſs, ſtrength, boldneſs, 415.
Chriſt, the ſaving ſight; or a view of God in Chriſt, 440. of the oneneſs betwixt him and the Father, 441. that there is ſuch an oneneſs, proven, 442 negatively, wherein this oneneſs doth not conſiſt, *ibid.* poſitively, wherein it doth conſiſt, *ibid.* ten remarks opening up the nature of ſeeing Chriſt, 443. in what capacity Chriſt is to be conſidered when we ſee the Father in him, 447. in what reſpects they who ſee Chriſt ſee the Father, 448. in what manner the Father is ſeen in Chriſt, 451. reaſons why the Father is ſeen in Chriſt, 452. the danger of denying him, and how fearfully he was humbled, 454. the excellency of Chriſt in being one with the Father, 455. his mediatory actings infinitely valuable, his infinite ability to ſave, not alone in the work of redemption, his glorious excellency in being adorned with all divine perfections and one with the Father, 455. his preciouſneſs, 457. an honour to be conformed to him, 458. dangerous to ſlight him, 459. marks to know if we have ſeen this great ſight, 460, —468. is the true and eternal God, 509. his glorious dignity and everlaſting excellency, 560. all honour and pre eminence to be aſcribed to him, becauſe it is God's great deſign to exalt him, *ibid.* compared to all things, and brought off with ſuperior excellency, 561. his followers have no reaſon to be aſhamed of him, *ibid.* the nature of his kingdom, 562. where he is to be ſeen, 563. who are his enemies, 563. what it is to come to him, 567. to whom his power is beneficial, 569. how he manifeſts himſelf to ſinners, 574. the means thereof, *ibid.* the manner of the manifeſtation, 575. the effects of it, 575. the reaſons of it, 580. makes a great and marvellous change, 583. how it may be known, *ibid.*
Chriſt, all things given into his hand, 601. the truth hereof demonſtrated, 614. ſome of theſe all things mentioned, 603. the import of the expreſſion, 604. the advantage of having all things in his hand, and what we may be ſure ſhall be effectuated, in conſequence thereof, 609. how precious he ſhould be to us on this account, *ibid.* the miſery of theſe who want him, and the happineſs of theſe who have him, *ibid.* the beauty of this diſpoſure of all things in his hand, evinced, 615. the extent of this ſtore enquired into, 617. the manner how all things are in his hand, 620. motives and conſiderations ariſing from this truth, 621. ſuitable directions offered, 623. repreſented as a Lamb in the midſt of the throne, 651. his enemies have ground to be afraid, 657. what kind of a ſeat he is to the ſoul, 676.
Chriſt's joyful approach chearfully welcomed by the church's echo of faith, 704. a fourfold coming, *viz.* in the fleſh, in the clouds, in the word, and in the Spirit, joyful both to him and them, 705. what makes his coming joyful to him, 706. what makes his coming joyful to his people, 707. what expreſſions of joy are imported in theſe words, *Lo, I come! Behold, he cometh!* 708. whence this conjunction of joys proceed, 709. evidences of his having come joyfully to his people, 711. on what account they may expect a meeting with him, 713. in what capacity they ought to give way to him, 722. what Chriſt is in himſelf, conſidered either in his natures, divine and human; or, in his perſon, *viz.* the union of theſe two natures, 734. what he is to God, particularly as his darling and repreſentative, *ibid.* what he is to ſinners, eſpecially the relation he ſtands in to them, what he has done for them, and ſtill doing, 735. has the fulneſs of the Godhead dwelling in him, 759. this fulneſs is a communicative fulneſs, *ibid.* the import of coming to him, 766. he is to be conſidered and honoured in his threefold office, of King, Prieſt, and Prophet, 772. when it may be ſaid, in a ſpiritual ſenſe, that he ſtoops down and waſhes his diſciples feet, 784. the import of coming to him, and the capacity

we

we are to view him in, when we come, 790. by what means gathered to him, *viz.* the blowing the great trumpet of the everlasting gospel, 791. the efficacy of these means, 793.
Christians, wherein the being and well-being of a Christian consists, 225. their walk laid open, 256, 259. the properties of the way, 260,—266. the excellency of it, 266. may grow evangelically, when they do not grow morally, 437. have no ground to be ashamed of a crucified Christ, 656. mount up with wings as an eagle, 748. what these wings are, 749. the things wherein they do not mount up, 750. what these things are wherein they do mount up, *ibid.* the particular seasons when they mount up, 751. the manner in which they mount up, 752. the reasons of it, *ibid.* evidences of these who are mounting up, 753.
Chrysostom, a saying of his, 325.
Church, order and stedfastness in the faith, denote the good constitution and temperament of a right church, 187. the judgment of the church of Scotland to be gathered from her standards, not from particular acts relative to doctrine, 224. The church militant and triumphant, the gathering places of the saints, 288. reforming, covenanting, confessing, suffering, and backsliding times, have been gathering times in the church, 302. Visible church, their privilege, 489. the invisible church, their special privilege, *ibid.* not safe to be without the church of God, 634. The church compared to a little city, 640. both besieged and delivered, 641, 642. her despicable case and dangerous circumstances, 646. who disturb her peace and destroy her foundations, 647. quite safe, because the Lamb is in the midst of the throne, 656. where her strength lies, 663. how dangerous her case, when not stedfast in the faith, 676. who are the greatest blessings to her, 700. the different state of the church visible and invisible, *ibid.* chearfully welcomes the Saviour's joyful approach, 704. when the Lord is absent from her all goes into confusion, 707. what would make happy days with her, 761. need not expect to be exempted from clouds of darkness, 783. the scattered church of Israel shall be gathered again to Jerusalem, 787. from what place, in what manner, by what means, and for what end, *ibid.*
Circumstances, the sinning circumstances of God's people, not inconsistent with his complacential love, 722. who these persons are whose sinning circumstances are inconsistent with his love, 723. the suffering and afflicted circumstances of the Lord's people not inconsistent with his love, *ibid.* who they are whose afflicted circumstances are inconsistent with his love, 724.
Citizens, their ingratitude and proneness to forget their deliverer, 645. the nature, object, universality, and reasons of this forgetfulness, *ibid.*
City, the little city besieged, and delivered, 639. Remarks, shewing in what respects the church is compared to a city, and a little city, 640. why to a city of men, and few men in it, 641. of the great siege laid against it, *ibid.* who the great King is, that besieges the city, and what bulwarks he uses, 641, 642. the deliverance of the city, and the raising of the siege, 642, the deliverer described, in his humanity, divinity, humility, destination, *ibid.* how the deliverance is effected, 643. wherein the matter of this great work consisted, *ibid.* the manner how it was brought about, 644. the ingratitude of the citizens, 645, 648.
Clarebachius, his last words when brought to the stake to be burnt, 782.
Clouds, what clouds are gathering in our sky, 326. Christ's coming in the clouds both joyful to him and his people, 706. clouds and darkness befal both the church and people of God in this world, 783.
Coloss, the church of the Colossians commended for their stedfastness in the faith, 187.
Combination and conjunction of joys, between Christ and his people, 704. whence these arise, 709. See *Joys.*
Comer's conflict: or, the beginner's battle with the devil, when essaying to come to Christ, by faith, 766, wherein this conflict consists, 767. an evidence of a true comer, 768.
Comfort to believers who praise God, 108. who have seen the glory and harmonious meeting of the divine attributes, 127. to those who are on the field of battle with their spiritual enemies, 494. to these who see all power in heaven and earth in Christ, 564. to the lovers of the Lamb, 661. to the mounting Christian, 754.
Commands of God, a child of God acknowleges himself a breaker of them all, 407. Sin is a transgression of all the commands, 498.
Commendations of Christ, what gives rise to them, 572. the matter of them, 577. the manner of them, 578. how this disposition may be known, 583. with what temper of soul we are to commend him, 587.
Commission of sin, Satan tempts thereto, 771. considerations to fortify against this, *ibid.*
Communicants, who are worthy and who unworthy communicants, 274. marks and characters of worthy ones, 657, 762.
Communion, the foundation of all true communion with God, 125. what is imported in having communion and converse with God, 740. includes his presence, vicinity, and amity, *ibid.* mutual intimation, commendation, counsels, confidence, care, assurances, and dedication the result of it, 741. evidences of those who enjoy communion with him, 744.
Communion-day, what would make a sweet and agreeable one, 710.
Communion-work, what is a fit and proper exercise before it, 685.
Comparison, Christ excells every thing he is compared to, 359.
Conformity, what it is of Christ the believer is to walk in conformity unto, 203.
Congregation, the happy congregation, 276. See *Shiloh.*
Conjunction and combination of joys between the Saviour and his people, 704. whence this proceeds, 709. See *Joys*
Connexion, between receiving Christ and walking in him, 213. the reasons of this order, why Christ must be first received and then walked in, 215.
Conqueror, the conqueror of Israel's enemies described, from his name Jehovah and his relation to them, 474. the sole vanquisher of their enemies, 485.
Conquest, the gradual conquest; or, heaven won by little and little, 471. seven nations that must be conquered before heaven be obtained, 474. and four terrible kings must be subdued, 475. The conqueror of these nations and kings described from his name and relation, 476. the import of this relation, 478. the manner of the conquest, *viz.* powerfully and effectually, visibly and remarkably, and the import of both, 479.; gradually, and the meaning of his putting them out by *little and little*, 480. by what steps and degrees the conquest is carried on, both by Israel's Captain, in his own person, and by him in his soldiers, 481. the different fields they are led through, *ibid.* the warfare carried on by little and little, till the day of death, 483. the sad experiences believers have of the enemy's making dreadful sallies and successful excursions upon them, *ibid.* what sweet experiences they have of fresh succours and supplies from heaven, whereby the enemy is driven out and vanquished, 484. the reasons why the conquest is obtained alone by Israel's Captain, and why he vanquishes the enemies gradually, and not all at once, 485. what beasts would increase upon them if it were not so, 487. evidences of those who have commenced war with the nations, 491. See *Nations.*
Conscience, not pacified with inward graces and good qualifications, nor by outward duties, 527.
Conscience, several cases of conscience, concerning the absolute and conditional promises, stated and answered, 375. several other cases stated and solved, 381. concerning believing the promise, 382. Fifteen cases concerning the right use, improvement, and application of the promise propounded, and judiciously answered, 422. How Christ is made and can be a blessing, when God made him to be sin and a curse for us, answered, 468. Concerning coming to God and embracing Christ, 510. What resisting of sin is consistent with the dominion of it; and what prevalency of it, with being freed from the strength thereof, 528.
Consolation, to believers to whom the vail of the temple is rent, 18.
Contrast, betwixt the law, the gospel, and faith, 377.
Conversation, a gospel one commended, 751.
Conversion, the saints need to be oftner converted than at first, 490. in itself an inward miracle, 508.
Conviction, to the ungodly, 464. to those that are at peace with sinful nations of lusts, 493.
Convictions, when the Lord brings a person to embrace the offer of the gospel he causes him to pass under three convictions, 191. the difference between the convictions of the Spirit and the temptations of Satan, 767, 768.
Coronation, Christ's two coronation-days, 557.
Counsel, to those that are in league with their spiritual enemies, 493. and to those that are engaged in battle against them, 495. to the hovering soul, whether sinner or saint, 755.
Course of sin, the danger thereof, 675.
Covenant of works, originally made with the first Adam and his seed, and consisted of a precept, promise, and a sanction, 49. broken and cannot save us, *ibid.* four things of principal moment in it, *viz.* the tenor, the breach, our concern in it, and fatal effects of the breach of it, *ibid.* the difference between the covenant of works and grace, 61, 85, 634. the precept, promise, and penalty of it, 134, 135, 148, 160. not to be blended with the covenant of grace, 221. The covenant of works allegorically compared to Ishmael, 368. the security of it, 397. all unbelievers under the commanding power of it, 539.
Covenant of grace, what is, and what is not the condition thereof, 36. covenant of grace may be considered either in its original transaction from eternity, or in its actual manifestation in time, 49. none fit to perform the condition of it, but Christ, 50. how the grace of God is manifested in this covenant, *ibid.* an oneness betwixt its being made with Christ, and us in him, being in one and the same covenant, *ibid.* all the blessings of it first promised to him, and then to us in him, because he is the centre in whom all the lines of it meet, *ibid.* how Christ is the covenant, and in what respects he bears that name, 51. he is so radically, relatively, substantially, eminently, meritoriously, and efficaciously, 51, 52. and therefore, called, Mediator, Messenger, Witness, Surety, Servant, and Performer of it, *ibid.* For whom Christ is a covenant, *viz.* the people, 52. there are two copies of this covenant or charter, the original recorded in heaven, with all the names of the church invisible in it; and the extract of it writ in the Bible, *ibid.* for whom Christ was given for a covenant, 53. ordained of the Father to be so, 55. the glorious manner of his ordination, *ibid.* and the gracious motive and ground of it, 57. the reasons why he was given for a covenant, *ibid.* the difference between the covenant of works and grace, 61, 85, 634. and the covenant of grace and the covenant of duties, 62. the transcendent excellencies of the covenant of grace, pointed out from a view of some of its qualities, 62, 71. the duty of all to embrace it, 63. motives to persuade to it, 64. answers all objections, 65. a warm expostulation to comply with it, 65,—70. difficulties solved, 70, 71. allegorically compared to Isaac, 368. absolutely free and unconditional to believers, 373. all the graces and blessings of it free, 391. the basis of its security, 397. two dispensations of it, 477. Faith's plea upon God's covenant, 678. what covenant it is he will have respect unto, 679. the various names and designations given to the covenant, *ibid.* what is it for God to have respect unto the covenant, and when it may be said he hath it, *ibid.* the import of his having respect unto the covenant, *ibid.* what it is in the covenant God hath respect unto, 680. and what kind of a respect he hath to it, *ibid.* why he will have respect to it, *ibid.* In having respect to the covenant he hath respect to himself, and all his perfections; to Christ, and all his purchase; to the Spirit, and all his offices; to his people, and all their circumstances, 680, 681. what kind of respect believers have to the covenant, 681. how it suits the different cases, both of saints and sinners, and how these ought to plead upon the covenant in the various circumstances they may be in, 682, 683. it contains all salvation, as a covenant of grace, 683, 684. all the blessings of it eternal, and built upon a sure foundation, 758, 760.
Covenanting, public and national, the duty and honour of a land, 62. once the glory of Scotland, *ibid.* our defection therefrom much prevailing, though still obligatory, *ibid.*
Covenanting, personal, what meant thereby, 62. what is prerequisite to personal covenanting, 178. Wherein the true nature of it consists, 418.

Covenants, the breach of our covenants, national and solemn league, the disgrace of our nation, and ground of humiliation, 178, 419. what is necessary to reviving of them, 179, 419. binding upon posterity, 62, 303. to disparage them more criminal than to break, burn, and bury them, 489.
Curse, all men by nature under it, 403.
Cyrus, was a type of Christ, 788. proclaims liberty to the captive Israelites, *ibid.*

D

DAVID, was a strong believer, 684. how his faith wrought, *ibid.*
Day, the day of the believer's espousals and consummation, 3. Christ's two coronation days, 557.
Death, law-death, gospel-life, 131. the nature, object, and means of this death, 132. the necessity of the believers dying to the law, in point of justification, in order to living to God in point of sanctification, evinced, 133, 145. what the law is, he is dead to, 134. what it is in the law he is dead to, 135. the import of this death, 136. the qualities of it, 137. the means of it, 138. the influence it hath on living to God, 145,—149.
Death, the day of death a gathering day to the saints, 312. wherein death external, internal, and eternal consists, 505. what these things are that death cannot divest a person of, 664. how a person may know if their time of death will be a time of love, 728, 729. the second death described, 789.
Death of Christ, how to be viewed, *viz*, in the cause, severity, sufficiency, and acceptableness of it, 447. satisfied justice to the full, and paid all the debt the law could crave, 449. what made it so dreadful to him before he suffered, 506.
Debt, Christ paid, by his obedience, the immense debt to divine justice, 735.
Definition, *viz.* of mercy in God, 93. of faith as it is a receiving Christ, 193, 209, 221, 569. of repentance, 308. of the gospel, 404. of saving faith, 491. of holiness, 628. of divine worship, 794.
Deliverance of the church when besieged, by the great king, 642. See *City*.
Demonstrations proving that all things are in Christ's hand, 614.
Desertion, what ground the Lord's people have to sing when deserted, 101.
Designs, what love-designs may God be carrying on by wrath-like dispensations of providence, 721. what glorious and merciful designs, 723.
Desire, when may the believer's desire be said to be holy, 731. how their desires operate, 81, 751.
Devil, throws a kind of fascination and deception over our eyes, 678. knows God and Christ, but has no love to them, 750. pride was his ruin, *ibid.* assaults those who come to Christ, 767. a cruel enemy to immortal souls, *ibid.* an enemy to true faith, 768. fix of his horrid temptations condescended upon, and arguments laid down to fortify against them, 769, —774.
Dialogue, one between a Christian and a Gentile, 771.
Directions, how to live unto God, 165. how to walk in Christ, 272. to gather to Shiloh, 333. to plead the promise, 428. to live upon the promise, 434. to inlist with Christ, 493. to engage our spiritual enemies, 495.
Discoveries, what the gospel discoveries are, 545. the means by which saving discoveries of Christ are brought about, 574. the manner of them, *ibid.* the effects of them, 576. the reasons of them, 580. very rare, 582. evidences of them, 583. partial in this life, but perfect in the world to come, 781.
Dispensation, the New-testament one excells that of the old, 477. the great advantage of a clear gospel-dispensation, 524.
Dispensations of providence, wrath-like ones may notwithstanding be times of love, 720. in what respects they may be so, *ibid.* what love-designs may be carrying on by these wrath-like dispensations, 721. what love appears in them, *ibid.* what instructive lessons we should learn from them, 722. God's dispensations may be sometimes very dark and mysterious, 775, —779.
Distress, persons in coming to Christ for help may have their distress grow upon their hand before their deliverance come, 766. this illustrated from scripture instances, *ibid.* in what respects they may grow worse, 767. the reasons of this dispensation, *viz.* to shew the wisdom and power of God, check unbelief, raise our esteem of his mercies, and try our faith, *ibid.*
Division, outward church-division and inward heart-division, causes why Christ is so little thought of, 358. an evidence of perilous time, 666.
Doctrine of grace, why opposed by the devil, 150. the dangerous and damnable influence of legal doctrine, 531.
Doctrines, fundamental, few and clear, 188. several false doctrines refuted, 221. the dangerous influence of new doctrines of a legal strain, 539. what false doctrines are abounding, 666.
Dominion, the difference between the power of prevalency, and the power of dominion of sin, 492.
Doubters, two sorts of them, *viz.* waking and mourning, sleeping and slumbering, 736. relief and comfort tendered to both, *ibid.* their duty pointed out, *viz.* to hear God's loving cries after them, *ibid.* a variety of these love-cries mentioned, *ibid.*
Duty, the duty of the Lord's people, to sing of mercy and judgment, 109. joyfully to receive the news of the divine perfections harmonizing, 128. of those who have right thoughts of Christ, 367. of unbelievers, under the power of sin, and believers, who are delivered from the strength of sin, 532. of saints, to sit down and rest upon a God in Christ, 676. and sinners, to sit still and abide in Christ by faith, *ibid.* of both saints and sinners, to plead that God may have respect to the covenant, 682. of unbelievers, to consider their dangerous state, and fly from the wrath to come, 701. of believers, to be joyful in the promise, and fruitful in the work of faith, 703. to come and take the waters of life freely, inforced by several considerations, 763. The duty of these towards whom the Lord's way is hid and unknown, 785. of such who never knew any of his ways, 789. The duty of people to pray for ministers, and receive their message, 796.
Duties of religion, no just ground to blame them, 768. Satan tempts to the omission of them, 770. how he ought to be foiled herein, *ibid.* prompts to heart-wandering in them, *ibid.* advices to fortify against this, *ibid.*

E

EAGLE, the mounting Christian; or, eagle-winged believer, 748. Christians mount up with wings as eagles, 749. what the wings are wherewith they are mounted up, *viz.* the influences of the Spirit, *ibid.* the wings wherewith they mount up, *viz.* faith and love, 750. a negative and positive view of the things wherein they do not, and wherein they really do mount up, *ibid.* the particular seasons of it, 751. the manner of it, like an eagle, 752. the parallel stated, *ibid.* the reasons why they mount up with wings like an eagle, *ibid.* evidences of these who are mounting up on wings like eagles,
Elect, the certainly of their conversion, 61.
Eloquence, human, quite insufficient, without the power of God, to reach the heart, 723.
Encouragements to receive Christ, 217, 239.
Enemies, who are Christ's enemies, 563. they may have a quaking heart, 657. their proper duty, 660.
Engagement, the best bond; or, the surest engagement, 167. what engagements Christ, as our Surety, came under when he engaged his heart to approach unto God, 171. what kind of an approach he made when he thus engaged, 172. how God is to be viewed to whom he engaged to approach, *ibid.* in what station he engaged to approach God, 173. the singularity of this engagement, 174. the manner of it, *ibid.* the reasons thereof, 176. the sufficiency of the Engager, 170. How sinners ought to engage to duty, and approach to God, *ibid.* considerations inducing to it, 181. the misery of those who are not engaged to him, 183. evidences of those who have engaged, 185.
England, did not reform so purely as Scotland, 303. her dangerous circumstances on account of the spreading of innumerable errors, 666.
Enmity, where it may be got slain, 86.
Enoch, his character, 204, 227, 298, 751.
Errors, several doctrinal errors refuted, 221. sundry practical errors reproved, 224, 357. what errors are abounding in Scotland and England, 666, 671.
Espousals, the day of, when it takes place, and how consummated, 3.
Esteem of Christ, a fourfold lodging where it resides, 347. what good reason there is for it, 657.
Eternity, the thoughts of it ought to engross our attention, 733.
Examination, marks of these who are espoused to Christ, 5. of those who have the vails of a broken covenant, the injured perfections of God, and sin, rent to them, 15. of such as have that love to God which is a fruit and effect of his love to them, 86,—90. Evidences of these that are dead to the law in point of justification, 153. of those that are living to God, 155. of those that have received Christ, 225. and are walking in him, 229. of those who have right thoughts of Christ, 359. of those who have got a saving sight of Christ, 460. of those who have the spiritual life commenced, and progressively going forward, 491. of those who are delivered from the law of works as it is the strength of sin, 542. of those who have got saving discoveries of Christ, 583. of those who are saved for his name's sake, 599. of those who are members of the house of God, 636. of those who are in a safe state, 649. of those who are the true seed of Jacob, 701. of those who have had a joyful meeting with Christ, 711. of those who have shared of the wonderful love of God in Christ, 718. of those whose time of trouble has been a time of love, 724. of these who have enjoyed the presence of God, and communion with him, 744. of these who are mounting up to God upon eagle's wings, 753. of such as have heard God's voice in the trumpet of the gospel, 796.
Examination, self, the best rule for self-examination, 353.
Exhortation, *viz.* to match with Christ as our Husband, 7. to be suitably exercised for the vail of the temple being rent, 20. to embrace the man that is God's fellow, 37. to all to take hold of the covenant first, and then the seal thereof, 63. to seek a view of God's love, and render him love for love, 90. to these that are alive to the law, and those that are dead to it, 163. to unbelievers who have not received Christ, 233. to believers who have received him, 255. to sinners who have never gathered to Shiloh, 327. to these who have gathered to him, 334. to embrace Christ, and to entertain right thoughts of him, 366. to sinners to flee to their hope, 397,—400. to these who are, and are not, children of the promise, 426,—438. and then to all in general, 438. to unbelievers to come and see the Father in Christ, 465. to believers who have seen him, to prove it and improve it, 467. to sinners in general, to throw themselves on Christ for salvation from the strength of sin, 509. to believers who have fled to Christ from it, 512. to unbelievers who are under the law, and so under the commanding and condemning strength of sin, 546. to believers who are not under the law, and so delivered from the strength of sin, 547. to come to Christ, to be interested in his power, 565,—568. to believers, who have got saving discoveries of Christ, 585. to unbelievers, who are yet strangers to him, 588. to sinners and believers, on account of God's saving for his name's sake, 600. to come to Christ as a full and sufficient Saviour, 613. to these who are without the house of God, 637. to these who are within it, 638. to close with Christ, 650. to match with the Lamb of God, 659, 660. to embrace him in whom all the promises are, 702. to welcome Christ's *Lo I come!* with a *Behold he cometh!* 712. to those whose time never was a time of love, 733. to these whose time has been a time of love, 736. to these who have enjoyed his presence, 745. to such who know nothing of his presence, 746. to these who never mounted up to God, 754. to these who are tempted and torn of the devil, 769. to all sinners, who are yet in their lost state, 797.
Extremity, the time of the saints greatest extremity, the very time when the Lord shews himself most graciously, 716.
Exoneration, in what respects we are to exonerate ourselves, 675.

F

FACULTY, a fourfold one, *viz.* intellective, elective, prosecutive, and retentive, 347.

Faith, the saving nature and essence of justifying faith, 36, 394, 457, 491, 569, 684. faith and repentance, may be called gospel-commands, if you speak of the dispensation of the gospel; but viewed as duties, are commanded in the law, 60. the nature of faith, and its appropriating quality, *ibid.* the ground of faith that all the hearers of the gospel have, *ibid.* is a fruit of God's love, 77. the harmony of the divine attributes, a ground for its boldness, 126. has its acts in receiving Christ, 188. something supposed that it relates to, *ibid.* something imported that it consists in, 193. the nature of this act unfolded, by viewing the qualities of it, 193, 205. the object of it considered, 195, 206, 218. the capacities or respects in which the object is received, 197, 207, 239, 242, 244. the nature and excellency of it, 218. never alone, but joined with gospel-obedience, 220. the doubtsome faith of the papists exploded, 194, 221. the modern Independents notion of it, (which is a popish one,) in rejecting the appropriating act, refuted, 218, 221, 296, 582, 685. the difference between saving and justifying faith, 198, 218. justifying faith, not merely an assent to the truths of the gospel, 221. a definition of it, *ibid.* fiducial application in the nature of justifing faith, 194, 221, 296, 582, 685. justifying faith preceeds sanctification, 222. the nature and evidences of saving faith, 225, 611, 711. particularly how it was created by the Spirit, 225. how it was acted in the soul, 227. what is the food of it, 228. how it differs from sense, 245, 295, 394. advances the believer to the highest dignity, *ibid.* quickens every other grace, *ibid.* excites to duty, 246. promotes communion with God, *ibid.* what means are necessary to advance it, 247. and how they are to be used, 248. what the impediments of faith are, *ibid.* wrong objects of faith, 249. six different pleas or arguments that faith uses with God, 250. of the priority of faith to repentance, 300, 582. runs through the whole of the believer's life, *ibid.* what are, and what are not the proper grounds of it, 308. not the condition of the covenant of grace, 373. a contrast betwixt the law, the gospel, and faith, 377, 402. both the weakest and the strongest thing in the world, 392. the proper object of it, *ibid.* the difference betwixt faith and spiritual sense; or, the assurance of faith and the assurance of sense, *ibid.* the difference between faith and hope, *ibid.* faith and repentance to be considered three ways, and whether gospel-commands, or not, 395. whether the gospel promises life upon condition of faith, 395, 428. the trial of faith, by stating the difference between the believer's faith, and Abraham's, 410. a fourfold faith, that does not amount to a genuine one, *ibid.* evidences of those who live by faith on the promise, 412. the excellency of a life of faith, 431. what glory faith brings to God, and what way it glorifies him, 433. the object of it great and glorious, 454. the grounds of it not to be confounded with the effects of it, 511. justifying faith, the root of a holy life, 525. the genuine nature of it, 562. carries a particular persuasion of salvation in it, *ibid.* not a necessary condition of salvation, 598. what is the ultimate refuge of it, *ibid.* what is the surest ground and strongest encouragement for faith, 606,—626. nothing to impede our matching with Christ by faith, 611. how faith comes, 623. the nature of stability in the faith opened, 667. four degrees of denying the faith, 668. what it is to know the word of faith, to have the grace of faith, to make a profession of faith, and to yield the obedience of faith, *ibid.* an adherence to the faith, and a perseverance in it enjoyned, 669. a six-fold work of an established faith, 673. eight evidences of a strong faith, 676. its plea upon God's covenant, 678. wherein lies the suitableness and force of faith's plea upon God's covenant, 680, 681. how both saints and sinners ought to plead upon the covenant in their various circumstances, 683. faith works by believing God's word, and acts by pleading the accomplishment of the promise, 684, 685. [See *Covenant.*] its plea upon God's word, 684. it is the business of faith to take God at his word, *ibid.* to put him to his word, to do as he hath said, 685. in what manner it takes the word of God, and how it pleads the accomplishment of the promise, *ibid.* what arguments it pleads upon, *ibid.* the reasons why it is the business of faith to take God at his word, and put him to it, *ibid.* how the word of promise is adapted to the circumstances of the sinner, 685,—689. the ground of faith immutable, 700. See *Word.*

Father, his love antecedent to the merit of Christ, 268. of the oneness betwixt the Father and the Son, 441. this oneness viewed both negatively and positively, 442. in what capacity the Father is to be considered when we see him in Christ, 447. in what respects they who see Christ, see the Father, 448. in what manner the Father is seen in Christ, 451. reasons why those who see Christ see the Father, 452. how we may know if we have seen the Father in Christ, 460, 468. See *Sight.*

Fathers, some of their sayings, 333, 503.

Feast, on what account may the Lord's people expect that Christ will come to the sacramental feast, 713.

Feathers, the mounting Christian throws off the feathers of self-righteousness and self-conceit, 753, 754.

Feet, in what respects it may be said, that Christ condescends, in a spiritual sense, to wash his disciples feet, 784.

Fellow, Christ God's fellow, 22. in what respect he is so, 23. why it behoved him to be so, 24.

Fellowship with God, the harmony of the divine attributes the foundation of it, 125. the sweetness of fellowship with God in Christ, 711.

Female preacher, 572. See *Preacher, Woman, Samaria.*

Flesh, Christ's coming in the flesh both joyful to him and his people, 706.

Food, how the Lamb feeds his church and people, 655. what kind of food it is he feeds them with, *ibid.*

Followers of Christ have no reason to be ashamed of him, 561. what comfort and encouragement is afforded them, 563.

Forgetfulness, the nature of it, 645. the object thereof, *ibid.* the universality of it evinced, in a variety of instances, *ibid.* the reason from whence it flows, 646.

Formality in religion, an evidence of unstable times, 667.

Freedom, what the receiver of Christ is freed from, 239.

Fulness, in Christ there is a fulness of authority, Spirit, righteousness, yea, of all divine relations, perfections, names, offices, promises, blessings, and all things, 237, 448, 449, 551,—555, 603, 604, 763. this fulness a communicative fulness, 759.

G

GARMENT, a two-fold gospel garment, *viz.* the imputed and imparted righteousness of Christ, 266, 545.

Gathering, of the gathering of the people to Shiloh, 276. of the persons gathered, the place, manner, and certainty of their gathering, 278. remarks opening up the nature of this gathering, 279. different kinds of gatherings, certain gatherers, sundry places from whence the gathering is made, and several things supposed and imported in gathering to Shiloh, 279,—284. what kind of people are gathered, 284. to whom they are gathered, 287. in what respects they are gathered to Shiloh, 289. in what manner, 290. by what means, 291. The qualities of this gathering, 292. (1.) On God's part, *ibid.* (2.) On the peoples, 294. what they gather to him for, 301. the seasons of their gathering, 302, 303. with respect to the church in general, *ibid.* the initial gathering of sinners in particular, 305. the progressive gathering of believers, 306. the consummate gathering of saints, 312. See *Shiloh.*

Generation, the present one delineated in eight particulars, and the greatest part shown to be rejecters of Christ, 238.

Gentiles, of whom descended, 58. Christ given as a covenant to them, 47, 52. their name described, and displayed, 53, 54. their gathering to Shiloh, 284. [See *Shiloh.*] God's sovereign mercy to the Gentile nations, 320.

Gift, two excellent ones given to men, Christ and faith, 233.

Glasses, the saints have several of them that they view themselves in, 585.

Glory, how Christ's absolute, comparative, and relative glory is manifested, 4. what glory faith brings to God, and how it glorifys him, 433. how the glory of God shines more conspicuously in Christ, than in all other representations, 734.

God, a display of his goodness, severity, and sovereignty, 34. how agreeably he speaks of and to Christ, 48. the subject matter of his discourse, *viz.* the great mystery of the covenant of redemption, or grace, *ibid.* how he loves his people, 75, 89. in what manner he hates sin, 89. ignorance of God the cause of a legal spirit, 160. what of God is in Christ, 237, 328. in what respect man hath to do with God, 370. who are partakers of the promise as it relates to God, 414. what glory faith brings to God, and what way it glorifys him, 433. a threefold distance between God and man, 440. the greatness of his glory and grace, 456. the import of the relative designation, *Thy God,* 477. nothing so opposite to him as sin, 499. the opposition stated, *ibid.* God's righteousness, how taken in scripture, 536. the danger of being ignorant, *ibid.* all his designs are for exalting Christ, 560. His great name, the ground and reason of saving great sinners, 590. [See *Name.*] His infinite love in giving him to be a sacrifice, 609. his infinite wisdom hath out-witted the policy of the devil, *ibid.* both a promising and performing God, 690. he will perform what he hath promised in his own time, 690, 691. how he speaks to a soul when he pays them a visit, 695. how he performs what he speaks, *ibid.* in what respects he may be said to leave his people, and wherein he will not leave them, 697, 698. the reasons hereof, 698, 699. Sinners time of need his time of love, 713. what kind of a time his time of love is, 714.

God-head, dwelling in flesh, the world's wonder, 237. the fulness thereof dwelling in Christ, a communicative fulness, 759.

God-man, the centrical place for God and man to meet in, 225.

God's house, the church is so called, and in what respect it is so, 628. who are the members of this house, and what sort of a house it is, *ibid.* See *Church.*

Gospel, a bundle of good news and gracious promises, 60. largely taken for the dispensation of it, hath the whole law in it, *ibid.* the great difference between the law and the gospel, 125, 367, 394, 404, 711. hath no tendency to licentiousness, 149, 219. ignorance of it the cause of a legal temper, 161. the duty of all who hear it, 37, 180, 392, 563. the nature and excellency of it, 218, 390. the efficacy of it, 320, 390. how impeded by unbelief, 242. who are included in the call thereof, 286. the great mean of gathering sinners to Christ, 291. what it is to believe it, 377. A contrast between the gospel, the law, and faith, 377, 402. The happiness of that nation that hath the gospel, and the misery of those that want it, 405. compared to a great pipe, and the promises to lesser pipes answering the particular circumstances of saints and sinners, 438. no new law, 523. what hinders the success of it, 526. what is in it that strengthens holiness, 545. what the attractive charms of it are, *ibid.* on whom the virtue and efficacy of it depends, 560. wherein the glory and power of it consists, 761. the duty of all who hear it, 763. compared to a great trumpet, 787. why compared thereto, 791. what sort of a sound it gives, 793. what makes it effectual, 796. evidences of these who have heard God's voice in it, *ibid.*

—— law-death, gospel-life, 131. See *Gospel, Law.*

Gospel-believer, wherein he differs from a legal one, 396.

Gospel-commands, whether faith and repentance be so, or not, 395.

Gospel-dispensation, the great advantage of a clear one, 524. the slighting thereof an evidence of unstable times, 667.

Gospel-doctrine, branded with novelty, *&c.* 70, 149, 178, 198, 384, 531. wherein it differs from legal, 396. much opposed by the devil and wicked men, 531.

Gospel-feast, Christ given for a covenant to the people, the marrow of it, 63.

Gospel-hearers, their duty, 392.

Gospel-holiness, of manifold necessity in the new covenant, 59.

Gospel-hypocrite, how differenced from the legal-hypocrite, 395.

Gospel-liberty, wherein it consists, and wherein it doth not consist, 219.

Gospel-ministry, the great design thereof, 356.

Gospel-obedience, how it ought to be influenced, 59, 85.

Gospel-offer, not to be clogged with legal terms and conditions, 57. Christ given freely to all therein, and to some in actual possession, *ibid.* the gospel-offer is to all, 61. to whom made, 189. upon what ground, 190. for what end, 191. difficult to be believed, *ibid.* in what capacity Christ is therein offered, 209. nineteen of them mentioned, 210,—212.

Gospel-principle the foundation of gospel-practice, 186. the reasons thereof, 199.

Goſpel-repentance, wherein it differs from legal, 396.
Goſpel-ſpirit, promotes reformation in the church, 405. and is a ſpirit of liberty, 419.
Grace, a twofold denial of grace, *viz.* in point of juſtification, and in point of ſanctification, 201. the freedom of it, 391. the ſovereignty of it, 404. the ſtrength of it, in conquering ſin, 508. twelve inſtances of the ſtrength of it, 533. what encouragement grace gives to obey the law as a rule, 547. the marvellous nature of it, in finding out a Saviour, 646. the freedom, power, and wiſdom of it, ground of admiration, 718. a perſon may be in a ſtate of grace, and yet not aſſured of it, 729. the grace of God to ſinners is reigning and enthroned grace, 759.
Graces, an enumeration of the eſtabliſhing graces, 677.
Gratitude, three ways expreſſed and recommended, 418.
Gueſt, what ſort of gueſts ſin and Satan are, 240.
Guide, Chriſt the guide of his people, 231. what kind of a Guide he is to them, *ibid.*

H

HAGAR, allegorically put for the law, or covenant of works, 368.
Hamilton, (Mr. Patrick,) a quotation of his concerning good works, 223.
Happineſs, Chriſt's perfect obedience the proper condition of it, 135. wherein the happineſs of the ſaints conſiſts, 651, 761.
Harmony, the harmony of the divine attributes diſplayed, 112. [See *Attributes.*] The harmony of the glorious Trinity, 769. of the church militant and triumphant, *ibid.*
Haters of God, a word of terror to them, 91.
Heart, what the believer's heart is rent for and from, 16. Chriſt engaged to approach God as Surety with all his heart, 175. and why he did ſo, 176. A contraſt between the heart of man and the law of God, 498.
Heart-wanderings in duty, Satan mightily tempts thereto, 770. gets much aſſiſtance from the evil heart, and the multitude of buſineſs, *ibid.* how to defeat him in his deſigns herein, *ibid.*
Heaven, what is the way to it, and what acceſs we have there, 14. what the motto inſcribed on the gates of it is, 75. what a ſweet place it is, and what ſinging muſt be there, 107. Chriſt the way to it, and holineſs the walk, 220. what a happy place it is, 458. won by little and little, 461. what nations are to be conquered before winning to it, 474. a deſcription of it, 697. the reaſon believers have to long for it, 783.
Heaven's grand repoſitory; or, the Father's love to the Son, and depoſiting all things into his hand, a ſtrong encouragement to faith, 601. See *Father, Son, Love.*
Help, the Lord Jeſus the mighty One on whom the help of ſinners was laid, 536. help in time of need, ſecured to all God's people, 736. rules to be obſerved in ſeeking help in time of need, *ibid.* ſecret ſupport may be given, yet ſatisfying help may be delayed for a time, *ibid.* the cauſes of this are both relative to ourſelves and the public, 738, 739.
Holineſs, cannot be ſatisfied without a complete obedience, 10. a fruit of God's love, 77.
Holy Ghoſt, wherein the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt conſiſteth, 242.
Holy of holies, of the believer's acceſs thereinto by the death of Chriſt, 8. this acceſs is two-fold, incohative and conſummative, 12. what underſtood by the moſt holy, 627. remarks opening up the privilege of acceſs to the moſt holy place, 632. this acceſs obliges all to be a moſt holy people, 634.
Honour, all pre-eminence and honour to be aſcribed to Chriſt, 560.
Hope, the difference between faith and hope, 394. the Father's giving all things into Chriſt's hand, the ſureſt ground and ſtrongeſt encouragement for hope, 606.
Houſe, what kind of a houſe Chriſt is to his people, 331. the law of God's houſe, 627. in what reſpect the church is God's houſe, 628. who are the members, and what ſort of a houſe the church is, *ibid.* how holineſs is the law of the houſe, 630. the import of the ingemination, *ibid.* the extent of the law of holineſs, 630, 631. God's houſe not lawleſs, 633. in what reſpect the law of the houſe is violate, 634. See *Church.*
Houſhold of God, few appear to be of it, 634.
Humiliation, a fruit of faith, 582. the difference between humility and pride ſtated, 586. two-fold humiliation of Chriſt, 623.
Hypocrites, for the moſt part, cannot be differenced from the ſaints, 86. the difference between the legal and goſpel hypocrite, 225, 395. hypocrites may reſiſt ſin, and yet remain under the dominion of it, 528. becauſe ſin is never broken in them, *ibid.*

I

IGNORANCE of God, the law, the goſpel, and Chriſt's righteouſneſs, cauſes of a legal temper and ſpirit, 160. and the reaſon why the world thinks ſo little of Chriſt, 357.
Illumination, ſaving, the beſt antidote againſt Arianiſm, 582.
Indenture, the articles of that one between God the Father, and Chriſt the Son, concerning redeeming mankind ſinners, 48.
Independents, getting footing in Scotland, 634. the modern ones denying the appropriating act of faith, refuted, 194, 281, 221, 296, 324, 360, 402, 491, 569, 685.
Indulgence, when granted, and by whom accepted, 529.
Infidelity, the principles of, too much upon the increaſe in Scotland, 671.
Influence, dying unto the law hath a phyſical and moral influence on living unto God, 146.
Ingratitude, the church's matchleſs ingratitude to her deliverer, 645, 646, 648.
Impediment, what the impediments of faith are, 248.
Improvement, what improvement the believer is to make of Chriſt in walking in him, 203.
Inſtability, unbelief the mother of it, 243. dangerous in perilous times, 666. the evil and diſadvantage of it, 674.
Interceſſion, what Chriſt's interceſſion, founded upon his oblation, is an antidote againſt, 343.
Iſaac, Sarah's ſon, allegorically repreſents the covenant of grace, 368. is a child of a gracious promiſe, 382. the parallel ſtated in ten particulars, ſhewing that believers, as he was, are children of the promiſe, 382, — 386.
Iſhmael, Hagar's ſon, allegorically ſets forth the law, or covenant of works, 368, 384. all Iſhmaelites, and legaliſts, want to be ſaved by their works, 406.
Iſrael, the true Iſrael of God characteriſed, 472. ſeven mighty nations that vex them in their way to the heavenly Canaan, 474 four terrible kings that muſt be ſubdued, 475. the parallel betwixt the church of Scotland and Iſrael, 486. the ſcattered church of Iſrael ſhall be gathered together and brought back to Jeruſalem, 787. from what place, in what manner, by what means, and for what end they ſhall be gathered, *ibid.*

J

JACOB, his verdict of the tribe of Judah, and his foretelling that the ſceptre and giving of the law was to remain with that tribe till the coming of Shiloh, 276. on what account called Iſrael, 473. obliged to fly from his father's houſe, on account of the wrath of his brother Eſau, 690. had a ſignal interview with God at Bethel, *ibid.* in what ſenſe it is ſaid the Lord will not leave Jacob, nor his ſpiritual ſeed, till he hath done what he hath ſpoken to them of, 697, 698. how and when he performs what he promiſes, 695, 696. the reaſons why God will not leave them till he hath performed his promiſe, 698, 699. God confirms his new name and promiſe, 740.
Japhet, the origin of the Gentiles, 58. the great promiſe to Noah concerning him, *ibid.*
Jehovah, and Jehovah-Elochim, the ſignification thereof, 476.
Jeruſalem, the city of, threatened by Sennacherib, 663. antiently the place of public worſhip, 795.
Jeruſalem, New, the meaning thereof, 368.
Jeſus, what it is to receive Chriſt as Jeſus, 197, 207. his glorious dignity and everlaſting excellency, 560 poſſeſt of a glorious imperial throne, and a glorious mediatory fulneſs, 763. See *Chriſt's Lord.*
Jews, of whom deſcended, 58. a heavy chrage exhibited againſt them, 245. their notion that the Meſſias is not come, refuted, 277. their doleful ſtate at preſent, 319. ſeek a ſign from Chriſt, 677.
Jewiſh church, the moſt remarkable event that befel her of old, 714.
Job, had four terrible meſſages brought to him ſucceſſively, 747.
Joy, the qualities of a heavenly and ſpiritual joy, 709.
Joys, the combination and conjunction of joys; or, the joyful approach of the Saviour, chearfully welcomed by the church's echo of faith, 704. what expreſſions of joy, in the Saviour, is imported in theſe words, *Lo, I come!* 708. what expreſſions of joy is imported in the echo, from the church, *Behold, he cometh!* 709. whence is this combination and conjunction of joys, *ibid*
Judgment, of ſinging of mercy and judgment, 93. the various acceptations of judgment, 97. what judgments the Lord's people meet with, 68. what it is in or about judgment that is matter of a ſong, 99.
Judgment, the day of, a gathering day to the ſaints, 311. a ſeparating day between the ſheep and the goats, 313. the awfulneſs thereof, 459. what will be the rule of it, 469.
Juſtice cannot be ſatisfied without a complete ſatisfaction, 10. the ſword of juſtice awaked againſt God's fellow, 22. what kind of a ſtroke this ſword gave, 28. the qualities of this ſword, *ibid.* the manner how it awaked, 30. the ſpecial hand that Jehovah the Lord of hoſts had in its awaking, 31. the reaſons why it did awake, *ibid.* juſtice exhibits a charge againſt man as a rebel, 511. viewed as retributive and vindictive, 592. nothing ſatisfactory thereto but the abſolutely perfect obedience and meritorious righteouſneſs of Chriſt, 735, 772.
Juſtification, the difference between it and ſanctification ſtated and cleared, and the priority of the firſt to the laſt evinced, 85. the popiſh and Baxterian notions thereof, 156. Chriſt's righteouſneſs alone the ſole ground of a ſinner's juſtification, 198, 490. what faith unto juſtification is, 227. no juſtification by the deeds of the law, 490, 523. nor by any new or milder law than the law of works, 523. nor is juſtification partly by the law, and partly by the goſpel, 524. is the root of ſanctification, 525. a ſure foundation for it in the blood of Chriſt, 657.

K

KEYS, what keys hang at Chriſt's girdle, 555.
King, a great king beſieges the little city the church, 641. this great king conſidered as the Great God, the devil, ſin, and death, 641, 642.
Kings, four mighty kings that oppoſe the true Iſrael of God in their way to the heavenly Canaan, 475. what theſe four kings are, *ibid.* See *Conqueſt, Canaan.*
Kingdom, the nature of Chriſt's kingdom, 562.
Knowledge, the ſum of all Chriſtian knowledge lies in Chriſt, 354. how a perſon may know if their knowledge of Chriſt and the goſpel be of a ſpecial nature, 408. two kinds of knowledge, ſpeculative and practical, 583. a knowledge of the word of faith, and grace of faith, neceſſary, 668. four properties of ſaving knowledge, 732. ſingular in reſpect of the object, author, and ſubject of it, *ibid.*

L

LAMB in the midſt of the throne, 651. four periods wherein Chriſt is repreſented as a Lamb, 652. the deſcription given of him as a Lamb, *ibid.* a fourfold view of the throne on which he is ſeated, 653. on what account it is called a throne, *ibid.* how he comes to be upon the throne, *ibid.* what is imported in his being in the midſt of the throne, 654. the benefit of feeding that iſſues from his being there, 655. the duty of ſinners who hear the Lamb in the midſt of

of the throne, *viz.* to come and see him, and match with him, 658. what they see in him, and what kind of a match he is, *ibid.* an address to the enemies of the Lamb, 660. a word of comfort and advice to the lovers of the Lamb, 661, 662.
Lamb, the river of life, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, 757. the import hereof, 759. See *River*.
Lamentation, that Christ hath so few brides, 5. over doctrinal and practical legalists, 156. over Christ-despisers, 366. over the disorders and irregularities of the house of God, 634. over the church as a besieged city, 647. for our forgetfulness of Christ, 649. for not mounting up to God, 753.
Lamentations, the book of, the remarkable manner in which it is wrote, 732. what is signified thereby, 733.
Law, only to be taken out of the hand of a Mediator, 60. one great difference between the law and the gospel, 125, 367, 711. ignorance of it the cause of a legal spirit, 160.
—— Law death, gospel-life, 131. the necessity of the believer's dying to the law in point of justification, evinced, 133, 150, 151. what that law is that he is dead to, 134. what it is in the law he is dead to, 135. the import of being dead to the law, 136. the qualities of this death, 137. the means by which it is brought about, 138. The law of itself can neither justify nor sanctify, 151. the misery of being alive to it, 152, 163. evidences of those that are dead to it, 153. and living to God, 155. A contrast between the law, the gospel, and faith, 377, 402. the difference between the law and the gospel, both in their nature and effects, 394, 395. when a person desires to be under it, 396. wherein legal and gospel-doctrine and legal and gospel repentance differ, 396. whether a person be begotten to a profession of religion by the power of the law or by the power of the gospel, 409. who are at liberty from the bondage of the law, 419. a contrast between the heart of man and the law of God, 498. law, taken more largely, for the whole revelation of God's mind; more strictly, for the old covenant-rule of perfect obedience, 513. viewed in its distinction, *viz.* formally, as a covenant of works; and materially, as a rule of life, *ibid.* considered in its parts, *viz.* the command, and sanction; in its properties, as holy, just, and good, 514. viewed in its revelation, as a broken law, a violated covenant, *ibid.* no justification by the deeds of the law, 490, 525. any new law, 523. who have underhand dealing with the law, 526. can never pacify the awakened conscience, *ibid.* nor heal the disease occasioned by sin, 532. has a standing force and binding power over all that are under it, by virtue of its command and curse, 535. all unbelievers under the gospel under this law, 539. requires more of the sinner than of sinless man, 540. believers not liable to the penal sanction of it by their new sins, 541. freedom from it obtained only by the absolutely perfect, and meritorious obedience of Christ, 735.
—— The strength of sin is the law, 496. what law is so, 497, 513. as sin took justifying strength from the law, so the law gives condemning strength to sin, and a commanding power over the sinner, *ibid.* what strength it gives to sin, 514. is the strength both of orignal and actual sin, 515. what actual sins it is the strength of, in eight particulars, 516. in what respects it is the strength of sin, in eight particulars, 518. four reasons why it is the strength of sin, 521. impedes the success of the gospel, 526. See *Sin. Strength of Sin.*
—— The law of God's house, 627. what law it is that is called the law of the house, 629. a threefold law that the house of God hath always had some concern in, *viz* the law of works, the law of faith, and the law of love, 629, 630. how holiness is the law of the house, and the import of the ingemination, 630. the extent of this law of holiness, 630, 631. in what respect the law of God's house is violate, 634. what the law of the house is with reference to these that are without, 637.
Law-charge, what it is, 377, 402.
Law-work, a few pieces thereof condescended upon, 139. the necessity of it, 150.
Legalist, a legal spirit condemned, 36. doctrinal and practical legalists reproved, 156. several legal errors in doctrine refuted, 221, 539. and legal-practices condemned, 224. their making their good works either the moving, meritorious, procuring, or instrumental cause of salvation, unhinged, 409. a legalist is the greatest enemy to the law, 531. cannot feed upon Christ and his righteousness, 656.
Licinius, a great persecutor of the Christians in the third century, 349.
Life, of the believer's life who is dead to the law, 132, 140. a negative and positive view of that life, 140, 141. Scriptural designations of it, 142. the import of its being called a life in general, where the parallel between natural life, and living to God, is opened up, 143. the import of its being called a living unto God, 144. evidences thereof, 155. a sure foundation laid for the hope of life in the blood of Christ, 657. the time of natural life, short and uncertain, 720.
Life of faith, the excellency of it, 431. how expressed in scripture, and the advantages of it, 664.
Life-time, how a person may know, if the particular periods of their life-time, as youth, middle age, old age, has been, and if the time of approaching death will be, a time of love, 727, 728, 729.
Light, four properties of saving light, 732.
Little, the little city besieged, and delivered, 639. See *City*.
Lord, what it is to receive Christ as a Lord, 197, 208. He will perform what he hath promised, 690. what he promises to do his people, 695. what he speaks of to them, 704. when absent from a church, all goes into confusion, 707. how he moulds sinners into conformity to himself, *viz.* preparatively, by the law; and effectively, by the gospel, 731. by what means carried on, *ibid.* the Lord's way of dealing towards his people may be many times dark and unknown to them, 774,—779. in what respects it may be so, 781. the reasons hereof, 788. the special seasons wherein he makes himself known, 781,—783.
Love, the Father's love to the Son evinced, 602. in what respect, and upon what account he loves him, 602, 603. the qualities and effects of his love, 603. his love evidenced, by giving all things into his hand, *ibid.* the import of this expression, 604. what love appears in this, 605. why he thus manifests his love to him, *ibid.* how this is a ground of faith, 606. how we ought love Christ, 609.
Love, the sinner's time of need, God's time of love, 713. what is to be understood by the love of God here, 722. what kind of a time God's time of love is, 714. most clearly evidenced at the time of the greatest need, 176. this is matter of the greatest wonder and admiration, 717, 718. evidences of those whose time of need has been a time of love, 718, 719. seeming anger, and wrath-like dispensations, may notwithstanding be a time of love, 720. in what respect they may be so, *ibid.* what love-designs may be carrying on by them, 721. what love appears in them, *ibid.* what lessons we may learn from them, 722. the sinning and suffering circumstances of his people not inconsistent with his love, *ibid.* how to know if the particular periods of our life, such as youth, middle-age, old-age has been, and the period of approaching death will be a time of love, 727, 728, 729. eight particular distressing cases mentioned, and all shewn to be consistent with a time of love, 730. what are the remarkable parts of it, 731. how this time of love commences, *viz.* preparatively, by the law; effectively, by the gospel, *ibid.* by what means it is carried on, *ibid.* no love like Christ's love, 735. several properties of it, 739. See *Time of Need, Time of Love.*
Love of God, the greatness of it to poor sinners, 59. A description of it, from the act, subject, object, and quality, 74. four observations concerning love, *ibid.* what things create love, 75. four remarks concerning the love of God, *viz.* that the fountain of it, is God the Father, the channel of it, Jesus Christ; the streams of it, are vastly great; the vessels into which it is poured, are sinners of mankind, *ibid.* the import of the expression, *He first loved us*, opened, 75. implying that his love is eternal, consisting of a love of destination and approbation, *ibid.* the object of the former, is every elect soul; the object of the latter, is every believer united to Christ, 76. his love is antecedent, first in point of time, and first in point of order of time, *ibid.* it is absolutely free; free, without force, reluctancy, merit, price, conditions, *ibid.* it is preventing love; preventing with respect to the object of it, the time of it, the dawning of it, and fruits and effects of it, 76, 77. prevents our holiness, faith, repentance, and prayers, 77, 78. the saints love to God evidenced by the nature, kinds, degrees, dimensions, properties, effects, extent, and grounds of it, 79,—83, 91. God's love to the saints the cause of their love to him, evinced by four considerations, 83. the influence his love has upon theirs is twofold, moral and physical, 84. the difference between God's love to the saints and their love to him, *ibid.* God's love can both kill our enmity, and quicken our love, 86. what kind of a love God bears to his people, 89. the duty of all to seek a view of God's love, and to render him love for love, 90, 91, 733. a word of comfort to the lovers of God, 92.
Love of Christ, a full feast to the believer, 13. qualities of a pretended love to Christ, 347. evidences of a true love to him, 413. the wonders of redeeming love, ground of admiration, 718.
Love-calls, love-visits, love-glances, love-tokens, given to the soul, in the time of God's love, 714, 715.
Love-cries, a variety of God's love-cries mentioned, 736. ought to have an echo, or loud cry made in return to them, 737. what these responsary cries are, *ibid.*
Love-feast, the sacrament of the supper one, 74.
Lover, of the promise and of Christ, evidences thereof, 413.
Lovers of God and of the Lamb, a word of comfort and advice to them, 92, 661, 662.
Lukewarmness, unbelief, the mother of it, 243.
Luther, sayings of his, 36, 385. concerning justification by grace, 531. concerning preaching the gospel, 560.

M

MAN, Christ the man that is God's fellow, 22. what kind of a man he became, 25. why our Redeemer must be a man, *ibid.* what need there was for his being both God and man in one person, 26.
—— The poor wise man, the many instances of his kindness apt to be forgotten, 645. the nature, universality, and reason of this, 645, 646.
—— Four things that a man comes to Christ for, 301. two sorts of men compared by the apostle to dogs and swine, reject Christ and despise the gospel, 359. a fourfold capacity wherein man hath to do with God, 370. his foolish pleas for salvation exploded, 406. naturally ignorant of God, 456. the blind man cured by Christ, 677. the Pharisees drag him from court to court, and excommunicate him, *ibid.*
Manifestations, all saving ones of God, made of God relatively, and not essentially, 354. their usefulness, effects, and distinguishing qualities, 677. the manner of the Lord's ushering these in, 692. may be succeeded by a very dark night, 693. some have been left to sin grievously, after manifestations, 694. the particular seasons when the Lord is pleased to favour with them, 781, 782, 783.
Marriage, the incomparable one between the Creator and the creature, 1. this marriage-relation confirmed, *ibid.* the nature of it opened up, by considering the parties married, *ibid.* the terms of the marriage, 2. the properties of it, *ibid.* the effects of it, *ibid.* how it was carried on, *ibid.* in what manner concluded, 3. and when, *ibid.* with the reasons thereof, 4. evidences of these who are married, 5.
Martyr, a short saying of one, 103. a saying of the forty martyrs that suffered under Licinius, 349. a remarkable saying of Adolphus Clarebachius, when brought to the stake to be burnt, 782.
Match, the best match; or, the incomparable marriage, 1. [See *Marriage.*] What kind of a match Christ is, 659.
Meditation, the best rules for it, 353.
Mediator, the law to be taken out of his hand, 60. Christ, as Mediator, did not work without a reward, 469. his power in heaven and earth, 548. all that was given him as Mediator, was the gift of the glorious Trinity, 549. what power resides in him, 551.
Means, what means tend to promote stability in the faith, 677.
Mens state, Christ the best judge of them, 355.
Meeting with Christ, how it may be known, and the effects of it, 583, 584.

Mercy in God, a definition thereof, 93. wherein it is manifeſted, 93,—96. the properties of it; or, what in it affords ground of ſinging, 96, 97. her plea in behalf of the ſinner, 114. to whom the glory of experienced mercy is due, 598. infinite towards periſhing ſinners, 795.
Mercy-ſeat, ſignified Chriſt the great propitiation, 14, 116.
Merit, the fruit of Chriſt's merit, and the fruit of his power go together, 525. what they are, *ibid.*
Meſſage, four terrible ones abiding every one in a natural ſtate of death, 747.
Middle-age, how a perſon may know if it has been a time of love, 727.
Militant's ſong, or the believer's exerciſe while here below, 92. See *Song.*
Milk, the milk of the word, ſome properties thereof, 379.
Miniſters of the goſpel, what ought to be their great buſineſs and chief aim, 59, 321, 404, 460. ought ſome times to meddle in public matters, 664. ſhould be zealous in reproving ſin, and earneſt that people ſecure ſomething that death cannot take from them, *ibid.* ſome have a greater and ſome a leſſer meaſure of the Spirit, 761. theſe who are not miniſters of the Spirit, but of the letter, ought to be diſcouraged and diſcountenanced, *ibid.* their great work, *viz.* to blow the trumpet in Zion, 795. a twofold trumpet they are to blow, the trumpet of the law, and the trumpet of the goſpel, *ibid.* ſhould preach always Chriſt, whether in the law or the goſpel, *ibid.* ſome better qualified for blowing theſe trumpets conjunctly than others, and therefore ſome reſemble Boanerges, others Barnabas, 796. the duty of people to pray for them, *ibid.*
Miniſtry, the great deſign of a goſpel-miniſtry, 356. dangerous to deſert it, when it is the miniſtration of the Spirit, 761.
Miſery, the great miſery of theſe who are ſtrangers to the covenant, 682. God hath no reſpect to their perſons, tears, ſouls, duties, nor ſalvation, *ibid.* the miſery of ſinners pointed out, 714.
Mockers of the goſpel, their ſad ſtate, 406.
Mortification, not by the means of the law, 490. but by the power of God, *ibid.* the difference between goſpel and legal mortification, 542.
Motives to receive Chriſt, 236. and walk in him, 266. to gather to Shiloh, 327. to live upon the promiſe by faith, 429. to render Chriſt love for love, 90, 91, 733. and to let their love flow out to him, 734.
Mounting Chriſtian, 748. he mounts with wings as an eagle, 749. what wings he is mounted up with, *viz.* the influences of the Spirit, *ibid.* what wings he doth mount up with, 750. a negative view of the things wherein he doth not mount up, ſuch as airy ſpeculations, ſinful curioſity, ſelf-conceit, and ſtarts of devotion, *ibid.* a poſitive account of the things wherein he really aſcendeth up, as ſpiritual-mindedneſs, high intentions, holy deſires, pious inclinations, a goſpel converſation, and a heavenly walk, 750, 751. the particular ſeaſons when he more eſpecially mounts up, 751. the manner in which he mounts up, 752. the reaſons of it, *ibid.* evidences of theſe who are mounting Chriſtians, 753. an addreſs by way of terror to ſuch who never mounted, 754. of comfort to the mounting ſoul, *ibid.* and counſel to the hovering one, 755. what impediments are in the way hindering the mounting Chriſtian, 755, 756.
Murder, Satan frequently tempts to ſelf-murder, 722. ſelf-murder contrary both to the light of nature and the expreſs letter of the law of God, *ibid.* conſiderations to fortify againſt this monſtrous and inhuman ſin, 772, 773.
Myſtery, the myſteries wrapt up in Chriſt's engaging to approach God as ſurety, 174.

N

NAME, God's great name the ground and reaſon of ſaving great ſinners, 590. what we are to underſtand by the name of God, 591. what it is for God to ſave for his name's ſake, 593. what deſigns he has in view in ſaving for his name's ſake, 594. what it is in the name of God he has ſuch a regard to, when he ſaves for his name's ſake, *ibid.* what ſalvation he works for his name's ſake, 595. what the conſtituent parts of eternal ſalvation are, *ibid.* what are the means by which it is brought about, 596. over what impediments, on the ſinner's part, ſalvation is brought about for his name's ſake, *ibid.* reaſons aſſigned, why he ſaves for his name's ſake, 597. evidences of thoſe who are ſaved for his name's ſake, 599. how the name of God ought to be improved, 600. two parts of God's name, the ſaving knowledge whereof conveys life, 765.
Nation, who are the greateſt bleſſings to a church or nation, 700.
Nations, ſeven mighty nations that oppoſe the true Iſrael in their way to the heavenly Canaan, 474. where the ſtrength of theſe nations lies, 479. the miſerable caſe of the nations that know not God, and are enemies to the people of God, 490. evidences of thoſe who have commenced war with the nations, 491. an addreſs to unbelievers that are at peace with theſe ſinful nations, by way of conviction and counſel, 493. and to believers who are at war with the nations, and that both for comfort and counſel, 494. See *Conqueſt.*
Nature, divine, what it is to be a partaker of the divine nature, 414. the dreadful depravity of man's nature, while in a natural ſtate, 532. See *State.*
Natures, a view of Chriſt in his two natures, divine and human, 734.
Need, the ſinner's time of need, God's time of love, 713. the ſinner's time of need deſcribed, 714. what God's time of love is, *ibid.* moſt conſpicuous in the time of the greateſt need, 716. will not leave any then, 717. this condeſcendency moſt wonderful, *ibid.* evidences how a perſon may know if their time of need has been a time of love, 718, 719, 725, 726. See *Time of Need, Time of Love.*
Night, the ſweeteſt diſcoveries of God are uſually uſhered in with the darkeſt nights, 692. and are readily accompanied with dark nights, 693. ſeveral of theſe dark nights enumerated, 693, 694.
Noah, walked with God, 751.

O

OATHS, what oaths were impoſed on Scotland in the perſecuting period, 427.
Obedience, what place the believer's obedience hath in the covenant of grace, 59. what are the motives that ſhould influence it, 59, 85. union to Chriſt the root of true obedience, 279. not influenced by legal hopes of heaven, or ſlaviſh fears of hell, 222. goſpel-obedience, what, 229. the obedience of two put together to make up a perfect one, vain, 524. true obedience, what, 525. obedience of faith requiſite, 668.
Obedience, legal, the inſufficiency thereof laid open, in ſix particulars, 162.
Obedience of Chriſt, abſolutely perfect and meritorious of eternal life, 135, 735. the proper condition of eternal happineſs, 135.
Object of faith, what, 195, 218. great and glorious, 454.
Oblivion, the nature, object, univerſality, and reaſon of it, 645, 646.
Objections, about a perſon's name being in the covenant, 52, 53. different objections made by the exerciſed ſoul againſt receiving Chriſt; ſuch as from the greatneſs and multitude of ſins, the juſtice of God, the ſinner's unworthineſs, Chriſt's willingneſs, the ſinner's unpreparedneſs, the day of grace being gone, long continuing in ſin, jealouſing his right to receive Chriſt, from the power of ſin, and the weakneſs of the creature, *&c.* 38,—40. 251,—255. that unbelievers under the goſpel, are not under the commanding power of the law, as a covenant, refuted, 539. that believers by their new ſins are liable to the penal ſanction of the law, overturned, 541. that God hath a power, but his will doubted of, anſwered, 568. ſalvation not founded upon our believing and repenting, 598. a variety of objections ſtated and ſolved, 612. how can a child of God take comfort, when he finds the Lord hath left him, anſwered, 708. ſeveral objections about Chriſt's coming to the ſoul propounded and anſwered, 713. a variety of objections of the hovering ſinner, and hovering ſaint, ſtated and anſwered, 755, 756. the objection, How can one come to Chriſt for life, who hath no life, anſwered, 765.
Offers of Chriſt, a tender of him to thoſe who have miſpent their time of life and time of love, 719, 720.
Offer of the goſpel, to what kind of perſons made, 189. upon what grounds, 190. for what ends, 191. requires the almighty power of God to concur, in order to its being believed, *ibid.* in what capacity Chriſt is offered therein, 209, 210, 211. nineteen of theſe capacities mentioned, *ibid.*
Offices, Chriſt to be received in all his offices, particularly in his threefold office of Prophet, Prieſt, and King, 209,—213, 227. to be glorified and honoured in his threefold office, 269, 772.
Old-age, how a perſon may know if it has been a time of love, 728.
Oneneſs, of the oneneſs betwixt the Father and the Son, 441. that there is an oneneſs, evinced, 442. but this oneneſs is not an oneneſs of perſonality and humanity, *ibid.* but an oneneſs of nature, properties, work, honour, will, felicity, intereſt, affection, authority, ſupreme Deity, *&c.* 442, 443. what inſtructing leſſons may be learned from this oneneſs, 454. the foundation of the honour conferred on Chriſt, 459.
Ordinances, ſolemn ordinances and goſpel-ſolemnites, both teaching and ſealing, gathering times to Shiloh, 310. what ought to be the great deſign of gathering to them, 312. on whom the efficacy and virtue of them depend, 560.
Owen, Doctor, a quotation from him concerning faith and obedience being a condition of the covenant, 62. a quotation of his concerning faith, 298. concerning the idolatry of Britain, 427. of the law as a covenant, 513.

P

PARABLES, the ſcripture is full of them, 749. the reaſon thereof, *ibid.*
Papiſts, talk of their merit of congruity and condignity, 76. their notion of juſtification exploded, 156. their doubtſome faith refuted, 194.
Parents, the firſt ſin committed by our firſt parents, a moral evil, 534.
Paſſover, no ground to be aſhamed of our Chriſtian one, 656.
Patronage, a grievance in the church, 631, 635. the origin of it from the Pope, not warranted from the ſcripture, 648, 662, 670. contrary to the acts of the church of Scotland in her beſt times, 662.
Peace, the healing overture propoſed by peace to reconcile the Creator and the creature, 115.
People, of the gathering of the people to Shiloh, 276. of the place, manner, and certainty of their gathering, 278. what kind of people are gathered, 284. how they act in gathering to him, 294,—302. See *Gathering.*
People of God, their duty both to hear what miniſters and God ſays to them, but eſpecially what God ſays to Chriſt, 47. how ſweetly God ſpeaks of him and to him, when treating with him, 48. their ſinning and ſuffering circumſtances not inconſiſtent with his complacential love, 722. have all a refuge in time of calamity, 729. their duty when they have met with him in the ſanctuary, 748. their exerciſe and privilege, 749. their duty to pray for miniſters, and receive their meſſage, 796.
Perfections of God, glorified in the children of promiſe, 389, 429. all ſeen in Chriſt, 448.
Perſecution, the ordinary lot of the children of God, 385.
Perſeverance in the faith requiſite, 669. in the preſent and leaſt truth injoined, *ibid.* that of the ſaints ſecured, 698, 699.
Perſon, Chriſt firſt to be received in his perſon, and then his benefits, 228.
Perſons, who theſe perſons are whoſe ſinning circumſtances are not inconſiſtent with the love of God, 722. a diſcovery of theſe whoſe ſinning circumſtances are indeed inconſiſtent with his love, 723. who theſe are whoſe afflicted circumſtances are not inconſiſtent with his love, *ibid.* a deſcription of theſe whoſe carriage in afflicted circumſtances is indeed inconſiſtent with his love, 724. who theſe perſons are whoſe time of trouble is evidently no time of love, 725. and who they are whoſe time of diſtreſs has been a time of love, *ibid.* See *Affliction.*
Perſuaſion in the nature of faith, wherein it lies, 85, 195, 218, 22 562, 582. a twofold perſuaſion, a fiducial and evidential, 295. t difference between them, *ibid.*

Phariſe

Pharisees, interrogate Christ with several questions, 337. their character, 350. drag the poor blind man, whom Christ cured, from court to court, and at last excommunicate him, 677.
Philip, his request, 441.
Philosopher, a remarkable saying of a heathen one, 34. one of them demand first a day, then a week, then a month to tell what God is, and then declared it was impossible, 353.
Pipe of the promise, suited to every particular case either the saint or sinner can be in, 438.
Pillars, the two in Solomon's temple, their names and signification, 664.
Power, the Mediator's power in heaven and earth, 548. the degree of that power, *ibid.* what right he hath thereto, 549. what things were given to Christ, which carry in them the gift of all power, *ibid.* what that power is, that is delegated to, and resides in the person of Christ, 551. considered in its kinds and parts, *ibid.* viewed in its acts and properties, 551, 552, 553. the extent of this power, being all power in heaven and in earth, 554. the divine donation of this power, 555. four periods when this power was given to him, *ibid.* the manner how all power was given him, 556. by whose pleasure, by what means, and with what solemnity was it given him, *ibid.* the reasons why all power in heaven and earth was given him, 557. who are interested in his power, 565, 571. the difference between his power and willingness cleared up, 568. his power suited to the different cases of the sinner, 569.
Prayer, what it is to pray the Father in Christ's name, 609.
Prayers, our prayers a fruit of God's love, 78. what is remarkable in the prayers of these whose time is a time of love, 733.
Praying times, usually gathering and sealing times, 309.
Preacher, the female one, 572. her subject, *ibid.* how she treats it, 573. See *Samaria.*
Presence, a twofold one of Christ with his people, 364, 365. what ground there is to expect his presence, 657.
—— sensible presence, sudden absence, 739. remarks concerning the finding and missing his presence, 741. in what respects they may miss his presence, where they enjoyed it, 742. they may miss him in the duties of his appointment, in their frames, in their best and their worst cases, in the words of grace, in the instruments whereby they have found him, in the society where they have met with him, and places where they have enjoyed him, 742, 743. the reasons of this dispensation, 743. evidences of these who enjoy his presence, 744. their duty pointed out, 745, 746. how his presence ought to be improven, 746. an address to those who know nothing of his presence, *ibid.* four terrible messages abiding such at death, 747. a fourfold wo denounced against them, *ibid.* warranted to close with Christ, *ibid.*
Preventing love; or, God's love to us the cause of our love to him, 74. in what respects it is preventing love, 76. preventing as to the object of it, the time of it, the dawning of it, and the fruits and effects of it, 77. prevents our holiness, faith, repentance, and prayers, 77, 78.
Prevalency of sin, the difference between the power of prevalency and the power of dominion, 492.
Pride, a cause why people think so little of Christ, 357. wherein spiritual pride lies, 586.
Principles, many good ones abused in the world, 199. infidel and deistical principles prevailing in Scotland, 671.
Prison, what kind of a prison sinners are in, 239.
Profession of the faith, both verbal and practical, active and passive, injoined, 668.
Promise, the pregnant promise, with her issue, 367. the nature of the promise opened up, by considering the subject or author of it, 370. the matter of it, or the good contained in it, *ibid.* and what promises believers are children of, 371. the qualities or properties of it, 372. the object of it, or to whom it belongs, 374. for whom it is designed, by whom it is possest, to whom it is presented, *ibid.* several questions proposed and answered, concerning the absolute freedom and conditionality of the promise, 375. the promise presents a suitable remedy to the sinner's malady, 377. in what respects believers are the children of the promise, 378. in what method and order they become so, 380. the comparison stated, and the parallel run in ten particulars, between believers and Isaac, and the truth evinced, how they are, as Isaac was, the children of promise, 382. the reasons why the promise hath such prolific virtue for begetting children to God, 386. why God will have his children to be so by promise, 387. why them and them only to be so, 389. all the children of promise freed from the law, 391. in what cases they should apply the promise, 393. religious duties, outward blessings, *&c.* nothing without a promise, 405. evidences of the children of the promise, both negative and positive, antecedent and concluſive, 407, 421. who are descendants of the promise, 408. who are begotten to the profession of religion by the promise, 409. who are special believers of the promise, 410. a fourfold faith that does not amount to a belief of the promise, *ibid.* who live by faith on the promise, 412. and are true lovers of the promise, 413. what the children of promise are liberate from, 420. both believers and unbelievers are apt to mistake concerning their being children of the promise, 421. fifteen cases concerning the right use and application of the promise, 422. whose children they are who are not the children of the promise, 427. and whose children they are that are the children of the promise, 428. all the attributes of God in the promise, 429. the excellency of the promises and a life of faith upon them, 429,—433. directions how to live upon the promise by faith, 434. how to improve the promise, 436. what means are necessary to be used in order to living on the promise, *ibid.* what connexion there is between applying the promise, and applying Christ, 438. the promise adapted to every case a person can be in, *ibid.* the import of that promise, John xii. 32. laid open, 659. how and when God performs his promise to his people, 695, 696. in what respects he will and will not leave them, 697. no promise to exempt any from the cross, 721.
Promises, some are constitutive, others are executive of the covenant, 63. the excellency of them pointed out, from their author, object, price, reality, immutability, and fulness, 429. a catalogue of the promises recommended, and the manner how to do it, proposed, 435.
Promising God, a performing God, 690. how and when he performs his promise, 695, 696, 697.
Properties of the love of God, 81, 91. See *Qualities.*
Prophecy, the present state of the world is a visible performing of scripture-prophecies, 689.
Propitiation, the mercy-seat signified Christ the great propitiation, 14. all the divine attributes meet in Christ as the propitiation and atonement, 116.
Propositions for clearing the nature of salvation, 590. for evincing the Father's love to the Son, 602.
Protestants, some of them too far symbolize with Papists, in substituting *conditions* in place of *merit*, in the matter of our justification, 76.
Providence, an over-ruling one, making all things co-operate for good to the hidden remnant, 106. providence may sometimes seem to contradict the promise, 778.
Providences, dark ones cleared in due time, 774. the Lord may be many times very near his people, and doing many great and precious things for them, which they cannot dive into, and must in a great measure be ignorant of, till he explain all his mind to them, 775. this verified in a variety of instances, both from the Old and New Testament, *ibid.* the Lord's dark and mysterious way of dealing with his people, may both respect their outward state in the world and their inward spiritual state, 778. an enumeration of these dark and mysterious dispensations of God's providence that he is pleased to cover with a cloud of majesty, that his people seldom know what he is doing with them, *ibid.* in what respects his people may be ignorant and in the dark about his work towards them, 779. the matter, manner, causes, beauty, excellency, necessity, usefulness, changes, and design of his work may be all unknown to them for a time, 779, 780. the reasons why the Lord takes this mysterious way with his people, *viz.* to display himself, discover his enemies, search out the latent corruption of the heart, manifest and exercise their graces, and learn to fear and reverence him, 780, 781. the seasons when he makes them afterwards know what now they are in the dark about, 781, 782. sometimes very soon after the work is over, and sometimes deferred for a long time, *ibid.* there are some circumstances of time that he observes in making them know what was dark and mysterious to them before, such as, when in private, when attending public ordinances, exercising their graces, performing duty; sometimes just before death, other times just at death itself, 782. sometimes when they are longing and hoping, and even when they have almost lost hope, at the lowest ebb, 783. how to know something of what he has been doing, 784. the duty of disciples who may be in the dark about what he is doing in his providential dispensations, 785. directions to these who know something of his dispensations, *ibid.* an address to sinners who know nothing of the dispensations of his grace, and are unconcerned thereat, 786.
Punishment, partakers in sin must be partakers in punishment, 721.

Q

QUALIFICATIONS, none necessary in order to a sinner's coming to Christ, 764.
Qualities, of the sword of justice that awaked against Christ, 28, 29. of the blood of Christ shed by that sword, 33. of the covenant, 62, 71. of the law, 81, 513. of the love of God, 81, 91. of the believer's militant song, 103. of his death to the law, 137, 138. of Christ's engagement as our Surety, 174. of faith as it is a receiving Christ, 193, 205. of the way in which the believer walks, 260. of the believer's walk, 220, 229. of God's gathering power, 292. of the sacrifice Christ offered up, 343. of seeing and commending him, 445, 387. of the promise whereof believers are the children, 372. of the strength of sin, 500. of the power given to our Lord Jesus Christ, 553. of the Father's love to Christ, 602, 603. of God's manifestations, 677. of the river of life, 758, 763. of the sound of the gospel-trumpet, 793.
Question, *What think ye of Christ?* the main question of the Christian Catechism, 336. the persons to whom it was proposed, 337. the emphasis of the question pointed out, *ibid.* the import of the question opened up, by considering it objectively, formally, actively, and subjectively, 340,—352. the import of the question, what think ye of Christ? *objectively*, or with respect to the matter of our thoughts, viewed in a fourfold light, *viz.* what think ye of his righteousness, pedigree, person, anointing, teaching, priesthood, kingdom, authority, ability, fulness, savour, beauty, preciousness, usefulness, 340,—344. what think ye of his station, travels, treasures, thoughts, words, works, gospel, service, and wages, livery, love, loveliness, blessing, everlasting glories, tabernacles, cross, crown, friends, enemies, *&c.* 361,—365. the import of the question *actively* considered, *viz.* what know ye, believe ye, love ye, esteem ye, of Christ? 345,—348. the import of the question *formally* considered, *viz.* what good think ye of him, what glory think you is in him, what use and worth think you he is of? 348. what price he is to be bought for, and what rate sold at, 449. the import of the question *subjectively* considered, *viz.* as put to the Jews in general, the Pharisees, Sadducees, and every individual, 349,—352. ten reasons assigned, why this is the leading question in the Christian Catechism, 352.
Questions, select questions on some of the most interesting points in divinity; such as, what is that nearness to God, and access to him, that a man hath in time, when brought within the vail? 12. how persons may know if they have that love to God, which is a fruit and an effect of his love to them? 86,—90. several ones relative to the absolute freedom, conditionality, particularity, *&c.* of the promise, 375. about faith and repentance being gospel-commands, 395. the conditionality of faith, *ibid.* a believer's desiring to be under the law, 396. whether a person's knowledge of Christ and the gospel be of a special nature? 408. if he is a descendant of the promise? *ibid.* whether he was begotten to a profession of religion by the power of the

the law, or the power of the promise? 499. if his faith be of a right sort, and he a special believer of the promise? 600. a fourfold faith that does not amount to a belief of the promise, *ibid.* how one may know if they live by faith on the promise? 412. who are true lovers of the promise? 413. and a true lover of Christ? *ibid.* how persons may know if they have the Spirit of promise? 416. fifteen cases propounded and solved concerning the right use and improvement of the promise, 422. what glory faith brings to God, and what way it glorifies him? 433. what means to be used to the living by faith on the promise? 436. what connexion there is betwixt applying the promise and applying Christ? 438. how a person may know if he hath seen Christ, so as to see the Father in him? 460. how a person may know if the spiritual warfare is commenced and progressively going forward? 491. how to know the difference between the power of prevalency and the power of dominion of sin? 492. what resisting of sin is consistent with the dominion of it? 528. and what prevalency of it, with being freed from the strength thereof? 529, 530. what the strength of sin is which remains with the believer, and what it serves for? 537. what it excites to? 538. who are these in whom the rule and strength of sin remain unbroken? 542. how persons may know if it be by the gospel or by the law they mortify sin? *ibid.* who are they who make their duties their righteousness? 543. who are they that have renounced their righteousness? 544. what is it in the gospel that contributes to the strength of holiness? 545. whose names are written in God's book? 568. if a person believes that Christ hath power to save him? answered, 569. if a person, who hath not the Spirit of God, nor a renewed conscience, be able to discern his own vileness? answered, 583. what it is in the name of God he hath such a regard to, when he saves for his name's sake? 594. how a person may know when God's rod hath done its work? 599. how God's saving for his name's sake is a ground of faith to *all*, seeing these whom he designs to save are only the *elect*, and these whom he actually saves are only *believers?* answered, 600. who are the members of God's house? and what sort of a house the church is? 628. how a person may know if ever Christ has come to him? 711. are there any signs of his coming? 712. may God leave his own in their most extreme need, and last battle? 717. why he chuses to make the time of greatest need, his time of love? *ibid.* in what respects he may seem to be angry with these whose time is notwithstanding a time of love? 720. what love-designs he may be carrying on by these wrath-like dispensations? 721. what love appears in them? *ibid.* what instructive lessons we may learn from them? 722. when is the desire holy? 731. when is a person made truly willing? 732. what is remarkable in the prayers of these, whose time is a time of love? 733. the question, *Where, Lord?* answered, 748. when may Christ be said, in a spiritual sense, to stoop down and wash his disciples feet? 784. why is it promised, that a number of outcasts ready to perish shall come, when the gospel-trumpet shall be blown? 794.

Quotations, one from Luther, concerning an absolute God, 36. from Dr. Owen, concerning faith or obedience being a condition of the covenant, 62. from —— concerning matching with Christ, 78. one from Mr. Patrick Hamilton, concerning good works, 223. one from Anthony Burgess, concerning idolatry, 228. from Dr. Owen, concerning faith, 298. from Chrysostom, concerning the sun, 325. concerning the forty martyrs that suffered under Licinius, 349. from Luther, about the world, 385. from our Standards, concerning the believer's freedom, 432. from Augustine, concerning the tyranny of sin, 403. from —— comparing sin to a spider, 504. from Augustine, concerning the life of the creatures, 505. from Dr. Owen, concerning men being under the power of the law as a covenant, 513. from Luther, concerning justification by grace, 531. from —— concerning seeking life by the law, 534. from Prof. Compbell, concerning the laws of nature, 671.

R

REASON, carnal, a cause why people think so very little of Christ, 358.

Rebellion against God, when people may be said to be guilty of it, 665.

Receiving Christ, the great duty of receiving and walking in him opened, 186. what it is to receive him, 193. how faith acts in receiving him, 188, 205. in what respects it receives him, *viz.* as Jesus and Lord, 197, 206. the connexion between receiving Christ and walking in him, 213. the order of the connexion; or, the reasons why receiving Christ precedes walking in him, 215. and why there must be a walking in him after he is received, 216. what is received when Christ is received, 217, 239. evidences of those who have received him, 225. how that faith was created by the Spirit that receives Christ, *ibid.* in what manner it was acted in the soul when he was received, 227. motives to urge a receiving of him, 235. who do not receive him, 238. what comes along with Christ when he is received, 239. what is received when Christ is not received, 240.

Reconciliation, a threefold one to be seen in Christ, 469.

Redeemer, why our Redeemer behoved to be God's fellow, 24. why he behoved to be a man, 25. and what kind of a man he became, *ibid.* why both God and man in one person, 26. he is a glorious and well-qualified Redeemer, 33.

Redemption, a wonderful concurrence of all the three persons of the Trinity therein, 34. all the three persons observe a distinct œconomy therein, 760. wherein that distinct œconomy lies, *ibid.* the glory of each person shines therein, 761.

Reformation, in Scotland, carried on by degrees, 489. the gospel successful then, 531.

Refuge, the children of God have all a sure one in time of calamity, 729.

Regeneration, the necessity of it, 508.

Rejecters of Christ, a description of these who are so, 238.

Relation, there is an antient and present fœderal, as well as a special relation between God and his people, 477. the import thereof, 478.

Religion, a test of the true religion, 59. true religion, the sweetness of it, 107. a mystery to the world, 152. the root of it, 219. is a qualified motion, *ibid.* no just ground to blame it, 768. always some thing savoury accompanies the sedulous exercise of it, 770.

Remarks, concerning the day of espousals between Christ and the believer, 3. concerning the covenant of works and grace, 49, 50. concerning becoming dead to the law in point of justification before we live to God in point of sanctification, 145. concerning man's thoughts, 338. concerning seeing Christ, 443. concerning the most holy place, 632. concerning the church, 640. shewing in what respects God may be said to leave his people, and wherein he will not leave them, 697. evincing that the sinning circumstances of his people are not inconsistent with his love, 722. that their afflicted circumstances are not inconsistent with his love, 723. concerning finding God's presence, 741. concerning the blessings of eternal life, 757.

Remedy, Christ is a needful, suitable, near, easy, seasonable remedy, 243.

Rent, the vail of the temple rent, 8. See *Vail, Temple.*

Repentance, the gift of God, and a fruit of his love, 78. a principal part of sanctification, and doth not precede our justification, 222. is not before but a fruit of faith, 300, 509, 582. a definition of it, 308. whether or not it is a gospel-command, 395. wherein legal repentance differs from gospel-repentance, 396. repentance a *part* and not a *condition* of salvation, 598.

Repository, Christ heaven's grand repository, 601. See *Father, Son, Love.*

Representation of the divine glory in Christ, exceeds all others, 734. in what respects it does so, *ibid.*

Reproofs, *viz.* to these who praise not the Lord, 108. to all legalists, 196. and other erroneous persons, 221. particularly Latitudinarians and Libertines, 225. to those who are filled with unworthy thoughts of Christ, 357.

Rhetoric, human, quite insufficient, without the power of God, to reach the heart, 723.

Revelation, the necessity of a divine one, objective and subjective, 455.

Righteousness, exhibits a charge against the sinner, 115.

—— God's, how taken in scripture, 536. the danger of being ignorant of it, *ibid.* a threefold view of it from the scripture, *ibid.*

—— The righteousness of Christ, as it is the righteousness of God, is a full, sufficient, perfect, law-biding, law-magnifying, justice-satisfying, truly meritorious, and everlasting, 10, 135, 138, 221, 341, 527, 561, 562. is every way profitable, 138. the sole ground of a sinner's justification, 198, 227, 490. the nature of it, being a perfect righteousness in point of merit, to justify, and of Spirit to sanctify, 222. wherein the faith of both these consists, 227. both active and passive righteousness imputed, 239. all the saints partakers of it and arrayed with it, 325, 416. no justification partly by it, and partly by our own, 524. who reject this righteousness, and establish one of their own, founded on their duties, 543. who have renounced their own righteousness, and rely on Christ's, 544. the excellency and acceptableness of it, 561. perfectly meritorious of eternal life, 735. perfumes all our duties and services, 772.

Righteousness, legal, every way unprofitable for justification, 138. ignorance of Christ, and his righteousness, the great cause of it, 161.

River of life, 757. what understood thereby, *ibid.* some of the streams of this river mentioned, *ibid.* a description of this river from its qualities, *viz.* the abundance, purity, virtue, and splendor of it, 758. the import of its being said to proceed out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, 759. the reasons why it thus proceeds, *ibid.* the excellency of these waters, 763.

Rod, how a person may know when God's rod hath done its work, 599. God has many rods that he afflicts his people with, 723.

S

SACRAMENT, the nature and end of it, 40. who stand debarred from it, 40, 42. is a love-feast, 74. the design of it to set forth Christ in his death and sufferings, 447. what ground the Lord's people have to expect that Christ will come to this feast, 713.

Sacrifice, who despise Christ as a sacrifice, 41. who truly value him, 42. properties of the sacrifice he offered up, 343.

Sadducees, propound a question to Christ, 337. their character, 350.

Safety, where the safety of God's people lies, 700.

Saints, their love described from its act, subject, object, and source, 74. considered in its *nature*, 79. viewed in its *kinds*, common and special, 80. considered in its *degrees*, as a love of desire, complacency, benevolence, and beneficence, *ibid.* viewed in its *dimensions*, *viz.* height, depth, breadth, and length, 81. considered in its *properties*, as free, sincere, ardent, active, uniting, solicitous, bold, persevering, conjugal, assimulating, and extatical, 81, 82. viewed in its *effects*, as it vents itself in prayer, praise, wonder, obedience, *&c. ibid.* considered in its *object* and *extent*; it loves Christ in his person, natures, offices, relations, righteousness, and purchase, *ibid.* viewed in the *grounds* of it, as founded on Christ's excellency and undertaking, the Father's love to him, and his love to them, 83. God's love to them the cause of their love to him, evinced from four considerations, 83. what influence his love has upon theirs, *viz.* a moral and physical one, 84. the difference between God's love to the saints, and their love to him, *ibid.* God's love to the saints sufficient both to slay their enmity and quicken their love, 86. evidences of the saints love to God, 87,—90. all ought to seek a view of God's love, and render him love for love, 90, 91, 733. a word of comfort to the lovers of God and Christ, 92. their happiness, 107. their summer times of refreshment, 306. their winter times of adversity, *ibid.* their spring time of spiritual duty and gospel diligence, 308. their consummate harvest, 312. their portion, 397, 400. the various articles of their portion, and where it is treasured up, 400. the reason they love Christ, 460. the weakest of them have perfectly satisfied the law in Christ, and freed from its commanding and condemning strength, 524. why they confide in God and trust in his name, 598. wherein their happiness consists, 651. their duty to sit still and abide in Christ by faith, 676. their perseverance secured, 698, 699. their time of greatest need and pinching extremity, the time of the Lord's gracious opportunity to help them, 716. this matter of the greatest wonder, 717.

Salvation, impossible without a perfect and complete righteousness, 49. what salvation is, 197. justification and sanctification, the two principal

cipal branches of it, 518, 534. all the parts of it the offspring of the promise, 391. wholly of grace, and neither for, in, by, or according to works, 409, 468. what is the rule of it, 469. to whom to be ascribed, 508. how much upon the heart of God and Christ, 560. six propositions opening up the nature of it, 590, 595. what are the constituent parts of that salvation he works for his name's sake, 595. what are the means by which it is brought about, 596. over what impediments, on the sinner's part, this salvation is effectuate, *ibid.* the gospel-method of salvation quite free, 598. yield's encouragements to sinners, 600. to be viewed in a threefold light, *viz.* as salvation decreed, obtained, and exhibited, *ibid.* whom he has purposed to save, 713.

Samaria, the woman of Samaria's sermon to the men of the city, 572. how Christ discovered himself to her, *ibid.* the influence thereof, 573. the means by which it was brought about, 574. the manner and kind of it, 575. the effects of it, 576. she commends the Saviour, 577. the matter of her commendation, *ibid.* the manner of it, 578. the reasons thereof, 580. the properties of it, 587.

Sanctification, the difference between justification and sanctification, stated and cleared, and the priority of the first to the last evinced, 85. the influence that dying to the law, in point of justification, hath upon promoting sanctification, 132, 133. Christ to be received as a Lord to promote it, 197, 208. natively flows from justification, 221, 524.

Sanctuary, the duty of these who have seen something of his glory therein, 748.

Sarah, allegorically put for the covenant of grace, 368.

Satan, what kind of a guest he is, 240. how a person may know, when a promise comes into the heart, whether it be presented by Satan or the Lord, 424. his great design is to blind the eyes of men, 458. assaults these who come to Christ, 767. a cruel enemy, *ibid.* the difference between his temptations and the convictions of the Spirit, *ibid.* six kinds of his temptations condescended upon, 769. he tempts to blasphemy; how such ought to conduct themselves, *ibid.* he tempts to heart-wandering; advices offered to fortify against this temptation, 770. he tempts to the omission of duty; considerations to fortify against this temptation, *ibid.* he tempts the sober to commission of sin; considerations to guard against this temptation, 771. he tempts to unworthy apprehensions of God; considerations offered how to conceive aright of God, and repel this temptation, *ibid.* he tempts to self-murder; advices offered how to withstand this horrid temptation, 772. all such warmly expostulated with to come to Christ, 773, 774.

Saviour, the strength of sin evinces itself in his sufferings and death above all other things, 505. his joyful approach, chearfully welcomed by the church's echo of faith, 704. a fourfold coming joyful both to him and them, 705.

Sceptre, of the departure of the sceptre from Judah, 276.

Scheme, the popish and Baxterian scheme of justification exploded, 156.

Scotland, early visited with gospel-light, 303, 320, 489. reformed more purely than England, *ibid.* solemnly entered into, and frequently renewed their covenant with the Lord, *ibid.* what they are by national descent, 427. in what respects they resembled Israel of old, 489. errors and corruptions taking place, 634. some good thing remains, notwithstanding all her evils 636. how the church in it hath been many ways besieged, and still hitherto delivered, 647. what errors are abounding in her, 666. two things very sad in her, 667. the principles of infidelity much upon the increase, 671. how dangerous her circumstances are, 676, 701. her ruin but beginning, 707. immerced in all manner of wickedness, 761. and grievous defections, 796.

Scriptures, faith and practice the two principal things taught therein, 205.

Seasons, the special seasons wherein people gather to Shiloh, 302,—314. the remarkable gatherings in the church in general, 302. the initial gathering of sinners, 305. the progressive gathering of believers, 306. and the consummate gathering of the saints, 312.

Seat, no seat for a weary soul to rest upon but a God in Christ, 676. what kind of a seat Christ is, *ibid.*

Secession, the origin of it, 631. the manner of it stated, 634. the grounds and reasons of it, 635, 636, 648, 661, 670.

Seeing, a threefold seeing that is to be separate from faith, 346.

Self-conceit and self-justification, why so prevalent in the visible church, 581.

Self-examination, the best rule for it, 353.

Sense, the difference between faith and sense, 245, 295, 394.

Sent of God, Christ so denominated, 330. what he is sent to be unto the people, 330, 331.

Separation from a church, in what cases lawful, 631, 634.

Servants of God, have been put to great hardships through the rage of persecuting brethren, 690

Shem, the origin of the Jews, 58. Japhet's dwelling in his tents, a clear prediction of the conversion of the Gentiles, *ibid.*

Shepherd, how Christ comes to be called a Shepherd, and what kind of a Shepherd he is, 26; 212. why the Lord of hosts calls him his Shepherd, 27.

Shield, what kind of a shield the Lord is to his people, 478.

Shiloh, of the gathering of the people to him, 276. the different acceptations of the word Shiloh, 277. how it signifies Christ, *ibid.* what is supposed and imported in the peoples gathering to Shiloh, 279,—284. in what respects they are gathered to him, 289. in what manner, 290. by what means, 291. the qualities of the gathering, 292,—302. the seasons thereof, 302, 303. with respect to the various degrees of gathering of the church in general, *ibid.* the initial gathering of sinners in particular, 305. the progressive gathering of believers, 306. the consummate gathering of saints, 312. six reasons why Shiloh must be a gathering of the people, 315. six reasons why to Shiloh must the gathering of the people be, 316. evidences of those who have been gathered to Shiloh, 322. what they are gathered to who are gathered to Shiloh, 328. exhortations to gather to him, 327. to gather more closely to him, 334.

Siege, the church besieged by a great king, and what bulwarks he besieges with, 641, 642.

Sight, the saving sight; or, a view of God in Christ, 440. A threefold distance that mars our sight of God, *ibid.* the different glasses by which he is seen, 440, 446. ten remarks opening up the nature of this sight, *viz.* that there is a mental, spiritual, and wrathful, common and saving sight of him, 443. the light in which he is seen, the eye by which he is taken up, the different periods wherein he is viewed, the certain seasons wherein he is beheld, and the various respects and degrees of this sight, 444. the several properties of it, the means whereby, and the glasses wherein Christ is seen, with the glorious, full, and extensive object, 446. in what respects they who see Christ see the Father, *viz.* in his nature, relation, perfections, names, and glory, 447,—450. in what manner the Father is seen in Christ, 451, the reasons why they who see Christ see the Father, 452. what instructions may be learned from this truth, 456. what are the blessed effects of this sight, 459. evidences to examine if we have seen this glorious sight, from a consideration of the object of the sight, 460, 468. from a view of the fruit and offspring of it, 461. the excellency and necessity thereof, 465. where this great sight is to be seen, *ibid.* and how it is to be attained, 466. how to be proved, 467. what those who see Christ see in him, 468. how it ought to be improved, 470.

Similitudes, earthly similitudes useful to represent spiritual mysteries, 188.

Sin, the infinite malignity and dreadful demerit of it, 34. how God hates it, 89. the dreadful evil of it, 124. what kind of a guest it is, 240. wherein the sin against the Holy Ghost consisteth, 242. is enmity against God, 455. the difference between the power of prevalency and the power of dominion, 492. how the law is the strength of it, opened up and unfolded, 496. the grand evil that ruins all mankind, 497. its grand quality and accidental source, *ibid.* took justifying strength from the law, *ibid.* its virulent nature appears principally in its being a transgression of the holy law, and an opposition to God the Law-giver, 498. wherein the strength of sin lies, 499. ten qualities of the strength of it, 500. the degrees of its strength viewed, positively, comparatively, and superlatively, 501, 502. what strength it hath from the law, 514. what sins the law is the strength of, 515. in what respects the law is the strength of sin, 518. reasons why it is so, 521. sin, under the gospel greatly aggravated, 524. hath a reigning power over the ungodly, and a prevailing one over the godly, 527. what resistance of sin is consistent with the dominion of it, 528. what prevalency of it is consistent with being freed from the strength thereof, 529. the woful nature and infinite evil of it, 534. the dreadfulness of a stedfast course therein, 675. sin and suffering, how connected, 723. no little or small sin properly speaking, 771. the nature of every sin, objectively considered, is an infinite evil, *ibid.* See *Law, Strength of Sin.*

Sing, what ground to sing may a child of God have when sin is a part of their judgment, 102.

Sinner, cannot be justified without a complete righteousness, 10.

Sinners, four particular seasons when they are gathered to Shiloh, 305. their hope, 397. different sorts of them called to fly to their hope, 398. the greatest may receive hope of mercy, 581. their duty to look unto and to receive Christ, and to rest upon him, 460, 509, 676. their miserable thraldom without him, 508. their deplorable condition by nature, 532, 789. under both the command and curse of the law, 535. how Christ manifests himself to sinners, 572. the means thereof, 574. the manner of it, 575. the effect that follows, 576. the reasons thereof, 580. God's great name the ground and reason of saving them, 590. [See *Name.*] A door of hope opened for them in the gospel, 598. their great duty, to come to Christ, 612. encouragements to do so, *ibid.* the benefit of matching with him, 658. their time of need and misery pointed out, 714, 734. their worst time the very juncture he shews his love, 716. this matter of the greatest admiration, 717. motives to induce sinners to love him, 734. sinners of all sorts warranted to come to him, 747. an address to such who know nothing of his ways, 786. their miserable circumstances, as outcasts, ready to perish, delineated, 789. their duty in this case, *viz.* to come to Christ, 790. what this coming imports, *ibid.* in what capacity we are to come to him, *viz.* as Redeemer and Jehovah, *ibid.* the means by which he gathers them, 791. the efficacy of these means, 793. the end for which they shall come, 794.

Socinians, their notion of God's pardoning sin, 36.

Son, the Father's love to the Son evinced, 602, 603. in what respect and on what account he loves him, *ibid.* some qualities and effects of his love, 603. how his love to him is evidenced, *ibid.* See *Father, Love.*

Song, the militant's song, 92. what is it to sing to the Lord, 103. the qualities of this song, *ibid.* the import of it, 104. the reasons of it, 105. how we are to sing it, 109,—111.

Soul, the manner in which the soul acts in receiving Christ, 227.

Spirit, how the Spirit of God operates in creating that faith in the soul which receives Christ, 225. six degrees of unbelief as it bears a reference to the Spirit, 242. the difference between the Spirit's working by his common motions and as a living principle, 294. evidences of those who are partakers of the Spirit of promise, 416. how the Spirit carries on his work in the soul, 490. Christ's coming in the Spirit joyful both to him and his people, 706. the Spirit and all spiritual blessings and comforts proceed from God in Christ, 757. the Spirit in scripture frequently compared to a river, *ibid.* the giving of the Spirit a part of Christ's royalty, 759. the Spirit essentially one with the Father and the Son, 760. the difference between his convictions and Satan's temptations, 767, 768.

—— the malignity of an antichristian, Socinian, libertine, Arminian, and legal spirit, 36, 152. evidences thereof both in the unconverted and regenerate, 156. causes of it, 160. and the danger thereof, 161.

Spring, the believer's spring-time of spiritual duty and gospel-diligence, and the various fruits that indicate a gathering time, 308, 309.

Stability in the faith, the church's strength, 663. the nature of stability in the faith opened, 667. it is a duty both commanded and commended in the word, *ibid.* what it supposes, *viz.* that we know the word of faith, have the grace of faith, make a profession of faith, and yield the obedience of faith, 668. what this stability in the faith includes, *viz.* an adherence to the faith, and a perseverance in it, 669. what it excludes, *viz.* fainting at the sight of the cross, hesitation about the truth, presumptious persuasion, wavering, doubtfulness of mind, sinful compliance, sinful silence, sinful debates, 669, 670.

670. what this ſtability in the faith infers, with reſpect to the object, cleared up in ten particulars, 671. what it infers with reference to the exerciſe of the duty, laid open in ten particulars, 672. what is the work of an eſtabliſhed faith, 673. ſtability in the faith is peoples ſtrength and ſafety, 674. the evil and diſadvantage of inſtability, *ibid.* the good and advantage of ſtability in the faith, *ibid.* eight evidences of a ſtrong faith, 676. ſtability conſidered as a privilege and a duty, 677. how to attain ſtability in the faith, *viz.* to labour after eſtabliſhing graces, improve eſtabliſhing means, ſeek after eſtabliſhing manifeſtations and breathings, to take heed to theſe things which hinders ſtability, and to be jealous of ourſelves and watchful, *ibid.* encouragements to this duty of ſtability, and the advantages of it, 678.

Staff, a fivefold ſort of a ſtaff the believer hath to walk with, 232.

State, a Chriſtleſs ſtate is a burdened, loathſome, poor, enſlaved, wrathful, curſed, miſerable ſtate, 247, 714. our natural ſtate groſs darkneſs, 456. who are in a ſafe ſtate, 649. a perſon may be in a ſtate of grace, and yet not aſſured of it, 727. the ſad ſtate of ſinners by nature, 789.

Stedfaſtneſs in the faith commended and recommended, 186, 667. [See *Stability in the faith.*] Such have need to be exhorted to walk in Chriſt, 213. ſtedfaſtneſs in a courſe of ſin the dreadfulneſs of it, 675.

Sting of death, what, 497.

Strength of ſin, how the law is the ſtrength thereof, opened up and unfolded, 496, 513. the command of the law the ſtrength of it occaſionally, and the curſe the ſtrength of it effectively, 535. ten qualities of its ſtrength, 500. the degrees of its ſtrength, viewed poſitively, in eight particulars, 501. viewed comparatively, in ten reſpects, *ibid.* and ſuperlatively, in eight inſtances, 502. how the ſtrength of ſin diſcovers itſelf, 503. ten particular ſeaſons wherein it doth ſo, *ibid.* by what ſad effects it evinces its ſtrength, 505. particularly in the death of the ſinner, and the death of the Saviour, *ibid.* whence the ſtrength of ſin comes, and wherein it lies, in four particulars, 507. no eaſy matter to be delivered from it, *ibid.* what kind of ſtrength ſin hath from the law, in ſix particulars, 514. what ſin the law is the ſtrength of, in eight particulars, 517. what ſin is the ſtrength of in, in eight particulars, 518. four reaſons why the law is the ſtrength of ſin, 521. in what reſpects believers are freed from the ſtrength of it, though ſenſible of the prevalency thereof, 529. what that ſtrength of ſin is that ſtill remains with them while here, 537. and what it ſerves for, *ibid.* what it excites to, 538. evidences of thoſe in whom the rule and ſtrength of ſin remain unbroken, 542. See *Law, Sin.*

Suffering, the godly need take no ſinful ſhift to ſhun it, 107.

Sufferings of Chriſt, how to be viewed, 447. how the ſtrength of ſin diſcovered itſelf in them, evinced, 505. what made them ſo dreadful to him before-hand, 506.

Summer, the believers ſummer-times of refreſhment, 306.

Sun, profeſſors compared to the ſun, both in his retrogade and progreſſive courſe, 213.

Supremacy, the king's, when eſtabliſhed and how reliſhed, 529. inconſiſtent with the ſcriptures and our ſtandards, 636.

Surety, Chriſt as Surety came to fulfil the righteouſneſs of the law, only as it is a covenant of works, 540. how he acted as our Surety, in yielding a perfect obedience to the law, paying our debt, liberating us from priſon, freeing us from the curſe, delivering us from the wrath to come, 735.

Sword, the ſword of juſtice awaked againſt God's Fellow, 22. why called a ſword, 28. and what kind of a ſword it is, *ibid.* in what manner this ſword did awake againſt Chriſt, 30. what ſpecial hand Jehovah the Father had in making this awful ſword to awake, 31. the reaſons why the ſword of juſtice did awake againſt his Shepherd, the man his Fellow, *ibid.* ſeven qualities of the blood ſhed by this ſword, 33.

T

TABLE of the Lord, who are debarred from it, 40. the character of thoſe who have a right to approach unto it, 42, 681, 762. in what manner they ſhould come to it, 44. how they ought to be exerciſed at it, 45. what reaſon they have to expect that Chriſt himſelf will come to the feaſt, 713.

Tables of the law, unbelief is a breach of both, 236.

Temper, four evidences of a legal temper in the ungodly, 156. and twelve evidences of it in believers, 157. four cauſes thereof, 160. the evil and danger of it, 191.

Temple, the vail of the temple rent, 8. the ſignification thereof, 9. what theſe vails are that are rent, 10, 18. how the death of Chriſt rent them, 10. in what manner the vail of the temble was rent, 11. for what end, 12. evidences of its being rent, 15. antiently the place of public worſhip, and a type of Chriſt, 765.

Temptation, what ground the children of God have to ſing when they meet with temptation, 100. the time of general temptation from men and devils, a dark and dangerous hour, 666. how to diſtinguiſh the temptations of Satan from the convictions of the Spirit, 767, 768. ſix temptations of Satan condeſcended upon, 769,—774. See *Satan.*

Terror, to unbelievers who enter not into the holy of holies by the rent vail, 17. to all the haters of God, 91. to all who have not felt the harmonious meeting of the divine attributes, 127. to the enemies of Chriſt, 563. to theſe who mount not to God, 754.

Teſtament, the glory of the New-teſtament diſpenſation above the Old, 14.

Teſtimonial, when faith is acted it receives a teſtimonial from God, and gives one to him, 227, 298.

Theodoſius, the emperor, makes an edict in favour of the Arians, 772. Amphilochius biſhop of Iconium, lays a ſtratagem to induce him to revoke it, and ſucceeds, *ibid.*

Things, all things given into Chriſt's hand, 601, 614. ſome of theſe all things mentioned, 603. the import of the expreſſion, 604. the advantage of having all things into his hand, 609. The beauty of this diſpoſure, in regard the Father's property, the Son's title, the ſecurity of the treaſure, the fulneſs of the truſtee, the pleaſure of all parties, and the honour of all concerned, have been conſulted, 615, 616. The extent of this ſtore enquired into, by ſhewing that all attributes, all the reins of providence, all offices, all relations, and all bleſſings are in his hand, 617,—620. the manner how all things are in his hand, *viz.* ſubſtantially, communicatively, ſufficiently, efficiently, unchangably, eternally, 620. motives and conſiderations ariſing from this truth, 621. ſuitable directions offered, 623.

Thoughts, ſome remarks concerning man's thoughts, 338. what right thoughts of Chriſt are, 359.

Throne, the Lamb in the midſt of the throne, 651. what kind of a throne it is, 653. why called a throne, *ibid.* how the Lamb comes to be upon the throne, *ibid.* what is imported in his being in the midſt of the throne, 654. the benefit ariſing from thence, 655. needs not be terrible to us, 657. what view we ought to have of, and what virtue is to be found in the belief of the Lamb's being in the midſt of the throne, *ibid.* the duty of ſinners who hear this doctrine, 658. what they ſee who ſee the Lamb in the midſt of the throne, *ibid.* the river of life proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, 757, 759. no penurious throne, 762.

Throne of grace, erected for a time of need, 724.

Time, the conſideration of it ought to employ moſt of our thoughts, 733.

Times, reforming, covenanting, confeſſing, ſuffering, backſliding times of the church, gathering times to Shiloh, 302. believing, repenting, praying, waiting, longing, attending times, with believers, gathering times, 308. what theſe times are that may be called *perilous times*, 665. times of rebellion againſt God, carnal counſel, carnal confidence, and inſtability, are ſigns of them, 665, 666. times of error, temptation, apoſtaſy, diviſion, ſlighting the goſpel, formality in religion, ſecurity, and careleſs indifference, evidences of unſtable times, 666, 667. eight ſignal appearances of God in perilous times, 678.

Time of love, what kind of a time it is, 714. moſt conſpicuouſly evidenced in the time of need, 716. particular periods of life condeſcended upon that are made times of love, 728, 729. particular troubles enumerated and [illegible] be times of love, 730. the time of love may be known by the remarkableneſs of that time, 731. by the remarkable parts of it, *viz.* the commencement and the [illegible] of it, *ibid.* by the attendance and properties of it, 732. theſe whoſe time has been a time of love, [illegible] love, 90, 91, 733. conſiderations enforcing it, [illegible] theſe who doubt if their time has been a time of love [illegible] who are aſſured their time has been a time of love, 737. ber the time of love, in the time of diſtreſs, very ſer[illegible] *ibid.* thoſe who have enjoyed a time of love from God, [illegible] it to make all their time a time of love to him, 736. See *Love, Time of Need.*

Time of need, a time of love, 713. the ſinner's time of need deſcribed, 714. the time of need, God's time of love both to ſinners and ſaints, 716. this moſt wonderful and admirable, 717. a throne of grace erected for a time of need, 724. how a perſon may know if their time of need has been a time of love, 725. the particu[illegible] of our time of need condeſcended upon, and the enquir[illegible] they have been times of love, 727. if the time of youth [illegible] age has been ſo, *ibid.* if the time of old-age has been, and [illegible] of death a-coming will be, a time of love, 728, 729. eight [illegible] cular times of trouble mentioned, and all ſhewn to be conſiſtent with a time of love, 730, 731. the rememberance of the time of love in the time of need, very ſerviceable, 737. ought to embolden us to come to the throne of grace in all future times of need, 738. what rules to be obſerved about help in time of need, *ibid.* See *Love, Time of Love.*

Tokens, God's time of love to the ſoul, a time of love-tokens, 715. tokens antecedent to the marriage, concomitant, and conſequent of it, *ibid.*

Traveller, the parallel ſtated in eight particulars between the ea[illegible] and heavenly traveller, 231.

Trial, uſes of trial. See *Examination.*

Trinity, the wonderful concurrance of the perſons thereof, 34. every thing that Chriſt hath, as Mediator, is the gift of a glorious Trinity, 549. they obſerve a diſtinct œconomy in the work of redemption, 760. wherein that diſtinct œconomy conſiſts, *ibid.* an eſſential unity and glorious harmony amongſt the reſpective perſons thereof, *ibid.* a glorious Trinity to be ſeen in every ſpiritual bleſſing, *ibid.*

Trouble, ſix ſorts of ſinners whoſe troubles are inconſiſtent with God's love, 723. a deſcription of thoſe whoſe carriage in trouble evidence that it is ſo, 724. who they are whoſe trouble is no time of love, 724, 725. who they are, in general, whoſe trouble and diſtreſs has been a time of love, 725, 726. particular troubles condeſcended upon, and the enquiry made if they have been times of love, 729. See *Affliction.*

Trumpet, the great trumpet of the everlaſting goſpel, 787. the jubilee-trumpet, the blowing of the great trumpet, and the feaſt of trumpets, what meant and typified thereby, 788. why the preaching of the goſpel is compared to the blowing of a trumpet, and why to a great trumpet, 791. what kind of a proclamation it makes, 792. and what are the qualities of the ſound it gives, 793. the efficacy hereof for gathering ſinners to Chriſt, *ibid.* both the trumpet of the law and the goſpel ought to be blown by miniſters, 795. great ſkill requiſite to blow them aright, 796. how perſons may know if they have heard the voice of God in the trumpet of the goſpel, *ibid.*

Truth, her appearance in favours of God againſt man, 114.

Truth, but ſimple and one, but error many, 187. ſeveral caveats offered not to ſwerve from it, *ibid.* the loſs of the leaſt truth dangerous, 223, 311. all goſpel truth centres in Chriſt, 322. is not to be relinquiſhed, though oppoſed and controverted, 667. cannot be held many times without fighting for it, 668. the preſent truth and the leaſt truth to be adhered to and perſevered in, 669.

Types, Chriſt the ſubſtance of all the Old-teſtament types, 51.

U

UNBELIEF, the malignity of it, 125, 241. twelve ſigns thereof, 234. breaks all the commandments of both tables of the law, 236. the ſinfulneſs of it evinced, in ſix particulars, 241. by its diſhonouring



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